**Analysis of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy in Group Counselling
with Relaxation Techniques to Overcome Anxiety
of High School Adolescents**

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**Abstrak**

This study aims to understand the implementation or use of CBT in group counselling involving relaxation techniques to overcome anxiety in adolescents, especially high school students. This study applied a qualitative descriptive approach in its research methodology. The data collection method used is a literature review of articles that have been obtained and analysed. In this study, data were analysed by reducing data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions from the results of the analysis. The informants in this study were taken from several articles, consisting of 5 people. Which 2 people are representatives of the family who supervise the teenager's behaviour. The results showed that the application of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) in group counselling with this relaxation technique, the teenager was gradually invited to think rationally and use several stages to relax his body, which the implications of the application were able to overcome the anxiety of the teenager. From the results of the discussion that has been obtained, there is a significant difference between before and after the therapy is carried out. Initially the teenager was in a hurry and tended to do things that were not in accordance with his wishes, but after that he became more organised and always thought before taking action.

**keywords:** *cognitive behavioral therapy, group counselling, realxation techniques, adolescents anxiety*

**INTRODUCTION**

Adolescence is a person with an age group between 12 to 18 years old who is a transitional period between childhood and adulthood. Adolescence can be considered an important period in an individual's life, as it is a time of significant physical, psychological and social changes. These changes can pose challenges and conflicts for adolescents in dealing with everyday life. Some of the problems often experienced by adolescents are identity problems, social relationship problems, anxiety and depression problems, as well as unhealthy behavioural problems such as drug addiction and free sex. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to adolescents' mental and physical health by providing appropriate support and developing positive skills. (Santrock, 2016)

In a study conducted by the WHO, it was stated that adolescents need special attention because they are vulnerable to various health problems, such as violence, addiction, and sexually transmitted diseases. In addition, adolescents are also prone to depression and anxiety due to environmental factors, such as pressure from family and school, as well as biological and psychological factors. (Organization, 2022)

To overcome the problems experienced by adolescents, it can be done with a holistic and integrated approach, which takes into account the physical, social, and psychological aspects of adolescents. Support from family, friends, and the community can also help adolescents deal with problems and grow into physically and mentally healthy individuals. Based on information from the Indonesian Ministry of Health during 2020, it was documented that there were 18,373 individuals who experienced anxiety disorders, more than 23 thousand people who experienced depression, and around 1,193 people who attempted suicide. The majority of people who experience these problems are adolescents aged 17-25 years old, who are considered to still be in an unstable period (Shanti, 2021). Therefore, a more comprehensive study on the issue of anxiety is needed.

Anxiety according to the opinion of Syamsu Yusuf and Nurikhsan is an individual response to recognise an uncertain threat (Syamsu & Nurihsan, 2009.) Then, another figure named Nevid explained his opinion about anxiety (anxiety), which is a state of apprehension or worry that something bad will happen (Nevid, 2005). According to Freud, anxiety is an unpleasant emotional condition accompanied by physical sensations that aim to warn individuals of possible danger (Yustinus Semiun, 2006).

The descriptions presented by the figures above show similarities in the definition of anxiety, namely as an emotional condition that arises in response to threats or fears of uncertain or negative things. Although experts' views on the definition of anxiety vary, in general, anxiety can be defined as a mental state associated with feelings of fear, worry, or apprehension.

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, also known as CBT, is an approach oriented towards the role of the mind or cognition in changing negative thought patterns and behaviours. The aim of CBT is to help individuals change their initially irrational thoughts into more rational ones. In CBT, techniques such as self-talk, reframing, and cognitive restructuring can be used to treat psychological trauma. The CBT process begins with changing the individual's cognitive processes (J. S. Beck, 2020).

Numerous studies have proven that CBT is effective in reducing levels of depression, stress, and modifying behaviour, as well as helping to overcome social anxiety in prisoners. One of the studies even used Islamic sources such as the Qur'an and hadith to identify and change negative thought patterns held by prisoners. Another study indicated that CBT has also been proven effective in helping children who are victims of sexual abuse to change their view that they still have a future, as well as assisting their parents in improving their religious activities. To review the discussion of these studies, there is a literature review with several sub-sections as follows.

**Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**

CBT is one of the most well-known forms of psychological therapy in the field of clinical psychology. This approach was developed by a man named Aaron T. Beck In the 1960s, CBT became widely recognised. Aaron T. Beck, an American psychiatrist and therapist, was instrumental in the development and progression of this therapy who is best known for his contribution in developing CBT. (A. T. Beck, 1964)

CBT or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is a counselling approach that aims to help clients overcome current problems by changing unproductive thought patterns and behaviours. The CBT approach is based on an understanding of the cognitive formulations, beliefs and unhealthy behavioural strategies that affect the client. The CBT counselling process focuses on the client's conceptualisation or understanding of specific beliefs and behaviour patterns. The main goal of CBT is to produce cognitive restructuring and a more positive belief system of the counselee, resulting in more positive changes in emotions and behaviours and healthy.

Another figure, O, J. L. Matson, expressed his definition of Cognitive-Behavior Therapy (CBT) as a counselling approach that involves a series of procedures that specifically emphasise cognitive aspects. CBT has a primary focus on the perceptions, beliefs, and thoughts of the counsellor. In CBT, changing unhealthy mindsets and replacing them with more positive and healthy mindsets is considered important to help the counsellor overcome the problems they face.

Cognitive-Behavior Therapy (CBT) can be defined as a counselling approach that aims to help counsellors overcome problems by changing mindsets and changing unhealthy thoughts and behaviours. The CBT approach is based on the concept of unhealthy cognitions, beliefs, and behavioural strategies that affect the counselee. The main focus of CBT is the perceptions, beliefs, and thoughts of the counsellor, and the counselling process is based on the understanding that the counsellor has of their specific beliefs and behaviour patterns. The main goal of CBT is to produce cognitive restructuring and a more positive belief system of the counsellor, resulting in more positive and healthy changes in emotions and behaviour.

The basic principle of CBT related to this activity stage is that the counselee expresses his/her opinion and the author of this study asserts that in CBT procedures, counselees are directed to think logically about their problems and realise that they have the ability to deal with them. This study focuses on students' anxiety problems and encourages them to think reflectively, and gradually assisted with behavioural strategies to reduce the level of anxiety. The importance of building a good relationship since the beginning of the meeting with the counselee and conducting careful planning are also determining factors in the successful implementation of CBT (Anggraeni, 2019).

In addition, experts often use several techniques in applying CBT, such as: Irrational belief reengineering (Identifying and changing irrational negative beliefs into more realistic and positive ones.), Bibliotherapy (Using reading materials as a tool to understand and embrace internal emotional states as interesting rather than frightening.), Self-statement training (Repeated use of different self-statements in real situations to change mindsets and stimulate more adaptive responses. ), Measurement of current feelings (Being aware of and measuring the current level of perceived emotion to understand the influence of thoughts and feelings on behaviour.), Stopping negative thoughts (Identifying and stopping harmful negative thoughts, and replacing them with more positive and helpful thoughts. ), Systematic desensitisation (Replacing fear and anxiety responses with relaxation responses gradually to reduce the level of intense emotions.), Social skills training (Learning and practising healthy and effective communication and social interaction skills.), Assertiveness skills training (Developing the skills to speak and act assertively and appropriately, and strengthening the ability to express personal wishes and boundaries. ), Homework (Rehearsing new behaviours and cognitive strategies in daily life to reinforce desired changes.), In vivo exposure (Directly confronting situations that cause problems or anxiety to overcome these fears.), Covert habituation (Involving psychological processes within the individual to condition more positive responses through understanding and modifying thoughts that occur internally.). In the application of CBT, these various techniques are used according to the needs and characteristics of the counselee (McLeod, 2010).

**Relaxation Technique Group Counselling**

Group counselling is a counselling technique that brings together a group of people who share a common problem or condition, and helps them to support each other and gain solutions from each other's experiences and perspectives. One of the most well-known figures in the field of group counselling is Irvin D. Yalom. He is a psychiatrist and author who has written several books on group counselling (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020). Group counselling helps individuals to broaden their experiences, improve social skills and develop a sense of connectedness with others. It also emphasises the importance of trust, cooperation and support among group members in achieving counselling goals.

The purpose of group counselling is to help members gain a deeper understanding of themselves, resolve problems encountered, and encourage active participation in group discussions. Group counselling also allows members to exchange ideas, offer solutions, and improve communication skills through group dynamics. In addition, group counselling aims to build a sense of empathy and sensitivity towards others by discussing and solving problems together. It gives members the courage to address the obstacles they face as well as helps them find appropriate ways to overcome them. Group counselling also builds compassion and mutual support between members, helping them develop an understanding of each other's feelings when facing problems and obstacles. Finally, group counselling trains members to open up in the group dynamics while keeping their personal problems confidential. (M. Edi, 2013)

Furthermore, there are components in group counselling services, namely the first group leader; In the context of implementing group counselling, trained counsellors have the authority as group leaders. Counsellors are expected to have good communication skills, be able to direct, and be able to carry out Group Counselling properly and correctly. During the implementation of Group Counselling, the role of the leader or counsellor is very important. One of the tasks is to form a group with several members so as to create effective group dynamics. In addition, the counsellor's role also involves structuring, which is discussing with group members or counselees about the services that should be provided (Netrawati dkk., 2021).

One important aspect of group counselling is the number of group members selected by the leader or counsellor, which should be between 4 and 10 people. If the number of members is too small, then relationships and resources are limited, thus reducing its effectiveness. However, if there are too many, the level of active participation of the members is reduced in intensity. Group members play an important role in the conduct of group counselling. They should be able to listen, understand, respond, and participate actively and appropriately in the activity. In addition, it is expected that group members or counsellors have the ability to build each other up and maintain confidentiality regarding individual problems or complaints experienced by other group members (Prayitno, 2004).

Apart from Group Counselling, to emphasise the group counselling approach, a technique called relaxation is used. It was first developed in the early 1930s by Edmund Jacobsen. According to his view, individuals who are in a state of relaxation will have better responses and not show sudden emotional responses to certain situations. In 1938, Jacobsen developed a relaxation technique known as Progressive Relaxation Training. He believed that a person can change their state to relax and reduce their emotional response (Ekawaldi & Liftiah, 2014).

However, some experts have their own opinions about this relaxation technique, such as Wiramihardha who explains that relaxation is an attempt to reduce and relax the tension that occurs in the body and mind, using breathing techniques and relaxing tense muscles. In addition, relaxation can also be an active copying skill to overcome anxiety. Another figure, Chaplin, expressed his view on relaxation techniques as a therapy that teaches counsellors to achieve a sense of relaxation and reduce tension and muscle stiffness is a relaxation technique that can help reduce psychological tension (Chaplin, 2006).

There are various kinds of relaxation techniques, including the following: the first The purpose of muscle relaxation is to reduce the tension and anxiety of the counselee by stretching and relaxing the muscles of the body. This process is usually carried out in 3-4 sessions, as it involves stages and involves the complete release of tension in the muscles involved. Secondly, sensory awareness relaxation is carried out with the counselee given one question but there is a form of relaxation that does not need to be expressed verbally, but rather felt according to the condition of the counselee. Thirdly, there is the Guided Imagery technique which uses visualisation and the use of other senses to achieve certain effects, such as reducing anxiety. This practice can change an individual's thoughts, emotions, and behaviour. Fourth, there is breathing relaxation which is used to reduce anxiety by regulating the rhythm of breathing while combining it with positive suggestions and creating a calm and comfortable environment (Handoyo, 2002).

**Adolescent Anxiety**

Anxiety of junior high school adolescents is a common occurrence in individuals who are experiencing the transition from children to adolescents. However, if the anxiety is excessive and interferes with daily activities, it needs to be taken seriously. Several factors can affect junior high school adolescents' anxiety (Istiqomah & Amin, 2020), including physical and hormonal changes that occur during puberty. Junior high school adolescents begin to experience significant physical growth, as well as hormonal changes that can affect mood and emotions. Academic pressure. Junior high school adolescents often feel pressured by higher academic demands. They must be able to fulfil the demands of teachers and parents to achieve good grades. Social pressure. Middle school adolescents often feel pressure to belong to their peer group. They feel the need to meet certain social standards, such as appearance, lifestyle, and behaviour. Family conflicts. Middle school adolescents often experience conflicts with their parents and other family members. Such conflicts can affect the mental and emotional state of adolescents.

Anxiety in junior high school adolescents can cause various negative impacts (Febriana, 2017), including impaired concentration and focus on learning, which makes it difficult for them to follow lessons. In addition, anxiety can also reduce motivation and interest in daily activities, making adolescents feel reluctant to engage in activities that they would normally enjoy. Sleep disturbances, such as difficulty falling asleep or waking up too early, are also often experienced by anxious teenagers. Not only that, anxiety can affect eating patterns, either through weight gain from overeating or a significant decrease in appetite.

Anxiety levels, according to some experts, can be divided into four categories (Nurjanah, 2017). First, Mild Anxiety, which is characterised by alertness and increased awareness of the individual's experience, allowing them to learn from the event. Second, Moderate Anxiety, which is characterised by a lack of interest in the surrounding environment and more focus on the important things at the time. Third, Severe Anxiety, which is characterised by a variety of physiological responses that make it difficult for the individual to control the situation. Finally, Panic, which is characterised by extreme physiological and cognitive responses, so that the individual is no longer able to control themselves.

To overcome anxiety in junior high school adolescents, there are several actions that can be taken (Saputri, 2016). First, improve communication with parents and peers. By talking about the problems being faced, adolescents can feel more at ease and get support from those closest to them. Second, creating a regular and realistic study schedule. This can help teenagers cope with academic pressure and boost self-confidence. Thirdly, making time to do activities they enjoy, such as sports, hobbies or social activities. These activities can help reduce stress and anxiety levels. Finally, seek professional help if anxiety persists or interferes with daily activities. A psychologist or counsellor can provide support and effective strategies to cope with anxiety.

**METHODS**

**Participants**

Some of the research from the literature review focused on adolescents who are studying in high school where they often feel anxious and worried when they have difficulty in receiving material from subjects that they find confusing or are afraid when doing assignments but often get bad grades.

**Research Design**

Using descriptive qualitative methods, this research method uses an approach that produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral information about people and behaviour that can be taken. However, the data obtained is in the form of several literature reviews with literature reviews that have been searched.

**Procedures**

From the various literature reviews obtained, that some researchers conducted observations by visiting institutions where they conducted learning such as at school and the residence of the counselee who lived with his parents. Interviews are conducted in more depth with parents or other family members in order to get a lot of information about the state of the counselee and the conditions in his family environment.

**Analysis Technique**

Using 3 techniques from Miles and Huberman, the data processing process in this study includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data reduction is done by analysing, focusing, classifying, eliminating irrelevant, and organising data that is transformed through rigorous selection. Regarding the presentation of data, it displays information that has been arranged systematically which is divided into several parts of the sub-chapters in the discussion. While verification or conclusion drawing is done by reviewing notes in the field and exchanging ideas between peers so that the validity of the data that has been tested becomes more solid, strong and suitable, so that it can be accounted for.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The data that has been obtained through the selection of some of the literature reviewed and the researcher found several findings regarding the procedures or stages in implementing CBT therapy to overcome anxiety. Table 1 explains the stages in conducting CBT therapy.

Table 1. Steps in conducting CBT therapy

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No | Stage | Description |
| 1 | Initial Evaluation | * Evaluate the mental health problems experienced by the client.
* Identify the factors that trigger the problem.
* - Determine the goals that the client wants to achieve in therapy.
 |
| 2 | Education | * Provides information on the relationship between thoughts, feelings and behaviours.
* Provides learning on how to change negative thoughts and behaviours into more positive and healthy ones.
 |
| 3 | Plan | * Helping clients plan concrete and measurable actions to achieve the goals set at the initial evaluation stage.
 |
| 4 | Intervention | * Help clients identify unhealthy thoughts and change them to be more positive.
* Provide techniques and strategies to deal with and overcome problems experienced by clients.
 |
| 5 | Evaluation | * Evaluate the client's progress in achieving the goals set during the process or some stage of the initial evaluation.
* If necessary, adapt the therapy plan to ensure the client achieves the desired outcomes.
 |
| 6 | Closing | * Help clients maintain therapy outcomes and prevent relapse.
* Provide necessary advice and support for clients.
 |

In CBT therapy, the therapist will work with the client to identify the problems experienced and provide effective problem-solving to overcome these problems. CBT therapy can be conducted individually or in groups, depending on the client's needs. The following table explains the steps in applying relaxation techniques in group counselling (Table 2).

Table 2. Activity stages of relaxation techniques in group counselling

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No | Stage | Activity |
| 1 | Early group stage | * Started the session and expressed gratitude to the counselee for volunteering to attend the group counselling.
* Prayed.
* Explained the meaning and purpose of group counselling.
* Explained the principles involved in group counselling.
* Introduced the group members or counsellors to each other.
 |
| 2 | Transitional stage | * Re-ask for readiness to conduct group counselling activities.
* Helping the counsellor overcome any feelings of fear or embarrassment they may have.
* Reinforce that this activity has a clear purpose and is beneficial for the counsellor.
* Establish a relaxed atmosphere by playing some games.
 |
| 3 | Activity stage | * Relationships between members or counsellors are established.
* The counsellor or group leader animates the activities.
* Discussion of problems according to the agreement of group members.
* The counsellor or group leader plays a role in helping to overcome problems and provide solutions and directions through the application of the CBT approach.
* Teaching relaxation techniques to counselees before facing exams.
 |
| 4 | Termination stage | * The group leader gives an explanation that the activity will end soon.
* Provide encouragement and appreciation to members or counsellors.
* Hold a discussion about the next activity plan.
 |

After the above stages, the study also included the application of relaxation techniques in group counselling, using respiratory relaxation techniques and progressive muscle relaxation techniques. These techniques were carried out in group counselling sessions six times before students or counselees faced exams or did assignments. The following table explains the benefits resulting from the use of CBT Therapy with relaxation techniques in group counselling to overcome adolescent anxiety (Table 3).

Table 3. Benefits of CBT therapy with relaxation techniques in group counselling

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| No | Benefit |
| 1 | One has the ability to cope with the overreaction that comes with problems and stress. |
| 2 | Provide assistance in alleviating problems related to mental health or psychiatry. |
| 3 | Able to reduce the level of anxiety experienced by counsellors. |
| 4 | Improve social and physical appearance. |
| 5 | Helps cure certain diseases. |
| 6 | Foster confidence and interpersonal relationships. |

In addition to using CBT therapy and relaxation techniques in group counselling, efforts to overcome anxiety in adolescents need to be holistic and integrated. Support from family, friends and the community is also important to help adolescents feel supported and able to cope better.

**Discussion**

Adolescent anxiety that occurs in clients is a sense of worry and fear when unable to follow or receive material from certain subjects that are considered confusing. In addition, they also often feel anxious if they fail to do their assignments so that they get less than optimal grades because they are not in accordance with what is expected (Faisal & Rosadi, 2024).

From the anxiety that junior high school adolescents have faced, there is a therapy to overcome anxiety, namely CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy). It is a form of therapy that focuses on the connection between an individual's thoughts, emotions, and actions. The main premise of CBT is that our thoughts affect our emotions, which in turn affect our behaviour. Therefore, by identifying and changing negative thought patterns, we can change our emotional and behavioural responses. CBT is a structured and goal-orientated form of therapy that is usually conducted over a limited period of time, usually consisting of 12-20 sessions. During these sessions, the therapist works with the client to identify negative or distorted thought patterns and behaviours that contribute to emotional distress or problematic behaviour. The therapist then helps the client to develop more positive and adaptive thought and behaviour patterns that enhance emotional well-being and problem-solving (Aini, 2019).

CBT is effective for a wide range of psychological disorders, including psychological states such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress (PTSD), and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and eating disorders. CBT is also useful for managing chronic pain, managing stress, and improving sleep. There are several techniques used in CBT, including cognitive restructuring, behavioural activation, and exposure therapy. Cognitive restructuring involves identifying and challenging negative or distorted thought patterns and replacing them with more positive and adaptive ones. Behavioural activation involves increasing engagement in positive activities to increase feelings of pleasure and accomplishment. Exposure therapy involves gradually exposing clients to feared situations or stimuli in a controlled and safe manner to reduce anxiety and improve coping skills (Noraini dkk., 2023).

CBT has been proven to be an effective form of therapy through various research studies. In some cases, CBT has been found to be as effective as medication in treating certain psychological disorders. It is also the preferred treatment approach of many individuals due to its focus on problem-solving and the development of practical skills to manage emotional distress and challenging situations. In conclusion, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is a structured and purposeful therapeutic approach that emphasises the relationship between thoughts, feelings and behaviour. It is an effective treatment approach for a variety of psychological disorders and is favoured by many due to its practical and problem-solving focus (Lumongga, 2014).

**CONCLUSION**

The application of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy through group counselling to overcome anxiety in high school adolescents is carried out through several stages: the initial stage of the group, the transition stage, the activity stage, and the termination stage. The techniques used include breathing relaxation and progressive muscle relaxation. CBT has been proven effective in treating various psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression, PTSD, OCD, and eating disorders. Techniques in CBT such as cognitive restructuring, behavioural activation, and exposure therapy help clients identify and replace negative thought patterns with more positive and adaptive thought patterns. After applying group counselling-based CBT with relaxation techniques, participants showed significant changes from being anxious, hasty, and disorganised to being more organised and reflective before acting, which made their lives more orderly. Therefore, CBT is considered as a structured and goal-orientated therapy that is effective to address various psychological problems. Future studies can focus on the effectiveness of CBT on different types of anxiety such as social anxiety, specific phobias, or generalised anxiety disorder to determine more focused therapy specifications.

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