

## OVERCOMING MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: THE ROLE OF THE COUNSELOR IN SCHOOL

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### Abstract

The researchers wanted to learn more about the part school counselors play in helping high school kids with mental and emotional difficulties. A qualitative approach involving a literature review was employed for this investigation. An in-depth understanding of a topic or phenomena may be gained through a literature review, and the function of school counselors in helping high school students overcome mental and emotional issues is the focus of this particular review. The information was gathered through reading and analyzing a wide range of resources on the subject at hand, including books, scholarly journals, articles, and other papers; from these, the researcher identified overarching themes and drew definitive conclusions. This study's findings highlight the fact that every kid is an individual with their own set of strengths and weaknesses, and that the school counselor's job will change accordingly. High school students' cognitive and affective growth is greatly aided by the services provided by school counselors. Students' mental and emotional health, as well as their overall well-being and potential, can be greatly aided by the counseling and support offered by school counselors.

**Keywords:** Mental, emotional, school counselor

### Abstrak

*Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengetahui mengatasi tantangan mental dan emosional pada siswa sma: peran konselor di sekolah. Metode yang digunakan adalah metode penelitian kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian studi pustaka. Jenis penelitian studi pustaka digunakan untuk menggali pemahaman yang mendalam tentang suatu topik atau fenomena dengan menganalisis literatur dan sumber-sumber yang relevan yang dimana dalam penelitian ini berkaitan mengatasi tantangan mental dan emosional pada siswa sma: peran konselor di sekolah. Adapun data, diperoleh melalui kajian dan analisis terhadap berbagai referensi seperti buku, jurnal ilmiah, artikel, dan dokumen-dokumen lainnya yang berkaitan dengan topik yang diteliti dan kemudian peneliti menarik benang merah dan menyimpulkan dari hasil temuan dan kajian penelitian. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa setiap siswa adalah individu yang unik, dan peran konselor sekolah akan bervariasi tergantung pada kebutuhan dan tantangan yang dihadapi oleh siswa tersebut. Konselor sekolah memiliki peran yang holistik dan terpadu dalam mendukung perkembangan mental dan emosional siswa SMA. Dengan memberikan dukungan,*

*bimbingan, dan sumber daya yang tepat, konselor sekolah dapat membantu siswa mengatasi masalah kesehatan mental dan emosional, meningkatkan kesejahteraan mereka, dan mencapai potensi penuh mereka.*

***Kata Kunci:*** Mental, emosional, konselor sekolah

## INTRODUCTION

The mental and emotional voyage of high school pupils can be complex and unstable. Students undergo significant physical, cognitive, and social changes at this age. They face academic pressure, social demands, and high expectations of themselves. In addition, they are searching for their own identities and experiencing changes in their social relationships. The adolescent process is a crucial time in an individual's development, both mentally and emotionally. Significant hormonal surges, such as puberty hormones, influence physical and emotional changes at this stage. This frequently results in difficult-to-control mood swings, emotional swings, and impulsive reactions (Afifah & Nasution, 2023).

Academic pressure is one factor that affects the mental and emotional health of secondary school pupils, according to Edmawati (2020). Students in high school are expected to perform well on tests, assignments, and college entrance exams. Students frequently experience anxiety, tension, and dread in relation to their academic accomplishments. In addition to affecting a student's mental health, a heavy burden and intense competition among classmates can also have a negative impact. In addition, social issues can have a significant effect on the mental health of secondary school pupils. Students begin to form their own identities and attempt to comprehend how they interact with others at this stage. They might experience peer pressure, feelings of isolation, or interpersonal conflict. Bullying, peer pressure, and friendship difficulties can have a negative effect on the mental health of a student.

Moreover, according to Gori et al. (2023), alterations in the family environment can have an impact on the mental and emotional health of high school students. They may be experiencing the divorce of a parent, the loss of a family member, or a shift in their family dynamic. Students may experience stress, anxiety, or melancholy as a result. Positive family support and compassion from parents or custodians is essential for assisting students in overcoming these obstacles. During this time, it is crucial that schools and communities provide SMA students with a supportive environment. This can include the provision of mental health support services, such as school counselling, which assists students in managing stress, coping with emotional issues, and developing healthy social skills. Programs that teach students about mental health and emotional management are also of great benefit to students.

It is also essential to reduce the stigma associated with mental health problems and increase secondary school students' awareness of the significance of mental health. By fostering an open and inclusive environment, students will be more likely to seek assistance and receive the necessary support if they encounter difficulties. High school pupils can cultivate their own skills and strategies to manage their mental health,

independent of external factors. This includes practicing healthy behaviors such as ample rest, a balanced diet, and regular physical activity. Meditation and yoga are two relaxation techniques that can help reduce tension and enhance mental health (Mokodenseho et al., 2023).

Moreover, according to Musafiri, (2021) A strong and supportive social network is also essential. Students in high school must learn to develop trustworthy relationships with their peers, families, and professionals. In addition, they must be provided with opportunities to cultivate their interests and hobbies, which can reduce stress and enhance their overall health. It is crucial to recognize that each student is an individual with unique mental and emotional health experiences. Some pupils may be more susceptible to mental health issues, whereas others may be more stress-resistant. Therefore, a holistic and integrated approach is required to satisfy the diverse mental and emotional health requirements of students.

Overall, the adolescent years of a high school student are difficult in terms of mental and emotional health. However, with the proper support from the school, family, and community environment, as well as by developing individual skills to manage stress and emotions, students can more effectively navigate this journey and develop robust mental health. The mental and emotional well-being of secondary school pupils is crucial to their overall health. During this time, they undergo significant alterations to their identities, social relationships, and responsibilities. Therefore, it is essential to comprehend some of the unique challenges that high school students may face and how we can assist them in overcoming these obstacles.

High academic pressure is a common issue for adolescents in high school. They must contend with the rigors of a rigorous curriculum, tests that determine their future, and the high expectations of their families and society. This excessive workload can cause students to experience elevated levels of tension, anxiety, and even depression. They may experience pressure to earn high grades, satisfy familial expectations, or compete with peers (Pasaribu et al., 2023).

Similarly, high school students frequently experience alterations in their social relationships. They are attempting to establish their individuality, locate suitable peer groups, and deal with the strain of strong social ties. Changes in social dynamics can be a source of tension and anxiety for students, particularly if they feel isolated or have trouble forming interpersonal relationships. Bullying, group divisions, and peer-to-peer conflict can have a negative effect on the mental health of a student. In addition, secondary school students frequently encounter future-related pressure. They must make judgments regarding the level of education they will pursue and the profession they will pursue, as well as prepare for an uncertain future. This uncertainty can cause significant anxiety and tension, as students feel compelled to make the correct choice and are subject to social and self-imposed pressure. (Sari & Herdi, 2021) .

According to Yudiani (2013), it is essential to establish a supportive environment at school and at home in order to address these mental and emotional issues. Schools can provide counseling services where students can discuss their problems and receive the

necessary assistance. School counselors can assist students in developing stress-management techniques, enhancing social skills, and providing emotional support. In addition, mental health education and emotional management skills can become integral components of the school curriculum. Educating students about the significance of mental health, how to recognize and manage stress, and the development of healthy social skills can equip them with the tools necessary to face mental and emotional challenges.

Parents and guardians must provide secondary school pupils with a supportive and empathetic environment at home. They can ask students open-ended queries and monitor any behavioral or emotional changes that may occur. Encouragement of open communication and provision of emotional support can assist students in feeling heard and supported as they face their problems. In addition to school and family support, it is essential that students develop robust skills for managing their own mental health. This may involve healthy self-care practices such as adequate rest, regular exercise, and scheduling time for pleasurable activities. Developing stress management skills, such as relaxation techniques or meditation, can also assist pupils in dealing with tension.

Furthermore, it is essential for students to seek support from peers or positive organizations. They can create healthy social networks in which they feel supported, can share experiences, and receive support from peers going through the same situation. This can help reduce feelings of isolation and enhance mental health overall. High school students have a tendency to be mentally and emotionally disturbed due to their complex developmental process. High school students frequently encounter problems such as academic pressure, social change, and ambiguity about the future. However, with the proper support from school, family, and peers, as well as the development of individual skills in managing mental health, students can overcome these obstacles and develop robust mental health.

The researcher is interested in conducting research with the title overcoming mental and emotional difficulties in high school students: the role of school counselors.

## **METHOD**

Utilized by researchers is a qualitative research method comprising a form of literature review. This type of research is used to gain an in-depth comprehension of a topic or phenomenon by analyzing relevant literature and sources, which in this case pertain to the role of school counselors in helping high school students overcome mental and emotional challenges. As for the data, it was obtained through the study and analysis of various references, such as books, scientific journals, articles, and other documents pertaining to the topic under investigation; the researchers then drew conclusions from the findings and research studies (Adlini et al., 2022)..

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

School counselors play a crucial role in the mental and emotional development of secondary school students. School counselors are an experienced source of guidance and support for assisting students with mental and emotional health challenges and concerns.

According to Kuswadi (2019), the function of the school counselor can be viewed in the following ways:

**Individual counseling:** School counselors can conduct individual counseling sessions with students to assist them in resolving personal issues that have an impact on their mental and emotional health. In this counseling, counselors can assist students in recognizing and coping with stress, anxiety, melancholy, and other issues. Counselors can also assist students in developing healthy coping mechanisms and boosting their confidence.

**Group counseling:** School counselors can facilitate group counseling sessions where students with similar issues can share their experiences with one another. This group counseling provides a space for students to feel heard, receive support from peers, and obtain new perspectives on overcoming obstacles. Through group interaction, students can develop social skills, increase their self-awareness, and feel more connected to others.

**Prevention and education:** School counselors play an essential role in preventing mental and emotional health issues in schools. They can organize educational programs aimed at increasing students' awareness of the significance of mental health, recognizing the signs and symptoms of mental health problems, and providing strategies for self-care. These programs can also assist in reducing the stigma associated with mental health issues and enhancing social support among students.

**Counselors in schools can assist students with vocation evaluation and guidance.** They can assist students in identifying their interests, skills, and values in order to determine appropriate educational and career options. School counselors assist students in making future plans with confidence and clarity by advising them on course, college, and vocational training selections.

**Collaboration with teachers and school personnel:** School counselors work closely with teachers and other school personnel to foster an environment conducive to the mental health of students. They can provide instructors with advice and direction on how to manage an inclusive classroom, identify signs of mental health issues, and support students who require assistance. Counselors can also collaborate with other school personnel, such as security officers and social workers, to provide integrated support for students with mental health and emotional difficulties.

**Referral and collaboration with outsiders:** If a student's problems require more specific assistance or more intensive intervention, school counselors can refer students to outsiders such as psychologists, psychiatrists, and mental health agencies. Counselors can work with other professionals to ensure that students receive coordinated and appropriate care. In addition, counselors can establish partnerships with community organizations and non-governmental organizations that provide students and their families with mental and emotional health support.

In addition to the previously mentioned roles, Nurhadi (2014) cites the following as demonstrating the significant role of school counselors in the mental and emotional

development of high school pupils at school: School counselors play a crucial role in addressing crises and other emergencies that may occur on school grounds. They are trained to recognize warning signs and provide emergency assistance to students who may be experiencing significant issues, such as suicidal thoughts or behavior, substance misuse, or relationship violence. Counselors can assist with these situations by administering emergency care, referring students to appropriate services, and collaborating with relevant parties to ensure the safety and well-being of students.

School counselors view students in a broader context, rather than focusing solely on their mental and emotional issues. They consider the family environment, socioeconomic conditions, and formative experiences of students. With a holistic approach, counselors are able to comprehend the unique contexts of each student and provide appropriate assistance, taking into consideration all factors that can impact their mental and emotional health.

Accompanying plans: School counselors can assist students in planning and monitoring their personal, academic, and professional objectives. Through counseling and mentoring, counselors can assist students in identifying their interests, talents, and strengths, and overcoming potential barriers to attaining these objectives. Students can feel more focused and motivated to attain a desired outcome by outlining concrete actions.

School counselors are also responsible for providing support and resources to the parents and guardians of secondary school students. They can assist parents in comprehending the changes occurring in adolescents, provide information on effective parenting strategies, and offer emotional support for coping with challenges associated with their child's mental and emotional development. Close collaboration between school counselors and parents can provide students with a strong and supportive environment in which to manage life's changes and stresses.

School counselors are able to regularly evaluate the mental and emotional development of their pupils. They can recognize behavioral or emotional changes that may indicate a problem that needs to be addressed. Counselors can provide early intervention and direct students to the appropriate resources to help them deal with problems more effectively if they carefully monitor student behavior. In addition, periodic evaluations may be conducted to assess the efficacy of mental and emotional health programs in schools and to identify areas for improvement.

Education of school personnel School counselors are also responsible for educating and training school personnel on mental and emotional health issues. They can organize seminars or workshops to increase staff understanding of how to recognize signs of mental health issues, provide early support to students in need, and work collaboratively to create a school environment that promotes mental health. By increasing staff comprehension, overall pupil mental health awareness and support can be enhanced.

In creating a healthy, secure, and supportive educational environment for high school students, school counselors play a vital role. School counselors can considerably contribute to the mental and emotional development of students via a holistic approach,



directed guidance, and close collaboration with all relevant parties. By focusing on students' mental and emotional health, schools can assist students in overcoming obstacles, reaching their full potential, and achieving overall well-being.

## CONCLUSION

On the basis of the above findings and discussion, it can be concluded that each student is a unique individual, and the school counselor's function will vary depending on the student's requirements and challenges. The function of school counselors in supporting the mental and emotional development of secondary school students is holistic and integrated. School counselors can help students cope with mental and emotional health issues, improve their well-being, and realize their maximum potential by providing the appropriate support, guidance, and resources.

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