Mental Resilience Optimization: A Screening and Educational Initiative Addressing Adolescent Hopelessness and Self-Harm Risks

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Abstract

Adolescents frequently encounter complex emotional pressures that can lead to a profound sense of hopelessness, which is a primary precursor to non-suicidal self-injury behaviors. This community service initiative aimed to mitigate despair and enhance psychological literacy among eleventh-grade students at SMAN 2 Jombang through a systematic screening and educational intervention. The program involved 40 participants selected via purposive sampling who demonstrated moderate baseline hopelessness. The one-day intensive session incorporated multimedia tools, including structured presentation slides, an educational video, and a printing pocket module focusing on hope-building strategies and adaptive coping mechanism simulations. Evaluation was conducted using pre-intervention and post-intervention assessments through the standard Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS; 20 items, scored 0–20) and a specialized self-harm risk awareness questionnaire. The latter was a pre-tested 15-item instrument utilizing a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree) to measure students' understanding of maladaptive behaviors. Baseline results indicated that 17.5% of students exhibited severe hopelessness, while 72.5% were in the moderate category. Following the intervention, a substantial shift occurred where 70% of participants reached the minimal-to-mild hopelessness level, and only 5% remained in the severe category. Furthermore, students' understanding of self-harm risks improved significantly, with the very high awareness group increasing from 5% to 30%. This educational initiative proved effective in strengthening adolescent psychological resilience, establishing empirical baseline data for the institution. It is recommended as a sustainable, school-based strategy by integrating screening tools into the annual guidance curriculum for early crisis detection.
Keywords: Adolescent Mental Health, Hopelessness, Self-Harm Prevention.

Abstrak

Remaja sering kali menghadapi tekanan emosional kompleks yang dapat memicu rasa putus asa mendalam, yang merupakan faktor pendahulu utama perilaku melukai diri sendiri tanpa niat bunuh diri (non-suicidal self-injury). Inisiatif pengabdian masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk mengurangi rasa putus asa dan meningkatkan literasi psikologis siswa kelas sebelas di SMAN 2 Jombang melalui skrining sistematis dan intervensi edukatif. Program ini melibatkan 40 peserta yang dipilih menggunakan teknik *purposive sampling* dan menunjukkan tingkat keputusasaan awal (awal) pada kategori sedang. Sesi intensif selama satu hari ini menggunakan berbagai media, termasuk slide presentasi terstruktur, video edukasi, dan modul saku cetak yang berfokus pada strategi membangun harapan serta simulasi mekanisme koping adaptif. Evaluasi dilakukan melalui penilaian sebelum dan sesudah intervensi menggunakan instrumen standar *Beck Hopelessness Scale* (BHS; 20 butir pernyataan, skor 0–20) dan kuesioner khusus mengenai kesadaran risiko melukai diri sendiri. Instrumen kedua ini terdiri dari 15 butir pernyataan yang telah diuji sebelumnya dan menggunakan skala Likert 4 poin (1 = Sangat Tidak Setuju hingga 4 = Sangat Setuju) untuk mengukur pemahaman siswa mengenai perilaku maladaptif. Hasil awal menunjukkan bahwa 17,5% siswa mengalami keputusasaan tingkat berat, sementara 72,5% berada pada kategori sedang. Setelah intervensi, terjadi perubahan signifikan di mana 70% peserta mencapai tingkat keputusasaan minimal hingga ringan, dan hanya 5% yang tetap berada pada kategori berat. Selain itu, pemahaman siswa mengenai risiko melukai diri sendiri meningkat secara signifikan, dengan proporsi kelompok yang memiliki kesadaran sangat tinggi meningkat dari 5% menjadi 30%. Inisiatif edukasi ini terbukti efektif dalam memperkuat ketahanan psikologis remaja serta menyediakan data dasar empiris bagi pihak sekolah. Program ini direkomendasikan sebagai strategi berkelanjutan berbasis sekolah dengan mengintegrasikan perangkat skrining ke dalam kurikulum bimbingan tahunan guna mendeteksi krisis sejak dini.
Kata Kunci: Kesehatan Mental Remaja, Keputusasaan, Pencegahan Perilaku Melukai Diri Sendiri.

A. INTRODUCTION

The transition through adolescence is a complex developmental phase often marked by heightened emotional vulnerability and the emergence of psychological distress. Cognitive distortions and maladaptive thinking patterns are significant contributors to depressive symptoms among the youth (Zaiden & Mahfar, 2024). When adolescents lack the necessary emotional regulation skills, they often become trapped in a cycle of despair that can lead to severe behavioral consequences.

Global statistics indicate that the prevalence of non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) in adolescent populations ranges between 17% and 18% (Apicella et al., 2025). In the Indonesian context, the 2023 National Health Survey (SKI) reveals that emotional mental disorders affect approximately 10% of the population aged 15 and above (Kemenkes RI, 2023). These figures are deeply concerning as feelings of hopelessness and loneliness have been identified as primary predictors of self-harming actions in this demographic (Iswanti et al., 2024). The lack of a stable future orientation significantly escalates the risk of a teenager transitioning from mere thoughts of self-injury to actual physical harm (Zhou et al., 2025).

To address these vulnerabilities through localized empirical evidence, SMAN 2 Jombang was selected as the research site. As a prominent public high school in the region, its student body provides a representative sample of late adolescents navigating transitional academic and psychosocial stressors. Initial observations indicate that while students are highly driven, they are simultaneously exposed to standard academic pressures and peer-related anxieties that can impact their psychological well-being. However, specific quantitative data regarding the baseline levels of hopelessness, emotional distress, and potential self-harm risks among the students remains undocumented. The absence of a systematic, institutionalized screening mechanism leaves a critical gap in identifying at-risk individuals early, emphasizing the urgent need for programmatic data collection and preventive education within the school environment.

The impact of recent environmental stressors has further diminished the sense of meaning in life among students while increasing general levels of despair (Sanz-Sendra et al., 2024). However, systematic intervention programs focusing on mental health literacy and psychological resilience have proven effective in disrupting these negative trajectories (Escofet-Colet et al., 2025). By identifying at-risk individuals through early screening, educational institutions can implement proactive strategies to mitigate the psychosocial factors that trigger self-destructive behaviors.

B. METHODS

This community service project was organized on April 14, 2026, at SMAN 2 Jombang. The program involved 40 participants from the eleventh-grade class. We utilized a purposive sampling approach to select students who demonstrated moderate levels of hopelessness during the initial assessment. The entire session took place in the school hall which provided an environment conducive to interactive learning.

To deliver the educational material effectively, this training utilized a multi-media approach consisting of structured presentation slides (PPTs), an educational video showcasing resilience-building, and a specialized printing pocket module containing coping strategy guidelines and professional mental health hotlines.

The training schedule was executed from 08:00 AM to 03:00 PM (WIB) as detailed in the following table:

Table 1: Training Event Itinerary

No.	Time (WIB)	Activity
1	08.00 – 08.30	Registration and Initial Assessment (BHS and Self-Harm Questionnaire)
2	08.30 – 09.30	**Session 1 –** Understanding the Nexus of Hope and Mental Health
3	09.30 – 10.30	**Session 2 –** Identification of Emotional Triggers and Personal Strengths
4	10.30 – 12.00	**Session 3 –** Coping Strategy Simulation and Stress Management
5	12.00 – 13.00	Break and Lunch
6	13.00 – 14.00	**Session 4 –** Guidance on Accessing Professional Psychological Support
7	14.00 – 15.00	Post-Intervention Assessment and Closing

We applied a participatory approach incorporating interactive dialogue and role-play simulations. The evaluation process utilized two primary instruments to monitor changes in participant perspectives before and after the initiative. The first instrument is the standard Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS), a widely validated 20-item true/false instrument where total scores range from 0 to 20, categorized into minimal (0-3), mild (4-8), moderate (9-14), and severe (15-20) hopelessness.

The second instrument is a specialized self-harm risk awareness questionnaire consisting of 15 items scored on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree), evaluating students' understanding of maladaptive behaviors and adaptive coping mechanisms. Both instruments have undergone rigorous psychometric testing. The Indonesian version of the BHS has been globally and locally validated, demonstrating high internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient exceeding 0.85. The specialized self-harm awareness questionnaire was pre-tested on a similar demographic of 30 non-participating students, yielding a Pearson product-moment validity coefficient (r-count) ranging from 0.412 to 0.765 (all items exceeding the critical r-table value of 0.361) and a reliability coefficient of 0.82, confirming its statistical validity and consistency.

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS software. Descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and percentages, were calculated to outline baseline demographics and baseline categories. To assess statistical significance in changes between pre-intervention and post-intervention outcomes, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test was performed, as the ordinal nature of the scoring data requires a non-parametric approach to analyze shifting psychological metrics within the same group of respondents.

C. RESULTS

The evaluation results indicate a substantial shift in the psychological profile of the participants. The distribution of hopelessness scores and awareness levels is presented in the tables below.

Table 2. Adolescent Hopelessness Distribution (n=40)

Category	Pre-Intervention f (%)	Post-Intervention f (%)
Minimal to Mild	4 (10%)	28 (70%)
Moderate	29 (72.5%)	10 (25%)
Severe	7 (17.5%)	2 (5%)
Total	40 (100%)	40 (100%)

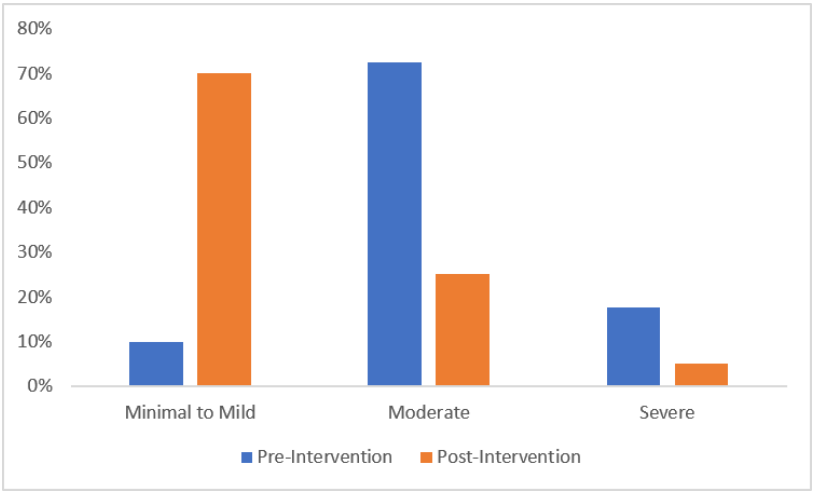

Figure 1. Comparison of adolescent hopelessness categories before and after intervention based on the Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS).

Table 3. Self-Harm Risk Awareness Levels (n=40)

Awareness Level	Pre-Intervention f (%)	Post-Intervention f (%)
Limited	18 (45%)	1 (2.5%)
Moderate	15 (37.5%)	6 (15%)
High	5 (12.5%)	21 (52.5%)
Very High	2 (5%)	12 (30%)
Total	40 (100%)	40 (100%)

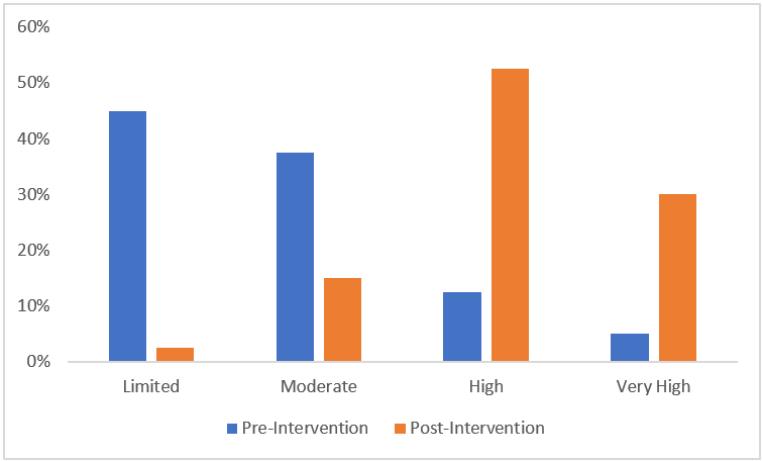

Figure 2. Comparison of students' self-harm risk awareness levels before and after intervention.

Based on the data presented in Table 2 and Figure 1, the majority (72.5%) of respondents were initially in the moderate hopelessness category, with only 10% demonstrating minimal to mild levels. Following the intervention, a significant shift in distribution occurred; most participants (70%) moved to the minimal to mild hopelessness category, leaving only 5% in the severe category. This decrease in scores indicates a shift in students' perceptions of the difficult situations they face, moving from a state of uncertainty toward a more optimistic outlook..

These findings align with evidence that cognitive distortions and maladaptive mindsets are major contributors that exacerbate depressive symptoms in adolescents ((Zaiden & Mahfar, 2024). The hopelessness observed at the beginning of the study reflects the impact of environmental stressors that systematically diminish the meaning of life and damage students' future orientation (Sanz-Sendra et al., 2024). The success of this program in reducing hopelessness confirms that appropriate interventions can mitigate the psychosocial factors that trigger self-destructive intentions (Ren et al., 2024).

Furthermore, these results support the assertion that feelings of hopelessness are strong predictors that trigger the transition from negative thoughts to actual self-harming actions (Zhou et al., 2025). The reduction in hopelessness levels post-education proves that strengthening mental health literacy is highly effective in reducing the emotional burden felt by adolescents (Iswanti et al., 2024). Focusing on building hope has proven to be a vital instrument in reducing the desire of adolescents to utilize destructive coping mechanisms (Faura-Garcia et al., 2024).

These findings indicate that cognitive changes demonstrate a high capacity for resilience in adolescents when provided with structured, non-judgmental guidance. The downshift in hopelessness scores suggests that instilling future-oriented optimism serves as a practical necessity to prevent severe psychological distress. The positive outcomes were substantially enhanced by the inclusive environment maintained throughout the training, which allowed students to regain a sense of agency over their personal trajectory. Consequently, the sustainability of this hopeful environment requires structural reinforcement through the school’s guidance and counseling department to maintain long-term mental health stability.

Data in Table 3 and Figure 2 shows that prior to the intervention, students' awareness regarding the risks of self-harm was at a limited to moderate level. However, after the intervention was administered, a substantial increase in literacy occurred; the majority (52.5%) of participants achieved a high level of understanding, and another 30%

reached the very high category. This surge in data reflects the successful transfer of information regarding the physical and psychological dangers of self-harming behavior.

These results reinforce the findings that non-suicidal self-injury is often viewed as an instant solution by adolescents who have limited information regarding emotional regulation (Apicella et al., 2025). The high level of understanding post-education indicates that providing accurate information is capable of changing adolescents' perspectives on destructive behaviors that they might have previously considered normal (Yu et al., 2024). Structured education has proven to be an effective method for increasing student alertness toward the long-term impacts of self-harming actions (Escofet-Colet et al., 2025).

This finding is also consistent with research stating that increased mental health literacy and social connectedness function as primary protectors against depressive symptoms and the urge to self-harm (Baker et al., 2023). Increased risk awareness helps adolescents identify their emotional triggers earlier before they escalate into a crisis (Ahn et al., 2025). By understanding the risks in depth, adolescents tend to choose professional help rather than suppressing their emotional suffering alone (Li et al., 2024).

The present program suggests that elevating risk literacy serves as a more effective preventive mechanism than merely executing reactive institutional sanctions for self-harming behaviors. When adolescents comprehend the clinical and psychosocial implications of self-harm, they establish stronger internal defense structures against maladaptive peer and digital influences. This elevated awareness fosters a supportive peer network within the school environment, mitigating the social stigma that frequently deters students from seeking timely psychological assistance. Ultimately, this literacy serves as a foundational asset for students to actively function as peer mental health advocates within their academic community.

In terms of program impact and sustainability, this screening and educational framework establishes a replicable protocol for early psychosocial risk detection within secondary education. The localized data generated provides the institution with an empirical baseline to transition from generic guidance methods to targeted counseling strategies. To ensure long-term sustainability, the initiative incorporates a train-the-trainer model, embedding the screening tools and educational materials into the school’s existing guidance curriculum, thereby allowing continuous annual assessments for incoming student cohorts without requiring external resources.

Figure 3 Documentation of the educational session and interactive mental resilience training at SMAN 2 Jombang

D. CONCLUSION

The educational and screening program conducted at SMAN 2 Jombang effectively minimized hopelessness and substantially improved self-harm risk awareness among participants. The significant transition from moderate to minimal-to-mild hopelessness levels, alongside the surge in psychological literacy, confirms that structured, school-based interventions are highly capable of strengthening adolescent resilience and disrupting negative psychosocial trajectories.

In terms of practical implications, this initiative demonstrates that integrating a systematic mental health screening framework provides educational institutions with critical, empirical baseline data. Rather than relying on reactive measures, schools can utilize these screening outcomes to design targeted, early-intervention counseling strategies that address specific emotional vulnerabilities before they escalate into severe behavioral crises.

To ensure program sustainability, it is highly recommended that the school's guidance and counseling department (Guru BK) adopts a train-the-trainer model. By institutionalizing the validated screening tools and pocket modules into the annual school curriculum, incoming student cohorts can be assessed systematically at the beginning of each academic year without requiring continuous external funding. Furthermore, future recommendations include establishing a peer-led mental health advocate network within

the student body to foster a supportive, stigma-free environment, alongside expanding similar programmatic initiatives to other secondary educational institutions in the region.

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