



Training in Depression Symptom Recognition and Positive Thinking to Prevent Suicide

Dwi Arimbi Setia Ningrum^{1*}, Ainayya Alfatihah Putri¹, Ratri Ayu Pranawengrum¹, Alphecca Carinae Brigianto¹, Nina Zulida Situmorang¹

¹Program Studi Magister Sains Psikologi, Fakultas Psikologi, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

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Corresponding Author:
Dwi Arimbi Setia Ningrum
dwiarimbi34@gmail.com

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Abstract: Suicide is a complex phenomenon often associated with depression, local myths, and limited mental health services. Gunungkidul Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta, has a high suicide rate, often associated with the myth of pulung gantung. Depression is a major factor, exacerbated by the lack of access to mental health services and low public health literacy. This study aims to increase community awareness about the symptoms of depression, provide education about positive thinking to prevent depression and suicide, and develop an intervention strategy based on education and discussion. The method used in this study is quantitative method. Pretest and post-test data were analyzed to evaluate changes in participants' knowledge of depressive symptoms and the importance of positive thinking after the training. The results of paired sample t-test analysis showed a significant increase in depression and positive thinking variables after the training. The mean depression score increased from 65 (pre-test) to 94 (post-test) with a t value = -14.447 and significance <0.001 (p<0.01). The mean value of the positive thinking variable also increased from 66 to 95 with a t value = -21.244 and significance <0.001 (p<0.01). This study proves that psycho education training in Wareng Village is effective in improving people's understanding of the symptoms of depression and the importance of positive thinking.

Keywords: Depression, Mental Health, Positive Thinking, Psychoeducation, Suicide.

Introduction

Suicide is often a decision made by individuals who feel unable to cope with various pressures in life. This act is seen as a last resort to solve problems or as a form of escape from burdens that are felt to be too heavy. One region in Indonesia that is often in the spotlight due to its high suicide rate is Gunungkidul Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta. This area has a long history of recurring suicide cases every year (Hakim et al., 2023). This training was conducted in Wareng Village, Gunungkidul, as an effort to understand and tackle the high number of suicide cases in the area. According to (Mulyani & Eridiana, 2018), suicide cases in Gunungkidul can be likened to an iceberg phenomenon: only the tip is visible, while the base is much larger. The recorded suicide data most likely only covers cases that have been successfully handled, while there are still many other cases that may not have been detected or handled by health workers or the police. Suicide in

Gunungkidul Regency is often associated with the myth of pulung gantung. Most of the local community still believes that a person's act of hanging themselves is caused by the influence of pulung gantung. This myth describes a phenomenon in the form of an object resembling a large ball of fire with a red light that floats in the night sky. According to local beliefs, houses that are illuminated by this light are believed to lead their inhabitants to the decision to end their lives by hanging themselves (Safitri, 2022).

In addition to the myth of Pulung Gantung, which is often associated with suicide, depression is also a major factor behind such acts. Dr. Dyah Prasetyorini, chair of the Indonesian Medical Association (IDI) in Gunungkidul, stated that depression is the main cause of suicide, which is often overlooked by family and the surrounding community (May, 2024). According to Andari (2017), one of the simplest methods chosen by those who commit suicide is to take their own lives. It is as if there is no hope for life or desire to continue

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fighting. Suicide is considered a solution for those experiencing depression, distortion, or cultural transition. Psychology and psychiatry also play a significant role. Schizophrenia and depression are considered causes of suicide.

Limited access to mental health services in Gunungkidul Regency, especially in Wareng Village, exacerbates this situation. People suffering from depression and mental disorders do not receive adequate treatment because there are no mental health facilities and sufficient professionals. In addition, there are no adequate education programs to improve mental health literacy in the community. Poor knowledge and understanding of depression and other mental disorders are very dangerous for those who experience them and the community as a whole. Strong, uncontrolled, and irrational emotional instability has the potential to develop into emotional disorders in the future, one of which is depression (Tuasikal & Retnowati, 2019). Lubis (2016), depression is a mental disorder that often occurs in society, which usually starts from stress that is not handled properly and develops into depression. Andari (2018), prolonged depression can increase a person's risk of wanting to commit suicide, because they think that suicide is the solution. Depression can be simply defined as a painful experience, namely a feeling of hopelessness (Lubis, 2016).

Based on interviews with Nafi'atul M.U as Head of P2P (Disease Prevention and Control), it was found that many people come to health centers complaining of depression. Screening results in a number of schools also showed that teachers experience depression and have suicidal thoughts but hide them from others. Many people have the potential to commit suicide, but many of them are unaware of it.

This is supported by the results of research conducted by Andari (2014), which found that the most common and frequently encountered reason why someone might commit suicide is depression. The type of suicide that occurs in Gunungkidul tends to be egoistic, which is suicide committed by someone who feels that their own interests are greater than the interests of their social group. High rates of egoistic suicide can be found in communities or groups where individuals do not interact well within broader social units. Therefore, a comprehensive approach is needed to understand the early symptoms of depression and reduce the high suicide rate in Kapanewon Wonosari.

Providing education about mental health is an important step in preventing various mental health problems and their impacts. According to Sirait (Hafidz et al., 2024), a lack of understanding and knowledge about mental health is one of the main factors that trigger these problems. Education plays a significant role in providing understanding about how to prevent

and overcome mental health disorders. In addition to providing psychoeducation about the symptoms of depression, the author will also provide psychoeducation about positive thinking. Positive thinking psychoeducation is a treatment to reduce the symptoms of depression. Positive thinking is a way of thinking that emphasizes a positive perspective and emotions towards oneself, others, and circumstances (Elfiky, 2009). Seligman (2006) people who think positively tend to see their problems as temporary, manageable, and specific to one situation. Conversely, people who think negatively believe that their problems will last a long time and cannot be handled. The main objectives of this education are to increase public awareness of the importance of psychological health, reduce the stigma attached to mental disorders, and equip the public with the skills and support necessary to maintain optimal mental health.

Method

The method used in this study is a quantitative method, which focuses on measuring and analyzing cause-and-effect relationships between variables using numerical data analyzed through statistical methods. This approach produces measurable information based on data that forms the basis of analysis, prioritizing samples as the basis for drawing conclusions and the accuracy of instruments in measuring variables as indicators of the accuracy of results. In this study, the quantitative method was used to measure changes in participants' understanding of depression symptoms and positive thinking through data collection before and after the intervention, which was then statistically analyzed to produce valid and objective conclusions.

The research subjects were 30 residents of Wareng Village, consisting of 27 women and 3 men. Most of the female participants were housewives, while the male participants generally worked as heads of households. The participants' ages ranged from 22 to 60 years old. The participants were asked to fill out a screening questionnaire to detect mental health disorders based on symptoms experienced in the last 30 days before participating in the activity.

The research procedure began with initial data collection through a pretest, in which participants filled out a questionnaire to measure their initial knowledge of depression symptoms and the importance of positive thinking. Next, training was conducted, which included psycho education, interactive discussions, and hands-on practices such as relaxation techniques, aimed at improving participants' understanding of the topic. After the training, participants filled out the same questionnaire again in a post-test to evaluate changes in their understanding. Data from the pre-test and post-test

were then analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the training based on the increase in average scores.

Result and Discussion

The participants in this activity were 30 residents of Wareng Village, consisting of 27 women and 3 men. Most female participants were housewives, while the male participants were heads of households. The participants' ages ranged from 22 to 60 years old. Prior to the training activity, participants were asked to complete a screening questionnaire to detect mental health disorders based on symptoms experienced in the last 30 days. Based on the questionnaire results, out of 30 respondents, 2 people, namely ANA with a score of 10 and SN with a score of 7, were indicated to have mental health problems. Meanwhile, the other 28 respondents were declared normal.

The results of this screening form the basis for designing a training program aimed at improving participants' understanding of the symptoms of depression and their ability to think positively. This program has demonstrated significant effectiveness, as evidenced by the results of data analysis using a paired sample t-test. To evaluate the results of implementing the training program on increasing knowledge of depression symptoms and the importance of positive thinking, the mean total scores for participants' understanding of depression symptoms and the importance of positive thinking were calculated for the pretest and posttest.

Table 1. Results of Statistical Calculation of Depression Symptoms

	Paired Sample Test				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
Pre-test	-29.333	11.121	-14.447	29	.000
Post-test					

Table 2. Results of Statistical Calculation for Positive Thinking

	Paired Sample Test				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
Pre-test	-29.667	7.649	-21.244	29	.000
Post-test					

The table above shows that there was an increase in the average score for the depression variable before and after the training. The average pre-test score for participants was 65, which increased to 94 in the post-test results. In addition, a very significant difference was found between the total pre-test and post-test scores with a t-value of -14.447 and a significance level of <0.001

($p < 0.01$). Meanwhile, the average score on the positive thinking variable also showed an increase, from 66 on the pre-test to 95 on the post-test. This analysis showed a very significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores with a t-value of -21.244 and a significance level of <0.001 ($p < 0.01$). These results indicate that this training had a real impact on improving participants' understanding. This shows that the training program was effective in improving participants' understanding of the symptoms of depression and positive thinking skills.

Psychoeducation is one of the management strategies that can be applied in individual, family, and group settings that focus on educating psychological education of participants about various problems faced in life, helping others to be better able to develop various sources of support from their environment, and developing coping skills to manage various problems (Walsh, 2010). According to Natasubagyo & Kusrohmaniah (2019), psychoeducation on depression is mental health literacy that discusses depression so that it can help people deal with depression.

According to Natasubagyo & Kusrohmaniah (2019), it can be concluded that psychoeducation has an impact on increasing depression literacy. The group that received education showed greater improvement compared to the group that did not. Psychoeducation can be used as a flexible and easy strategy to improve depression literacy. In addition to psychoeducation about the symptoms of depression, this training also provides psycho education related to positive thinking as part of the treatment of depression symptoms.

Zulni & Koentjoro (2017) in the cognitive intervention process, positive thinking training provided through group methods is considered effective. The group approach allows subjects to practice arguing and speaking in groups. This approach is considered very helpful in creating openness and facilitating the learning process on all subjects. In positive thinking training, researchers teach participants to recognize the bad events they have experienced, negative thoughts or beliefs, and the consequences of these events.

Several studies show that positive thinking training can reduce depression levels. The results of research conducted by Kholidah & Alsa (2012) show that positive thinking training is significantly effective in reducing stress levels in students. The training uses a combination of various methods such as brainstorming, presentations, lectures with multimedia support, games, role-playing, the use of worksheets, homework, story sharing, and discussions. Research conducted by Nurasmı et al., (2024) shows that preventive psycho education that teaches positive thinking and relaxation training has been proven effective in reducing suicidal

ideation and attempts among adolescents in Gunungkidul. The program successfully reduced stress, anxiety, and depression levels among high school/vocational school students who participated, thereby significantly reducing the risk of suicidal ideation and attempts among adolescents.

During the process of identifying adverse events, participants learn to distinguish between adverse events that are their own responsibility and that they can change, and adverse events that are beyond their control (Nailul Muna et al., 2020). Overall, this training shows that participants' understanding of their mental health can be greatly improved with training that combines psycho education about depression symptoms and positive thinking. Through an interactive group approach, participants develop the ability to deal with life's obstacles in a more positive way. In addition, participants can learn how to identify and control negative thoughts. This supports the idea that psycho education has enormous potential to be used in various community settings to improve mental health and reduce the risk of mental illness, both as a prevention technique and as an intervention.

Conclusion

The training and psycho education activities carried out in Wareng Village, Gunungkidul, showed success in increasing community understanding of the symptoms of depression and the importance of positive thinking. The methods used, namely psycho education, interactive discussions, and relaxation practices, proved effective in delivering the material and increasing participants' post-test scores compared to their pre-test scores. Improved understanding of depression symptoms and the importance of positive thinking is expected to be the first step in preventing depression and suicide, especially in areas with high suicide rates such as Gunungkidul Regency. The presence of mental health cadres as liaisons between the community and mental health services also plays an important role in reducing stigma and improving mental health literacy.

The success of this program underscores the importance of community-based mental health education, as well as the need for further training for mental health cadres to support the sustainability and effectiveness of the program. In addition, the provision of community-based counseling facilities and additional educational materials, such as how to provide social support and help family members experiencing depression, is necessary to expand the impact of the program.

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