

BASIC CONCEPTS OF GROUP COUNSELING

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Abstract

Group counseling is one of the implementations of responsive service program strategies from a series of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs in schools in the form of providing professional assistance to each individual in a group who has similar problems. The meaning of the main and fundamental concept of group counseling lies in how a guidance and counseling teacher can develop and overcome the problems of group members in accordance with predetermined provisions so that it becomes a benchmark for the success of group counseling sessions. This research aims to provide an understanding through a concrete explanation of the basic concepts of group counseling which become the foundation in the implementation of group counseling services so that there is an optimal success of counseling results. The result of this research is an explanation of the basic concepts of group counseling which includes understanding, objectives, principles, procedures, benefits, and challenges in group counseling services. The method used in this research is a qualitative method of literature study, understanding of a fact or phenomenon through the process of collecting data from various sources such as books, journals, and existing research by conceptualizing and understanding the text objectively and rationally. The basic concept of group counseling is very important because it is used as the first step in the implementation and realization of guidance and counseling programs.

Keywords: Basic concept, group counseling, guidance and counseling

Abstrak

Konseling kelompok adalah salah satu implementasi strategi program layanan responsif dari serangkaian bentuk program bimbingan dan konseling komprehensif di sekolah berupa pemberian bantuan secara profesional kepada setiap individu dalam suatu kelompok yang memiliki permasalahan yang serupa. Makna dari adanya konsep utama dan mendasar konseling kelompok terletak pada bagaimana seorang guru bimbingan dan konseling dapat mengembangkan dan mengatasi permasalahan anggota kelompok sesuai dengan ketentuan yang telah ditetapkan sehingga menjadi tolak ukur keberhasilan sesi konseling kelompok. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memberikan pemahaman melalui penjelasan secara konkret mengenai konsep dasar konseling kelompok yang menjadi landasan dalam pelaksanaan layanan konseling kelompok supaya terdapat keberhasilan hasil konseling secara optimal. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah pemaparan mengenai konsep dasar konseling kelompok yang meliputi pengertian, tujuan, asas-asas, prosedur,

manfaat, dan tantangan dalam layanan konseling kelompok. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kualitatif studi literatur, pemahaman tentang suatu fakta atau fenomena melalui proses pengumpulan data dari berbagai sumber seperti buku, jurnal, dan riset-riset yang telah ada dengan mengkonsepsikan dan memahami teks secara objektif dan rasional. Konsep dasar konseling kelompok menjadi suatu hal yang sangat penting karena dijadikan sebagai langkah awal dalam pelaksanaan dan realisasi program bimbingan dan konseling.

Kata kunci: Konsep Dasar, Konseling Kelompok, Bimbingan dan Konseling

INTRODUCTION

Humans, as God's creatures, have been endowed with a special ability to socialize, which leads every individual to interact with others. The emergence of specific groups within society is a result of these interactions among people. Through these interactions between individuals, certain groups or communities arise or form. Typically, people tend to come together in groups because they share similar interests or goals. Individuals can achieve their goals and connect with others in innovative and productive ways through cooperation or group interaction. People cannot live in isolation or develop on their own without being part of a group. Given this reality, it is clear that coming together in groups is a necessity that everyone must experience and be able to participate in (Siti Wahyuni, 2018).

Everyone possesses different skills, so forming groups can be beneficial in meeting these various needs. Within a group, individuals can appreciate each other's strengths and weaknesses, which can then lead to personal growth and provide mutual support and motivation for individual development. However, in today's 21st-century global era, the focus is on population growth that goes hand in hand with developments in various aspects of life, giving rise to several complex issues (Siti Wahyuni, 2018).

When facing challenges related to these complex issues, each individual who encounters a problem will react differently; it is not uncommon for some to experience stress, symptoms of depression, or severe depression, while others may appear relaxed, going about their lives unaware of the problems—which they have chosen to suppress. This is due to the variety of ways individuals interpret problems. In the school environment, students also face problems—whether personal, social, academic, career-related, or even family issues that may spill over into school. In this context, guidance counselors must possess the appropriate skills to address and resolve students' highly complex problems, especially in today's era of global development. Rapid technological advancements, particularly the influence of the media, have a significant impact on individuals; they can alter worldviews, lifestyles, and even the culture of a nation (Hamid, 2016).

Among the various methods available to school guidance and counseling (BK) counselors or teachers—such as the 10 services and six supporting activities—group counseling is a service that can be used to address students' issues simultaneously or in groups. Group counseling is assistance provided by a Guidance and Counseling (BK) teacher or counselor to a group of individuals or students to address the problems experienced by each individual as a group member by utilizing the dynamics that arise within the group (Yandri et al., 2019).

Group members may be facing situational crises and short-term conflicts, overcoming personal or interpersonal challenges, navigating life transitions, or attempting to change self-defeating patterns. The group provides the empathy and support needed to foster trust, enabling individuals to share and discuss their difficulties.

Group members are assisted in honing their current interpersonal problem-solving skills so that they will be better prepared to address similar issues in the future (Corey, 2015). Thus, group counseling is expected to serve as a tool for counselors or school counselors to help individuals resolve their problems through a group setting and can be useful in helping each individual achieve development and growth, as well as serving as therapy to address individual psychological issues. Participating in group activities during counseling has often proven effective in helping individuals overcome personal and interpersonal problems.

METHOD

A literature review was used as the research method in this study. Creswell, John W. (2014:40) explains that a *literature review* is a synthesis of various theoretical information and ideas—both past and present—drawn from journals, books, and other documents, organized into a discussion relevant to the researcher’s objectives.

According to Habsy (2017), expertise in deepening one’s understanding of qualitative research in guidance and counseling is achieved by mastering an in-depth understanding of research methods capable of describing or presenting research objects based on procedures and non-numeric data—such as verbal data, textual data, content analysis techniques, conversation analysis, focus groups, discourse analysis, and phenomenology to interpret a specific phenomenon or event occurring in the delivery of guidance and counseling services.

According to Hasan (2002), conducting a literature review must be based on three stages: determining the types of literature to be used and required for the research—such as books, journals, and other sources; synthesizing and analyzing the literature; and presenting the previously analyzed literature. The data in this study were collected using qualitative methods to ensure relevance to the research topic. Data were obtained from previously reviewed journals. A descriptive approach was then used to explain the findings, which were subsequently compared and synthesized to serve as a useful reference for the study.

Table 1. Research Data

NO.	DATA	DATA SOURCE
1.	Definition of Group Counseling	Bakhtiar, F., Aryani, F., Sinring, A. (2024). Penerapan Layanan Konseling Kelompok Dengan Teknik Psikodrama Untuk Meningkatkan Resiliensi Pada Siswa Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan di Kabupaten Pinrang. PINISI JOURNAL OF ART, HUMANITY AND SOCIAL STUDIES, 4(1), 37-48.

		Febrianti, E. A., Setyawati, P. A., Atrup. (2022). Pemanfaatan Buku Panduan dalam Melaksanakan Konseling Kelompok. Paper presented at Seminar Nasional Jaringan Konseling Kearifan Nusantara ke-3. Yandri, H., Rahayu, G., Suhaili, N., & Netrawati, N. (2022). Kebermaknaan Konseling Kelompok dalam Menanggulangi Masalah Kehidupan. <i>Indonesian Journal of Counseling and Development</i>, 4(2), 59–69. https://doi.org/10.32939/ijcd.v4i2.1526
2.	The Purpose of Group Counseling	Rasimin, D. R., & Hamdi, M. (2021). <i>Bimbingan dan Konseling Kelompok</i>. Bumi Aksara. Habsy, B. A. ., Zain, H. H. H. ., Masruroh, H. ., & Mukti, F. A. . (2024). Basic Concepts of Group Counseling: An Intervention Services. <i>QUANTA: Jurnal Kajian Bimbingan Dan Konseling Dalam Pendidikan</i>, 8(1), 1–7. https://doi.org/10.22460/quanta.v8i1.4268
3.	Principles of Group Counseling	Rasimin, D. R., & Hamdi, M. (2021). <i>Bimbingan dan Konseling Kelompok</i> . Bumi Aksara.
4.	Group Counseling Procedures	Lestari, R., Wicaksono, H. H., Kinanthi, K. H., & Salsabilla, S. (2022). Konseling Kelompok untuk Meningkatkan Kepercayaan Diri Remaja Panti. <i>Abdi Psikonomi</i>, 107-115. Sutanti, T. (2015). <i>PELAKSANAAN LAYANAN KONSELING KELOMPOK PADA SISWA CERDAS ISTIMEWA DI SMA NEGERI KOTA YOGYAKARTA</i>. <i>Jurnal Konseling Gusjigang</i>, 1(1). https://doi.org/10.24176/jkg.v1i1.293
5.	Benefits of Group Counseling Services	Setyaputri, N., Lasan, B., & Permatasari, D. (2016). <i>Pengembangan Paket Pelatihan “Ground, Understand, Revise, Use (GURU)-Karier” untuk Meningkatkan Efikasi Diri Karier Calon Konselor</i> . <i>Jurnal Kajian Bimbingan dan Konseling</i> , 1(4), 132-141. Retrieved from http://journal.um.ac.id/index.php/bk/article/view/6783
6.	Challenges in Guidance and Counseling Services	Szilagyi, A. (2022). <i>The benefits of group counseling in career and educational settings. Online group work as an alternative intervention in a post-pandemic world</i> . <i>Journal of Educational Sciences & Psychology</i> , 12 (74)(2), 114–121. https://doi.org/10.51865/jesp.2022.2.13

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Group Counseling

Hartuti (2017) states that group counseling is counseling conducted in a group setting. Meanwhile, Gazda (Adhiputra, 2015) argues that group counseling is a dynamic interactive process that focuses on conscious thoughts and actions in real-life situations. This process relies on trust, understanding, acceptance, and support among participants.

Group members utilize the dynamics of group interaction to deepen their understanding and acceptance of certain values and goals, as well as to learn and change specific attitudes or behaviors.

According to Tohirin (Magrur, Siregar & Silondae, 2020), group counseling is an effort by a guidance counselor to help each group member resolve the personal problems they face in order to achieve maximum development and growth. In the context of group counseling, it is important to foster healthy group dynamics to facilitate the achievement of effective service goals. Supported by the view of Sukardi (2016), group counseling is a counseling process conducted by bringing individuals together in a group to then utilize the dynamics that arise within the group. The issues discussed in this counseling are personal problems that emerge within the group context, covering all aspects of guidance such as social, personal, academic, and career.

Meanwhile, according to (Prayitno, 2017), group counseling is an interpersonal process focused on the underlying thoughts and behaviors. This process also features therapeutic characteristics such as self-expression of deep feelings, trust, attention, understanding, and mutual support. Based on this description, it can be concluded that the group counseling process involves the provision of services by a counselor who utilizes group dynamics and applies principles of assistance, prevention, and treatment to support the growth and development of the members involved in the group.

Objectives of Group Counseling

According to Rasimin and Hamdi (2016), group counseling essentially has two objectives: theoretical and operational. The theoretical objective refers to the general goals to be achieved during counseling sessions, while the operational objective is based on the expectations or desires of the members and is tailored to the issues currently being experienced by the group counseling participants.

Winkel (1997), as cited in Rasimin (2019), states that the objectives of group counseling include the following: (1) To understand, discover, accept, and open up to oneself in order to foster a positive self-image for each group member; (2) To improve *skills* in communicating with fellow members so that these skills can help overcome any obstacles in their developmental process; (3) To develop the ability to self-regulate and self-direct; (4) To cultivate a deep sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others, thereby enhancing self-awareness and fostering empathy among members; (5) To foster a more constructive attitude through the goals to be achieved; (6) To be more courageous in taking action and accepting risks, thereby fostering the belief that it is better to act than to remain passive; (7) To foster maximum awareness and appreciation of the meaning of life for human beings, thereby developing an awareness of social life; (8) To realize that when facing a troubling situation, a member is not alone; (9) To respect and care for other members through open communication, thereby creating a positive impact among members.

If group leaders do not receive clear explanations and guidance regarding the group's current objectives, this will lead to confusion, boredom, and unproductivity within the group and may result in a misalignment with the group's true purpose.

Principles in Group Counseling

According to Munro, Manthei, & Small (2021), confidentiality, voluntariness, and the client's autonomy are the three main ethical principles in guidance and counseling services. In the context of group guidance and counseling services, it is important and mandatory to apply these three ethical principles.

According to Dina Hajja Ristianti & Irwan Fathurrochman (2021), the principles that can support group counseling activities include:

1. The Principle of Confidentiality

The principle of confidentiality ensures that all data and information regarding clients—as the recipients of guidance and counseling services—are safeguarded and kept confidential, without any disclosure to any third party except with the client's permission and consent. Therefore, this principle is crucial in the guidance and counseling process.

2. The Principle of Activity

The principle of activity is a principle in which the active participation of clients or counselees is key to the conduct of counseling sessions. This principle is implemented by requiring all group members and the group leader to play an active role, which fosters a positive atmosphere, enthusiasm, and a structured session led by the group leader.

3. The Principle of Openness

The principle of openness guides clients to be honest and open. This principle is closely related to the principle of confidentiality and the client's or counselee's willingness to share in group counseling sessions. As a role model, a counselor must first be honest and open so that clients or counselees will adopt the same attitude. If there is no openness among group members and the group leader, disruptive obstacles will arise during group counseling sessions.

4. The Principle of Timeliness

The principle of timeliness is the principle whereby clients or counselees must express whatever they are currently experiencing without delaying seeking help. Thus, this principle emphasizes addressing each group member's issues as soon as possible.

5. The Principle of Normativity

The principle of normativity is the principle that every group counseling session must not violate the norms applicable in society, the nation, and the state—such as customary norms, religious norms, legal norms, scientific norms, and so on. Therefore, effective counseling is counseling that proceeds in accordance with applicable norms.

6. The Principle of Expertise

The principle of expertise is a principle that employs professional guidelines and regulations in conducting the counseling process. Consequently, guidance and counseling services must be provided by individuals who are experts and certified in the field of guidance and counseling. If the provider is not an expert, there is a risk of violating the

code of ethics and of the counseling process being conducted improperly, which prevents the counseling process from functioning optimally.

Group Counseling Procedures

In the implementation of group counseling, the process is carried out through the following stages:

1. Initial Group Stage

This initial stage is also known as orientation and exploration and involves a series of steps: introducing oneself as a gesture of open acceptance of each member, expressing gratitude, then offering a prayer according to each individual's faith, followed by an explanation of the definition of group counseling, its objectives, how it is conducted, and its principles—all of which are followed by a self-introduction session in which members introduce themselves in order of their names.

2. Transition Stage

In this stage, building rapport and fostering mutual trust—which motivates members to confront the fears that arose in the initial stage—is crucial. The steps in this stage are: summarizing the group counseling activities, asking and answering questions regarding members' readiness to continue the session, identifying the atmosphere if some or all members are not yet ready for the next step, addressing that situation, and raising personal issues to be discussed within the group.

3. Activity Stage

In-depth exploration to understand group members' issues and identify appropriate solutions. The steps in this activity phase are: providing group members the opportunity to share their personal concerns one by one; determining or selecting which issues to discuss first; conducting an in-depth discussion on the selected issues; and confirming the commitment of members whose issues have been addressed to take the next steps toward resolving them.

4. Closing Phase

If there are changes in behavior within the group, this is a defining characteristic of the group counseling session process at this stage.

The steps taken are as follows: the group leader announces that the group counseling session will conclude; group members then provide feedback and evaluate the progress and improvements each member hopes to achieve; the group discusses plans for future activities; the leader receives messages and feedback from group members; expresses gratitude; leads a group prayer; and concludes the session with farewells (Fahmi & Slamet, 2016).

Additionally, Corey (2016), as cited in Sutanti (2015), argues that the group counseling service process consists of four stages: the initial stage, the transition stage, the working stage, and the closing stage. The characteristics of each stage are as follows:

1. Initial stage

During this stage, introductions take place, which can lead to noticeable silence and awkwardness; therefore, it is necessary to establish a positive atmosphere within the group. The presence of trust versus distrust has become a central issue in this stage. Group members are asked to decide how open and comfortable they wish to be.

2 Transition stage

A key characteristic is establishing a safe and comfortable environment to identify a trustworthy leader and members who will actively participate in group counseling. During the transition stage, group members must be open to sharing various problems or concerns so they can be analyzed and addressed.

3 Working stage

There are several important points regarding the working stage to note: *working* does not occur exclusively in this stage but is present in every stage. Consequently, some group counseling sessions may not be able to progress through the working stage, and not all group members may reach the same level of progress.

4 Terminating Stage

Characteristics of this stage include feelings of despair, discussing unresolved issues, and giving and receiving feedback. However, conversely, some members successfully resolve their issues and achieve their goals. To ensure that group counseling runs smoothly, this discussion highlights that these counseling stages are crucial to implement.

Benefits of Group Counseling Services

There are several advantages and benefits of group counseling (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005; DeLucia-Waak, 2013): (1) The feeling that one is not alone. Others are also experiencing the same or similar problems. This is the principle of universality (Yalom); (2) Creating an environment conducive to receiving and providing emotional support; receiving support is a vital aspect of the therapeutic alliance, particularly when applied to group work; (3) A broader therapeutic alliance that encompasses diverse perspectives for participants; (4) Lower costs compared to individual therapy or counseling; (5) Training and developing communication and social/interpersonal skills; (6) Building self-confidence; (7) Providing emotional safety for people who feel uncomfortable discussing their feelings in front of others; (8) Modeling the successful behaviors of others who have had similar experiences.

According to (Elida P, 2010), group counseling offers various benefits for each group member, such as: (1) A forum for providing support to each member to foster better behaviors, beliefs, and feelings toward themselves and others; (2) A forum for learning about various types of relationships and understanding how to build effective and beneficial relationships; (3) A forum for discussing perspectives and opinions among members, which can generate useful suggestions; (4) An opportunity to gain detailed insight into the daily lives of fellow members with diverse life backgrounds—such as differing interests, ages, concerns, backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, and types of problems—thereby gaining many new perspectives; (5) A space for receiving feedback

from various perspectives, which helps group members gain a deeper understanding of themselves; (6) Receiving both physical and emotional support, as well as advice from fellow group members, to help make decisions regarding the problems they are currently facing; (7) Developing a sense of belonging to the group and learning to befriend one another, maintain positive relationships, and provide support through close interactions that continue to develop within the group setting.

Challenges in Group Counseling Services

Some challenges participants may face in a group (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005): (1) The intervention is not focused solely on a specific individual; therefore, the client is not the center of the therapist's or counselor's attention; (2) There is a greater potential for breaches of confidentiality, even though participants are instructed not to share information outside the group; (3) Some less-motivated participants may not make progress; they may choose to hide their problems and avoid taking responsibility; (4) A less focused therapeutic alliance; (5) Less flexibility (it is not possible to align the group schedule with each participant's individual schedule); (6) It is not always appropriate. Sometimes, group interventions may not be suitable for certain types of participants (those who are shy, passive-aggressive, impulsive, antisocial, etc.).

CONCLUSION

Group counseling is an approach that involves providing counseling services by a professional counselor to a specific group of people who share similar issues, with the goal of healing and addressing those issues within a group dynamic involving several members. Group counseling aims to help each group member understand, discover, accept, and open up to themselves in order to develop a positive self-image; improve communication skills among members so they can help overcome obstacles in their personal development; develop the ability to self-regulate and self-direct; become more attuned to the needs and feelings of others, thereby fostering greater self-awareness and empathy in each member; fostering a more constructive attitude through the goals they seek to achieve; encouraging members to be bolder in taking action and accepting risks—believing that it is better to act than to remain passive; helping members realize and appreciate the meaning of human life, thereby developing their awareness of social life; ensuring members understand that when facing a troubling situation, they are not alone; and fostering mutual respect and consideration among members through open communication, thereby creating a positive impact on the group. This approach is effective in helping individuals address their various psychological, social, and emotional issues holistically, by leveraging the support and insights of other group members.

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