

Improving Adolescent Mental Health Through Self-Determination Training in Coastal Areas

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Abstract

Background: Environmental factors such as peer relationships, school environment, and internet usage significantly affect adolescent mental development. Adolescents with low self-determination may struggle to direct their lives and are more susceptible to negative environmental influences. Objective: This community service project aims to cultivate adolescents' ability to determine their own life direction and make autonomous decisions. Method: The activity took place in the coastal area of Pekanbaru City, Riau Province, involving 29 adolescents aged 12–18 from RW 11, Sri Meranti Village. It was conducted in three phases: education on adolescent mental health, self-determination training, and independent tasks focused on personal change. Results: The training led to increased knowledge of mental health and improved self-determination scores among participants. Impact: Adolescents could recognize their potential, plan short and long-term goals, and commit to self-improvement..

Keywords: Self-determination, Mental Health, Adolescents

A. INTRODUCTION

In the past decade, the prevalence of mental health issues among adolescents has increased. According to the Indonesian Basic Health Survey (Riskesdas, 2018), 9.8% of individuals aged 15 and above experienced emotional mental disorders, up from 6.1% in 2013 – translating to about 12 million people.

The Indonesia National Adolescent Mental Health Survey (I-NAMHS) found that 1 in 3 adolescents (15.5 million) reported mental health issues in the past year, and 1 in 20 (2.45 million) experienced psychiatric disorders. Common issues include anxiety (3.7%), major depression (1%), conduct disorders (0.9%), PTSD and ADHD (0.5% each) (FKKMK UGM, 2022). In Riau Province, emotional mental disorders affected 10.4% of people aged 15+, with Pekanbaru City having the highest prevalence.

Research by Elita et al. (2022) on 218 adolescents in the coastal region of Siak River revealed that 52.3% had normal mental health, 28.9% abnormal, and 18.8% borderline. Behavioral issues (28.4%) and emotional problems (26.1%) were most common.

One major contributing factor is smartphone overuse. Nearly all teenagers use smartphones daily, often before sleep, which negatively impacts sleep quality (Fitriana et al., 2021). According to APJII (2018), the highest internet use is among those aged 15–19, followed by 20–24 and 5–9 (Irfan et al., 2020).

While smartphones offer educational and social benefits (Amri et al., 2020), excessive use can lead to issues like social withdrawal, sleep disorders, violence, reduced creativity, poor academic performance, and diminished respect for parents.

Field experience in Sri Meranti showed that teens used smartphones for over six hours daily, leading to poor sleep, disobedience, procrastination, and verbal violence. Self-management is essential for teens to prioritize and manage time effectively. This program offered self-determination training as a promotive and preventive approach.

Self-determination involves identifying and achieving goals based on self-assessment and knowledge (Tamba, 2018). It is critical during adolescence, enabling independent thinking, decision-making, and actions (Hui & Tsang, 2012).

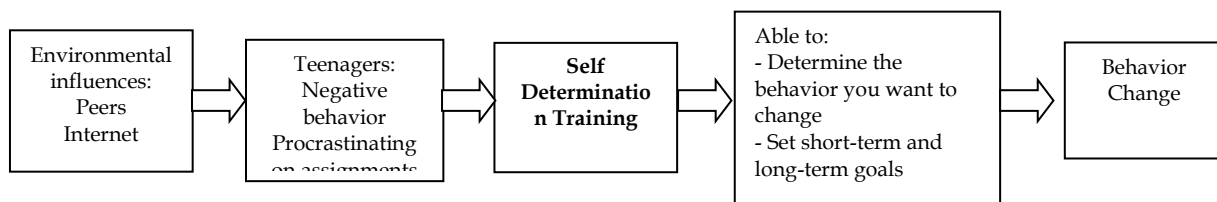


Chart 1. Framework for problem solving thinking

B. METHODS

Methods used:

Presentation and Q&A sessions

Delivered using accessible language and real-life examples. Post-presentation Q&A sessions helped gauge participant comprehension

Module Distribution

Participants received modules with instructions and worksheets.

Practice Sessions

Conducted in three sessions:

1. Self-reflection and recognizing potential
2. Planning short- and long-term goals using SMART methods
3. Creating a change plan

Participants were divided into four groups (7-8 members), each guided by a tutor and facilitator.

Evaluation

Tasks were assessed, and the best participants received rewards.

C. RESULTS

Table 1. Pre and Post Training Knowledge Scores

Training Stage	Participants	Total Score	Average Score
Before Training	29	1930	66,55
After Training		1950	67,24
Score Difference		20	0,69

Based on the assessment, the average score of participants' knowledge before education was 66.55, while the average score after training was 67.24. This means that there was an increase of 0.69 after receiving training.

Table 2. Self-Reflection Summary

Actions Taken	Thoughts and Feelings
Procrastination	Regret, self-harm awareness
Smartphone overuse	Regret, desire to change, poor sleep, missed prayers, incomplete schoolwork

Table 3. Self-Determination Assessment

Self-Determination Level	Before		After	
	F	%	F	%
- High	16	55	19	66
- Average	13	45	10	34
Total	29	100	29	100

The results indicate an 11% increase in participants with high self-determination.

Documentation of training



Photo. 1. Presentation of material on the Concept of Adolescent Mental Health



Photo. 2. Presentation of material on Self-Determination



Photo. 3 Participants fill out the pretest



Photos. 4 and 5. Participants fill out worksheets and discuss guided by tutors and facilitators and small groups.



Photo. 6 Door prizes for participants who can answer questions.



Photo 7. Evaluation activities



Photo 8. Prize distribution for participants with the best scores



The results obtained from this activity can be seen in table 1 and table 2, namely the change in attitude and an increase in the knowledge score about the concept of adolescent mental health. Likewise, with the self-determination score, there was an increase in the number of participants with high self-determination by 11%.

Based on the training results, there was an increase in both participants' knowledge of adolescent mental health and participants' self-determination scores. Adolescents were able to recognize their potential, make short-term and long-term plans in their lives and make commitments to the changes they wanted to make.

Self-determination is very important in the psychosocial development of adolescents. Self-determination theory is a derived approach to motivation that proposes three basic needs as predictors of optimal physiological, psychological and social functioning, namely autonomy, competence and connectedness to others. When individual needs are met satisfactorily, for example when individuals feel competent, have autonomy and relationships with others, individuals will feel strong and prosperous, which of course will reduce psychosocial problems and ultimately achieve a better level of health (Ryan & Deci, 2000 in Clermont, Paquette, Lalande & Dion, 2022).

According to Hui and Tsang (2012), independence and autonomy are important parts of adolescent development tasks, where adolescents want to make decisions and determine choices that are in line with their thoughts and beliefs. Furthermore, Stanton, Thomas, Jarbin and Mackay (2020), stated that adolescents need relationships with other people, peers, and caregivers so that they feel safe and supported. Adolescents also want to feel competent and have abilities in various aspects of their lives.

In addition to autonomy, relatedness or connection and competence, other aspects of self-determination are identity development and motivation. Griffin, Adams and Little (2017) concluded that self-determination theory is closely related to identity development, where self-determination helps adolescents determine direction in the process of identity formation. The stability of self-determination construction shows considerable continuity in adolescent experiences in the family, at school and at work. Furthermore, fulfilling the needs for relatedness, autonomy and competence will increase well-being and intrinsic motivation (Stanton, Thomas, Jarbin and Mackay, 2020).

Individuals who have high self-determination tend to act based on their interests, values and the goals they set, while low self-determination makes a person more focused on the pressures and expectations of their social environment (Vansteenkiste et al, 2010 in Clermont, Paquette, Lalande & Dion, 2022).

D. CONCLUSION

The self-determination training activity that was carried out generally went smoothly and achieved the expected results. There were 29 participants. Participants were very enthusiastic in asking and explaining about adolescent problems, healthy adolescent development and how to achieve this development. There was an increase in both participants' knowledge about adolescent mental health and participants' self-determination scores. The results of this community service are expected to have an impact on improving adolescent mental health. This activity can be followed up by the Umban Sari Health Center as a partner to be applied to other adolescents in the Umban Sari Health Center work area, Pekanbaru

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