
Group Counseling with the Motivational Interviewing Technique to Alleviate Students' Mild Depression Symptoms

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ABSTRACT: Depression is a common phenomenon in Indonesia, particularly among adolescents. Many teenagers today suffer from mild to severe depression as a result of stress from both internal and external factors, which can lead to mental problems and even suicidal thoughts. This fact can be seen from the results of the pretest conducted on students in class 11 Mathematics and Natural Sciences 3, which resulted in eight students who have mild depression categories. Therefore, an effort should be made to reduce the level of depression symptoms by providing group counseling using motivational interviewing techniques so that the level of depression symptoms does not rise to the severe depression level. This study aims to see how effective group counseling with the motivational interviewing technique is in helping class 11 Mathematics and Natural Science 3 of State Islamic High School 2 Bandar Lampung students overcome mild symptoms of depression. This study employed a pre-experimental research method with a one-group pretest-posttest design. The data-collecting techniques employed were questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documentation. The purposive sampling technique was utilized to select eight students as the sample from class 11 Mathematics and Natural Sciences 3. The treatment consisted of six meetings, including pretests and posttests. The results revealed a pretest score of 263 with an average of 32.8 and a posttest score of 151 with an average of 18.8. There is a noticeable difference after receiving group counseling with motivational interviewing technique. The results of the T-test and N-gain indicated a decrease in the level of depression experienced by students, as seen by the pretest and posttest scores.

Keywords: Group Counseling, Motivational Interviewing, Mild Depression.



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INTRODUCTION

Depression in Indonesia is not a new phenomenon, particularly among adolescents. Depression is a mood condition that is becoming more prevalent in modern culture. Previous research indicates that there are about 300,000 patients with depression in Hong Kong. According to the World Health Organization, about 100 million individuals worldwide suffer from depression, but less than 25% have undergone therapy. Depression is a classical disorder characterized by depressive symptoms lasting at least two weeks, but usually much longer, and having significant cognitive abnormalities.

Depression is the primary cause of a person's constant fatigue and inability to engage in activities. Grasa and Kirchenbaum in Abi Zaid define depression as long-term sadness combined by feelings of worthlessness. Many adolescents have suffered from depression caused by both social and familial influences.

According to Mappiare, adolescence occurs between the ages of 12 and 21 for female and 13 to 22 for male. This phase is a transformation or transition from infancy to adulthood that encompasses biological, psychological, and social changes. In most communities and cultures, adolescence begins between 10 and 13 and concludes between 18 and 22.

According to an American study on depression symptoms, early teenagers aged 11 to 13 are more likely to experience mild depression than adolescents aged 14 to 18. According to Prat and Brody, the problems triggering depression in adolescents are typically associated with a loss of confidence in their physical appearance. Most adolescents are unprepared to face the challenges they confront, which contributes to the formation of depressive symptoms.

Several factors contribute to adolescent depression, including genetic, biochemical, environmental, and psychological variables. Negative life events experienced in the school setting, like being bullied and an inability to make compatible companions, are both risk factors for depression. In addition to some of the previously mentioned factors, family circumstances can be a risk factor for depression.

Depression starts with a negative perception of stressors, followed by an accumulation of stressors that exacerbate the condition, such as self-harm and suicide. Depression is an emotional state that includes melancholy, helplessness, hopelessness, and a loss of passion for life.

Rahmawati and Rahmayanti discovered some common depression symptoms among adolescents, including being irritable, depressed, scared, lacking enthusiasm, and feeling sad about disagreements with friends and family. A depressed individual has a depressed mood (such as melancholy, emptiness, hopelessness, and so on), loses interest in daily activities, loses appetite, suffers from trouble sleeping, and may even consider suicide. Poor mental health can cause a range of issues, including interference with activities, low inner confidence, and trouble achieving life goals. Mental health issues can also cause depression. Depression is the most common mental disease among young individuals.

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According to Endriyani's research, Southeast Asia has the highest rate of depression, with 86.94 (27%) of 322 billion people. According to WHO, Indonesia ranks fifth in terms of depression incidence rate (3.7%). Indonesia's incidence of depression among those over the age of 15 is 6.1%, with a higher incidence in the province of Central Sulawesi (12.3%). Depression cases suggest that adolescents are more vulnerable to depression. Adolescents can experience desperation at school, at home, or neighborhood.

This study employs observation and questionnaires for students. Observations are data collection techniques that involve going directly to the research site. On the other hand, the questionnaire is a data-collecting technique that contains questions that respondents will complete. A study at State Islamic High School 2 Bandar Lampung discovered eight students who exhibited mild depression symptoms, such as sadness, lack of enthusiasm, poor appetite, loss of interest in activities, inability to sleep or sleep too much, and being very irritable. The symptoms revealed are consistent with the theory provided in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual Of Mental Disorder -V, and the results were acquired by distributing Diagnostic and Statistical Manual Of Mental Disorder -V Level 2 questionnaires at State Islamic High School 2 Bandar Lampung.

Baiq Nurainun, Apriani Idris, Irwan Hadi, Anwar Wardi Warongan, and Nana Supriyatna conducted an earlier study on the effectiveness of counseling with a motivational interviewing (MI) technique in lowering depression in post-stroke depression (PSD) patients. The difference between this previous study and the current study is the focused issue. Furthermore, Difly Praise Malelak researched the role of counseling in overcoming depression in adolescents aged 10 to 24. This research shares similarities in dealing with depression problems; however, Malelak did not employ motivational Interview techniques.

Based on the issues above, the researchers conducted research on the effectiveness of group counseling with motivational interviewing techniques to overcome mild depression symptoms of State Islamic High School 2 Bandar Lampung students. The formulation of the problem is whether group counseling with motivational interviewing techniques is effective in overcoming mild depression symptoms of State Islamic High School 2 Bandar Lampung students.

The researchers interviewed the guidance and counseling teacher at State Islamic High School 2 Bandar Lampung. He stated that there was a history of students suffering from mild to severe depression, although cases of severe depression have been sent to a psychiatrist. The counseling teacher is only authorized to treat moderate depression cases whose symptoms have not persisted for more than two weeks.

Based on preliminary research, questionnaires were distributed using a depression questionnaire from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-V (DSM-V) Level-2 containing 14 items. Based on class 11 Mathematics and Natural Sciences 3 data, comprising 36 students, 18 did not exhibit depressive symptoms, with a total score of 14-31 and a T-score of 31.7-54.8. Eight students revealed mild depression symptoms, with a total score of 32-37 and a T-score of 55.6-59.1. Ten students reported moderate depression symptoms, with a total score of 38-53

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and a T-score of 59.8-69.7. Furthermore, 0 learners reported having severe depression symptoms, with a total score of 54-70 and a T-score of 70.4-86.6.

In this study, the researchers used group counseling to solve the same problem for multiple individuals. According to Pauline Harrison, group therapy involves four to eight counselees meeting with one or two counselors.

Counseling groups share the same reasons and goals. Group counseling is used to address the same problem. Consequently, they started a depression group to allow victims to share their experiences and provide encouragement and support to others.

In this study, the researchers employed the motivational interviewing technique during group counseling. Lumongga defines group counseling as individual aid in preventative and restorative groups. Motivational interviewing is a technique that prioritizes individuals' abilities and capabilities. The belief is that through motivation, individuals can develop effective solutions to issues in their lives.

In Mulawarman, Arkowitz and Miller suggested that these skills are useful for assisting the counselees in awakening their internal motivation and developing a constructive relationship with the counselor.

Motivational interviewing has never been employed to implement State Islamic High School 2 Bandar Lampung counseling services. Instead, several counseling strategies, such as assertiveness, scaling, self-talk, and so on, have been used. However, the researchers were interested in utilizing the motivational interviewing technique and incorporating it with relevant theories.

METHODS

This study employed the quantitative research method. According to Kasiram, a quantitative method is a process of knowledge discovery that employs numerical data to analyze information. Variables are typically measured using research instruments, allowing numerical data to be examined using statistical procedures. Consequently, quantitative data analysis utilizing statistical approaches is one of the most important steps in this type of study.

This study employed a quantitative experimental approach with a pre-experimental research design. Experimental research examines the effect of independent variables (treatment) on dependent variables (results) under controlled conditions. The researchers' design for this study is a one-group pretest-posttest design, which is a research design with two measurements, one before and one after treatment.

The target population was State Islamic High School 2 Bandar students in class 11 Mathematics and Natural Sciences 3. According to interviews with counseling teachers, numerous students

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displayed symptoms of depression. There were 36 students in class 11 Mathematics and Natural Sciences 3, and the sample size was eight.

According to the results of the pretest utilizing the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual Of Mental Disorder -V Level 2 questionnaire, eight students had mild depression symptoms, as shown in Table 1 below:

Table.1
Students with Mild Depression Symptoms

No	Gender	Initials	Score	T-score	Categories of Depression Symptoms
1	Male	ADZ	32	55.6	Mild
2	Female	APS	33	56.3	Mild
3	Male	JNC	33	56.3	Mild
4	Male	MKZ	33	56.3	Mild
5	Male	RNPW	33	56.3	Mild
6	Male	RYC	34	57	Mild
7	Female	WAS	32	55.6	Mild
8	Male	ZSRPI	33	56.3	Mild
Total = 263					
Average = 32,8 %					

Table 1 shows eight students in class 11 Mathematics and Natural Sciences 3 who had mild symptoms of depression. The researchers then treated depression symptoms with group counseling using the motivational interviewing technique.

The research sample consisted of eight students of class 11 Mathematics and Natural Sciences 3 selected based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual Of Mental Disorder -V Level 2 questionnaire, ranging in age from 11 to 17. Following the pretest and posttest, the researchers used a T-test to assess students' changes before and after group counseling.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study used motivational interviewing to conduct group counseling. According to Prayitno, counseling is a group-based individual service. Furthermore, motivational interviewing is a technique for increasing motivation. This study took place at State Islamic High School 2 Bandar Lampung in class 11 Mathematics and Natural Sciences 3 between April and May of 2024. Students received group counseling to alleviate symptoms of mild depression using the motivational interviewing technique and worksheet. To collect the data, this study employed a questionnaire with Likert scale options, a psychometric scale used in questionnaires with options 1-5. This scale assessed students' feelings and symptoms of mild depression. Measurement occurred at the beginning (pretest) and end (posttest). Eight students carried out the group

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counseling. The questionnaire provided used the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual Of Mental Disorder-V Level 2.

The research was conducted in six meetings, including a pretest and a posttest, with group counseling utilizing the motivational interviewing technique. By offering treatment, students' behavior changes would be observed. Table 2 shows the posttest results:

Table. 2
The Posttest Results of Students with Mild Symptoms of Depression

No.	Gender	Initials	Score	T-score	Categories of Depression Symptoms
1	Male	ADZ	20	43,8	No Symptoms
2	Female	APS	20	43,8	No Symptoms
3	Male	JNC	18	40, 6	No Symptoms
4	Male	MKZ	20	43, 8	No Symptoms
5	Male	RNPW	19	42, 4	No Symptoms
6	Male	RYC	16	36,9	No Symptoms
7	Female	WAS	20	43,8	No Symptoms
8	Male	ZSRPI	18	40, 6	No Symptoms
Total = 151					
Average = 18,8 %					

Based on Table 2, the posttest results of group counseling utilizing the motivational interviewing technique show that eight students did not show symptoms of depression, with an average score of 18.8%.

After the treatment, the difference between the pretest and posttest may be seen in the following N-gain table:

Table. 3
The Data of Pretest, Posttest, N-Gain Score

No	Initial	Pretest	Posttest	Gain score (N-Gain)
1	ADZ	32	20	12
2	APS	33	20	13
3	JNC	33	18	15
4	MKZ	33	20	13
5	RNPW	33	19	14
6	RYC	34	16	18
7	WAS	32	20	12

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8	ZSRPI	33	18	15
Σ (Total)		263	151	112
Average		32,8	18,8	14

Table 3 shows that the average pretest and posttest scores declined ($32.8 \geq 18.8$). Therefore, based on the average score, it was possible to infer that group counseling with motivational interviewing techniques for overcoming mild depression symptoms was successful in lowering students' mild depression symptoms. The following is an overview of the decrease in students' mild depression symptoms based on pretest and posttest findings.

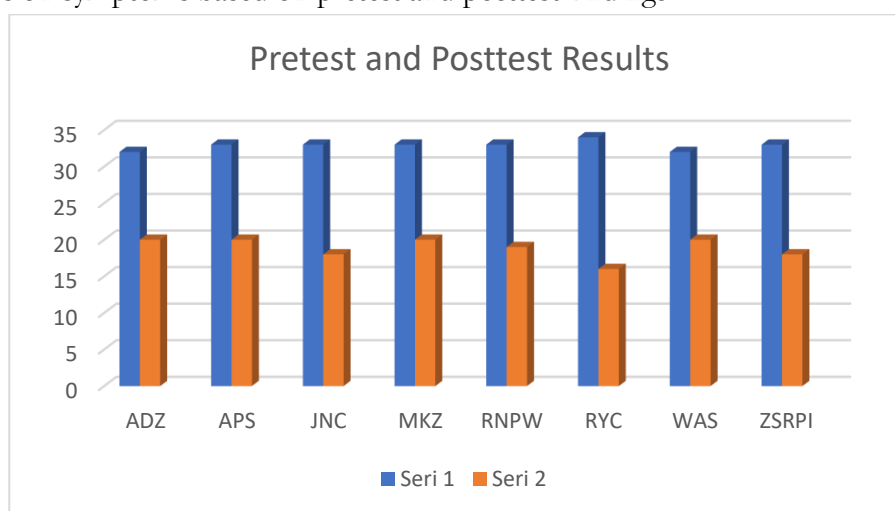


Figure. 1

The Results of Pretest and Posttest Using the Group Counselling with Motivational Interviewing Technique

Figure 1 shows a significant decrease in mild depression before and after treatment, namely ADZ $20 < 32$, APS $20 < 33$, JNC $28 < 33$, MKZ $20 < 33$, RNPW $19 < 33$, $16 < 34$, $16 < 34$, $20 < 32$, and $18 < 33$.

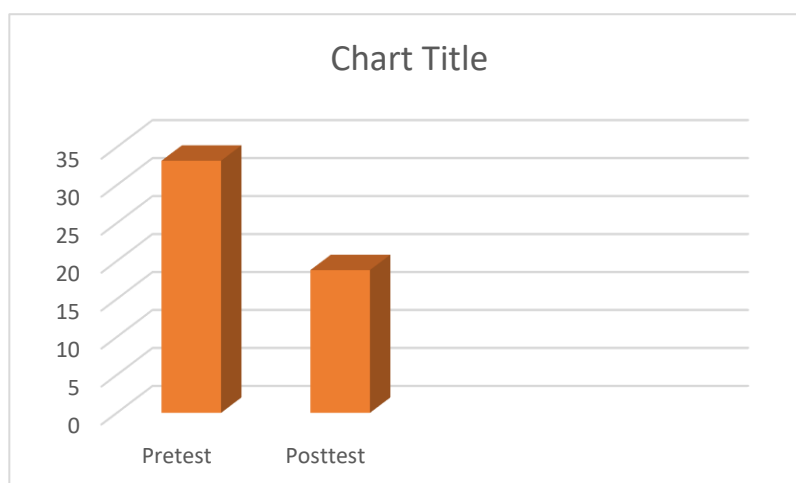


Figure. 2

The Comparison of the Average Score Before and After Treatment

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Figure 3 illustrates the average decrease in mild depression symptoms among students ($18, 8 \leq 32.2$). According to the average comparison in the Figure above, group counseling with the motivational interviewing technique was beneficial in treating mild depressive symptoms among students at State Islamic High School 2 Bandar Lampung.

This study employed the paired sample t-test to determine if the average of a sample can reflect the population. Then, using group counseling with the motivational interviewing technique to overcome students' mild depression symptoms, calculations using SPSS 22 produced the following outcomes:

Table. 4
The Outcome of Paired Sample T-test on Pretest and Posttest Data

Pair		Paired Differences				T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
1	Pretest - Posttest	14,00000	2,00000	,70711	12,32796	15,67204	19,799	7	,000

The paired sample t-test results in Table 4 show a t-value of 19.799 and a mean of 14.00000, with a 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference (lower of 12.32796 and upper of 15.67204). The $t_{observed}$ was compared to the $t_{critical}$ ($0,05 = 1,89$) on the degree of freedom of $df = 7$. Therefore, the $t_{observed}$ value of 19,799 is higher than 1,89. The sig value (2-tailed) of 0,00 is lower than 0,05. Therefore, H_a is accepted, and H_o is rejected. So, it is possible to conclude that the symptoms of mild depression experienced by students differ after receiving group counseling treatment with the motivational interviewing technique. Based on the data presented above, group counseling with the motivational interviewing technique is successful in addressing mild depression symptoms of State Islamic High School 2 Bandar Lampung students.

This study took place at State Islamic High School 2 Badar Lampung in class 11 Mathematics and Natural Sciences 3. The study was conducted between April and May of 2024. The students received group counseling to alleviate symptoms of mild depression, with the motivational interviewing technique and worksheets. To collect the data, this study used a questionnaire instrument in the form of Likert scale options (1-5), which measured students' feelings and symptoms of mild depression. The measurements were taken at the beginning (pretest) and the end (posttest). Eight students participated in the group counseling. The questionnaire distributed was the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual Of Mental Disorder -V Level 2.

The pretest results will then be treated for six meetings between the start of the pretest and the posttest. The duration of each meeting was 45 minutes. The students actively participated in group counseling meetings by asking and answering questions. Group counseling was conducted using worksheet media. The students were required to write down apparent behavioral changes at each meeting. The pretest scores were 263, with an average of 32.8, while

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the posttest scores were 151, with an average of 18.8. There was a noticeable difference after receiving group counseling with the motivational interviewing technique.

This study performed a t-test in the hypothesis testing, yielding a t_{observed} value of 19.799 and comparing it to the t_{critical} ($0.05 = 1.98$). The t_{observed} is greater than the t_{critical} ($19.799 \geq 1.98$); therefore, H_a is accepted. The result demonstrates that there is a difference between being given group counseling with the motivational interviewing technique. Thus, there is a decrease in mild depression symptoms experienced by students in class 11 Mathematics and Natural Sciences 3 of State Islamic High School 2 Bandar Lampung after being treated with group counseling with the motivational interviewing technique.

The limitation of this study occurred in the first meeting when the students could not freely express their feelings. However, the researcher provided an understanding related to the principle of confidentiality in the counseling and guidance process. After that, the students conveyed their feelings more openly to researchers.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data and interpreting it, the researchers concluded. Based on the problem formulation, group counseling with the motivational interviewing technique is useful in treating students' mild depression. Group counseling characterizes itself by students' comprehension of depression and its symptoms, as well as their willingness to discuss, ask questions, and express their opinions. It is evidenced by the results of the t-test and N-gain on the pretest and posttest data, which reveal a decrease in the level of depression experienced by students to the category of no symptoms.

The pretest resulted in a score of 263 with an average of 32.8 and a posttest score of 151 with an average of 18.8. Therefore, there was a difference after group counseling treatment with the motivational interviewing technique. Based on the paired sample t-test, the t_{observed} value was 19.799 and then compared to the t_{critical} value of $0.05 = 1.98$. The t_{observed} value was greater than the t_{critical} ($19.799 \geq 1.98$). Therefore, H_a was accepted, which explains that group counseling with the motivational interviewing technique was effective for overcoming mild depression symptoms in class 11 Mathematics and Natural Sciences 3 of State Islamic High School 2 Bandar Lampung.

Future researchers who study the treatment of students' mild depression should employ mixed-method research methodologies to be more thorough in dealing with mild depression-related issues.

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