



Implementation of Peer Counselors in Strengthening Mental Health at PIK-R Sei Nagalawan Village

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Abstract:

Adolescent mental health is a major concern in an effort to improve the welfare of the younger generation. Through the PIK-R program established by BKKBN, adolescents gain knowledge and life skills in order to live a healthy and prosperous life. This study aims to implement peer counselors as a strategy to strengthen adolescent mental health in PIK-R Sei Nagalawan Village. The research method used is qualitative descriptive with case study techniques. Research data were obtained through interviews, observation and documentation. The results showed that the implementation of peer counselors in PIK-R Sei Nagalawan Village had a positive impact on improving adolescent mental health in Sei Nagalawan Village. Where Nagalawan village teenagers already have good skills in solving problems, support each other in their groups, are more confident in expressing their ideas, are able to discuss and accept other people's opinions, and there is an improvement in their life skills. Thus, peer counselor services are an effective step in strengthening adolescent mental health, and improving the overall well-being of the younger generation.

Keywords: *Mental Health, Pik-R, Peer Counselor Implementation*

Abstrak:

Kesehatan mental remaja menjadi perhatian utama dalam upaya meningkatkan kesejahteraan generasi muda. Melalui program PIK-R yang diselenggarakan BKKBN, remaja memperoleh ilmu dan kehidupan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menerapkan konselor sebaya sebagai strategi penguatan kesehatan mental remaja di PIK-R Desa Sei Nagalawan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan studi kasus. Data penelitian diperoleh melalui wawancara, observasi dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa implementasi konselor sebaya pada PIK-R di Desa Sei Nagalawan telah memberikan dampak positif dalam meningkatkan kesehatan mental remaja di Desa Sei Nagalawan. Dimana remaja Desa Nagalawan sudah mempunyai kemampuan yang baik dalam memecahkan masalah, saling mendukung dalam kelompoknya, lebih percaya diri dalam mengemukakan gagasan, mampu berdiskusi dan da peningkatan keterampilan hidup mereka. Dengan cara ini, layanan konselor sebaya merupakan langkah efektif dalam memperkuat kesehatan mental remaja dan meningkatkan kesejahteraan generasi muda secara keseluruhan.

Kata Kunci: *Kesehatan Jiwa, Pik-R, Implementasi Konselor Sebaya*

Introduction

Adolescence is the period of human development that occurs between childhood and adulthood, and usually refers to the age range of 13 to 19 years. This period is a critical period in a person's life because it involves various significant changes physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively. Physically, adolescents experience rapid growth and noticeable changes in their bodies. During puberty, a girl's breasts grow, hair grows in certain areas of her body, and the menstrual cycle begins. In contrast, adolescent boys develop deeper voices, grow hair on the face and body, and increase the size of muscles and bones. In addition to physical changes, young people also face significant emotional challenges. Significant hormonal changes often leave you confused and emotionally unstable. Conflicts with parents and peers, concerns over body image, and identity exploration are common at this stage of adolescence.

Socially and cognitively, adolescents begin to develop their own independence and autonomy. They begin to explore more complex relationships with their peers and enter a phase of exploring their self-identity. Adolescence is also a time when children begin to think about future education and career choices. In adolescence, it is important to receive appropriate support and guidance from family, friends, and the community. This will help them overcome the challenges and difficulties they may face at this stage, and at the same time provide a solid foundation for their coming adulthood. (According to Jean Piaget) is an expert in the field of developmental psychology, viewing adolescence as a time when humans experience significant cognitive development. Start thinking abstractly and develop the ability to understand complex concepts.

In an effort to improve the welfare of the younger generation, mental health in adolescence is an increasingly important problem to pay attention to. During adolescence, a person undergoes major changes in various

aspects of their life, such as physical, emotional, and social. Various obstacles that arise today can have a major impact on the mental health of adolescents and hinder their optimal growth and development. Sadly in recent years, the increasing amount of emotional stress experienced by teenagers has become a major concern. Mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and eating disorders can be caused by things like high academic demands, social pressure, changes in self-identity, family problems and the influence of social media.

World Health Organization (WHO): WHO defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which each individual is able to fulfill his or her potential, cope with the stresses of daily life, work productively, and contribute to the surrounding community. Mentally healthy adolescents are adolescents who are able to restrain themselves, show intelligence, respect the feelings of others, and have a happy outlook on life (Dewi, 2012). According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) (2019), the highest prevalence of mental health problems occurs in the younger generation aged 17 to 18 years. NIMH (2019) also found that the suicide rate in individuals aged 15 to 24 years in the United States is 220 per 100,000 (Ivey, 2020).

Data from the World Health Organization (WHO) there are 450 million people worldwide experiencing mental health disorders, 20% of which the prevalence of occurrence occurs in children (O'Reilly, 2015 in Gunatirin, 2018) the rest are adolescents. The number of these incidents is large enough to be a concern that the mental health of children and adolescents is important to be studied. When discussing the mental health of children and adolescents, it is very important to understand the factors that can deceive mental health in adolescents. Factors that can disrupt the mental health of children and adolescents are due to vulnerability to stress, namely children and adolescents experience the inability to adjust to their life circumstances (Schoon, 2006 in

Gunatirin, 2018), as well as vice versa with factors that protect their mental health.

The era of the industrial revolution 5.0 is an era of very rapid technological development so that many challenges must be faced by adolescents today such as the demands of schoolwork, free internet access that has positive and negative impacts and social problems where adolescents must be able to adapt to the surrounding circumstances and environment. In adolescence, self-confidence (self-image) undergoes changes. Teenagers become increasingly worried about other people's views of themselves. This can make the younger generation in confusion (IDAI Youth Task Force, 2013). This can lead to mental health problems in adolescents.

One of the efforts to get good mental health in adolescence is by fulfilling developmental tasks that must be appropriate and important enough to have close peers. Peer relationships in adolescence are essential to meet social needs without establishing the values that adults demand but rather from themselves (Hurlock, 1991; Santrock, 2012). Not a few teenagers believe that adults find it difficult to understand themselves and only fellow teenagers can understand each other. For most teenagers, friends are very meaningful treasures. Moreover, when adolescents experience problems in the family environment and experience broken homes in their daily lives, the interaction and influence between them is very intense. Various attitudes and behaviors (positive or negative) will greatly affect the teenager.

Suwarjo, as explained by Carr (1981) stated that the essence of peer counseling is an approach for adolescents to learn how to observe and help other friends, and apply it in daily life. Maliki (2016) explained that peer counseling is necessary because adolescents often express their problems with peers compared to parents, guides, or caregivers. In fact, for problems that are considered very

serious will also be told to peers (friends). This arises because adolescents have interest, commitment, and bonds with peers who are very close. Adolescents feel that people of different age ranges cannot understand the problems they are feeling.

According to Suwarjo (2008), someone who wants to become a peer counselor must have basic counseling skills to support their role as facilitators and peer counselors. These skills include accepting (listening to the interlocutor with full attention), empathizing, integrating, questioning, being genuine, behaving assertively, confrontational, and solving problems. Nonetheless, Maliki (2016) points out that peer counseling is very important because adolescents talk about their problems more often with peers than with their parents, mentors, or caregivers. Even problems that are considered serious will also be told to peers or friends. This is due to the fact that adolescents are interested, engaged, and have strong relationships with their peers.

Data obtained from PLKB and several cadres and adolescents of Sei Nagalawan village in recent years often found teenagers who experienced several problems both individual, social and family problems. Some problems found in other adolescents feel hurt because the problem solving is not in accordance with what is expected, often use abusive language to make people not confident so it is difficult to express opinions, often skip school, trauma because they have been bullied so it is difficult to socialize with anyone, trauma because they experience violence in the family and result in families experiencing separation between children and parents, of course, this can interfere with mental health in Sei Nagalawan village teenagers

Teenagers in Sei Nagalawan Village have never received information about mental health. They still don't believe that mental health matters. When teenagers encounter something that stresses them out, they often don't solve the problem and always ignore it. The Adolescent

Information and Counseling Center or commonly called PIK-R is an organization under the auspices of the National Family Planning Population Board (BKKBN) is a forum formed for the activities of the Generasi TPlanning (GENRE) program, an lembaga or organization that focuses on providing services and support for adolescents. The general purpose of Pik-R is to help adolescents overcome problems and challenges faced by adolescents during the adolescent development phase.

Sei Nagalawan Village is a village located in Perbaungan District, Serdang Bedagai Regency. Since 2017 this village has been officially given a decree as a family planning village and has several organizations and several activities in it, including the Sei Nagalawan village PIK-R which was established in 2017 until now, many activities carried out by the Sei Nagalawan village PIK-R organization include providing information and counseling services on life planning for adolescents, providing information and socialization about early marriage, the impact of drug use, postponement of marriage age (PUP), reproductive health, dangers of free sex and pornography and building a more positive self-concept. PIK-R Sei Nagalawan Village has a systematically arranged organizational structure such as the person in charge, coach, chairman, secretary, other fields and teenagers of Sei Nagalawan Village.

Based on the description and phenomena that have been conveyed, it is necessary to have a study on the implementation of peer counselors in adolescents aimed at providing mental health strengthening to adolescents in the Pik-R organization of Sei Nagalawan village. It is assumed that peer counselors are one alternative that can be used to help solve adolescent problems so that adolescents are expected to have strong mental health to solve their problems independently in the future,

METHOD

This research was conducted on PIK-R adolescents of Sei Nagalawan Village, Perbaungan District where this research used qualitative descriptive with classical guidance of case study techniques. The qualitative description approach was chosen for the deep understanding and implementation of peer counselors in mental reinforcement at the location studied. According to Bogdan and Biklen in Sugiyono (2020: 7), the descriptive qualitative research method is the collection of data in the form of pictures or words so that it does not emphasize numbers. Once analyzed, this data is then described so that others can understand it easily.

With data collection techniques from observations, interviews and documentation.

1. Observation: Make face-to-face observations to the PIK-R of Sei Nagalawaan Village, Pik-R advisors and cadres of Sei Nagalawan Village where the researcher obtained the overall situation.
2. Interview: Conduct Q&A to the person in charge of Pik-R, the Chairman, several teenagers and cadres of Sei Nagalawan Village.
3. Documentation: Collecting data in the form of photos, writings and videos.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

With regard to the description of the mechanism for implementing peer counselors in strengthening mental health at the Sei Nagalawan Village Pik-r. According to interviews with 10 teenagers, 2 cadres and 1 PLKB of Sei Nagalawan Village said that usually guidance and counseling are only obtained in the school environment, but in recent years since the presence of the Pik-r organization which is a forum for adolescents so that adolescents can express themselves and can also do counseling. The Pik-R organization in Sei Nagawalan Village itself was formed by the KB counseling center of Perbaungan District in 2017 and then coincided with the existence of a KB village in Sei Nagalawan Village.

Information obtained from PLKB (Family Planning Field Officer) who said that the Adolescent Information and Counseling Center (PIK-R) program is one of the proud programs that focuses on adolescent development, where adolescents need direction and guidance that they do not get at home, this Pik-R is a forum for adolescents to express themselves and their place to find solutions to the problems faced, planning for the future and gaining knowledge about healthy living for adolescents. Pik-R Sei Nagalawan Village has various activities such as competitions, socialization about reproductive health, a place for teenagers for counseling, education on the dangers of drugs, education on sexually transmitted diseases in adolescents and training or socialization of peer counselors

The role of Pik-R Sei Nagalawan Village towards the younger generation covers various aspects related to welfare and development:

1. Information Provision: PIK-R provides relevant and reliable information to the younger generation about the various problems they face. Such as reproductive health, sex education, drugs, mental health, interpersonal relationships, and others.
2. Counseling: PIK-R provides counseling services to young people who need support in dealing with personal, emotional, social, or family problems. PIK-R counselors help teens find solutions to their problems.
3. Prevention: PIK-R helps prevent problems commonly faced by adolescents, such as teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, risky behavior, and mental health disorders, I will fulfill. PIK-R can provide information, training, and support to help adolescents avoid such risky behaviors.
4. Health Education: PIK-R organizes health education programs for young

people to strengthen their understanding of the importance of maintaining physical, mental, and emotional health. These programs may cover topics such as reproductive health, healthy lifestyle habits, and social skills.

5. Social Support: PIK-R provides a platform for adolescents to receive social support from counselors and adolescent peers. Through discussion forums, support groups, and other social activities, young people can feel supported and share experiences and ideas with others who have experienced similar experiences.
6. Advocacy: PIK-R can act as an advocate for young people who demand the following rights: For example: the right to proper education, access to safe and affordable health services, protection from violence and exploitation, etc.

Mental health problems that often occur among adolescents in Sei Nagalawan Village are as follows:

1. Juvenile delinquency that occurs in the form of fights between groups, taunting each other.
2. Low discipline, such as skipping school, being late for school, not doing schoolwork, being late for submitting assignments, wearing uniforms not according to regulations, arriving late for organizational meetings.
3. Feeling irritable, irritable, having excessive worry, and unable or difficult to be confident.
4. When experiencing failure, both in friendship problems to teenage romance, it often appears to hurt yourself.

The results of interviews and observations made by researchers to several

adolescents assisted by Pik-R Sei Nagalawan Village and also the advisor of PIK-R itself said that at first they already knew the news circulating about mental health that occurs a lot today in adolescents, but had never done peer counselors so that researchers carried out peer counselor implementation activities in strengthening mental health in Sei Nagalawan Village pik-r, where researchers design various activities carried out to be able to implement and apply peer counselors at the Sei Nagalawan Village PIK-r where researchers provide information in the form of classical services that are considered capable of providing education about peer counselors and mental health, researchers explain what are the negative effects of poor mental health on adolescents and provide education about peer counselors, Azaz that must be applied first, providing guidance and techniques on how to do peer counseling, playing and problem solving where participants pair up as listeners / advisors called counselors and people who have problems so that the problem wants to be solved is commonly called counseling.

The general purpose of implementation or practice is carried out as a medium for teenagers in Sei Nagalawan Village to learn to solve problems faced, have empathy for something that happens around them, and provide feedback to their peers. As according to Satrcok (2012), adolescents are more open about sensitive and personal things with their friends. With the presence of peer counselors in adolescents pik-r Sei Nagalawan Village makes them able to solve problems, able to express their hearts so that if there are friends who have problems they are able to open up to each other and provide advice, input to find solutions to the problems they are facing. Gunarti (2018) said that when adolescents are able to make themselves feel comfortable in the midst of uncomfortable situations, can go through difficulties and rise from the difficulties faced, then adolescents are considered able to adapt. One of the characteristics of adolescents who

have good and healthy mental health is adolescents who are able to adapt and adjust themselves.

The following are the results of research conducted by researchers through several series to implement peer counselors and interview results after the implementation of peer counselors in strengthening mental health in Sei Nagalawan Village.

1. Have the support and understanding of others

According to one of the teenagers assisted by pik-r Sei Nagalawan Village, where teenagers will be more comfortable talking about personal to peers than adults, so the implementation of this seabaya counselor can provide emotional support and understanding because it is easy to understand each other's experiences and feelings.

2. Bringing positivity to teenagers

Meanwhile, according to other adolescents, peer counselors who successfully overcome problems or difficulties can be an inspiration to other adolescents. They can be positive examples of how to deal with challenges, solve problems, and take the right decisions.

3. Comfort and Trust

The chairman of pik-r said that the implementation of peer counselors carried out was able to provide comfort and mutual trust to peers, because in the element of peer counseling

there is a principle of confidentiality.

4. Improved Social and Emotional Skills

Having a peer counselor among adolescents can help adolescents develop social and emotional skills such as empathy, active listening, and effective communication skills. This can help them in building healthy relationships with others.

With the implementation of peer counselors and the role of the adolescent counseling information center, it can help individuals and groups of adolescents to obtain very clear information, so that development in adolescents is more directed towards positive things able to embrace each other in solving all the similarities they face. Thus, adolescents in Sei Nagalawan village will have strong mental health to deal with various existing problems and with the existence of mental health services, in the future adolescents will understand better to maintain and control mental health in themselves.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of observations and interviews that have been conducted by peer counselors in strengthening the mental health of adolescents in Sei Nagalawan village, it can be concluded that mental health is the main key in all circles, especially adolescents, the existence of peer counselors is expected to be able to provide solutions for adolescents who are always reluctant and always harbor problems that individuals experience so that adolescents have solutions in expressing their hearts and solving problems that they face, until in the end the teenagers / individuals will have a strong mentality and emotional that they can overcome by themselves, have a sense of empathy for each other and the implementation of peer counselors

Sei Nagalawan village teenagers have been able to implement to solve problems faced by individuals and groups, so that the existence of peer counselor services for Sei Nagalawan village adolescents is one of the effective steps because Able to improve welfare, increase self-confidence in individuals / groups for current and future young generations.

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