

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EXISTENTIAL THERAPY IN IMPROVING EMOTION REGULATION ON THE BENEFICIARIES AT *PANTI SOSIAL KARYA WANITA MULYA JAYA (PSKWMJ)* OF EAST JAKARTA

Fetrian Herlinda¹, Dhira Airin Aulia² & Widya Damayanthi³
fetrianherlinda07@gmail.com¹, dhiraaul22@gmail.com², widya.damayanthi@yahoo.com
Program Study Masters Psychology Professional (PSMPP)
Persada Indonesia University YAI Jakarta, INDONESIA

ABSTRACT

The Karya Wanita Mulya Jaya Social is an effort by the Indonesian Ministry of Social Affairs through the Directorate of Social Rehabilitation in dealing with prostitution cases in Indonesia, whose objective is that the prostitutes can return to normal life and leave their previous immoral practices. During their time living in the institution, the beneficiaries could not accept the situation and felt compelled to participate in the activities that had been scheduled. There was a sense of boredom, irritable, apathetic such as unwilling to participate in activities, involved in quarrel, being rude to others. This research sought to examine the effectiveness of humanistic existential therapy in improving emotion regulation on the beneficiaries at PSKWMJ. The proposed hypothesis was "Humanistic existential therapy can improve emotion regulation on the beneficiaries at PSKWMJ". The research involved five people subjected to pre-experimental design method with one group pre-test and post-test design, thus, the experimental group received treatment in the form of humanistic existential therapy. The emotion regulation level scale was used to reveal whether the subjects experienced low emotion regulation or not. After receiving humanistic existential therapy, the research result revealed that the emotion regulation level increased with an average post-test result of 213 in the moderate category, compared to before receiving therapy with an average pre-test result of 142 in the low category.

Keywords: Emotion Regulation, Humanistic Existential Therapy.

A. INTRODUCTION

PSKWMJ is an effort by the Indonesian Ministry of Social Affairs through the Directorate of Social Rehabilitation in dealing with prostitution cases in Indonesia, whose objective is that the prostitutes can return to normal life and leave their previous immoral practices. Having service and rehabilitation programs for the beneficiaries, each batch consists of approximately 80 people and will attend training for 6 months. The service and rehabilitation programs are curative and promotive by providing guidance of basic knowledge, physical education, mental and social, skills training, and rationalization of advanced guidance to ensure the beneficiaries can be independent and play an active role in society. These main tasks are carried out with the principles of acceptance, non-judging, individuation, confidentiality, participation, communication, introspection, networking, and human rights.

At this institution, the beneficiaries are fostered and trained with various activities and skills as a provision to live a good life, so they must take part in these activities every day. The interview results with social workers revealed that the beneficiaries receive guidance related to religion and spirituality, manners, maintenance of cleanliness and health, sports and discipline,

entrepreneurship, and tourism. In addition, there are skills programs that the beneficiaries can participate in, such as culinary (cooking and making various cakes), salon (make-up and hair styling), or sewing (embroidery, high speed sewing, manual sewing). The implementation of guidance and skills training uses some methods, including individual and group guidance as well as organizational and community social guidance.

In addition, the interview and observation results on several beneficiaries in PSKWMJ revealed that they shared the same background, some of which being in low economic level and high demands in social life, that forced them to take the path of being prostitutes. Being taken forcibly by the authorities made them feel annoyed because their statements were not heard, so they had to live in PSKWMJ.

During their time living in the institution, the beneficiaries could not accept the situation and felt compelled to participate in the activities that had been scheduled. There was a sense of boredom, irritable, apathetic such as unwilling to participate in activities, involved in quarrel, being rude to others. This is supported by the statement of one the beneficiaries "why would I do all these activities, when in fact I am locked up here".

Such behavioral phenomenon is in accordance with the view of Saxena (2011) who argued that emotion regulation is usually found to be associated with mental problems such as depression, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress, and social dysfunction. Difficulties in performing emotion regulation in oneself are usually related to negative emotions that affect the low level of control in negative influences and life dissatisfaction.

It is supported by the opinion of Shaffer (2005) that emotion regulation is the capacity to control and adjust emotions at the right intensity level to achieve a certain goal. Appropriate emotion regulation includes the ability to regulate feelings, physiological reactions, cognitions related to emotions, and emotional reactions.

As described by Gross (2019) that emotion regulation refers to the shaping of one's emotions, the emotions one has and experiences or how one experiences or expresses these emotions. Thus, emotion regulation is concerned with how emotions are regulated, not how emotions regulate something else.

According to Goleman (2019), the purpose of emotion regulation is not to suppress the emotions, but to control the emotional outbursts that might be out of control in order to maintain emotional stability. Excessive emotions that increase with intensity for too long will shake the individual stability. This shows that an individual's ability in emotion regulation is an indicator of his emotional intelligence. All of these were experienced by the beneficiaries as they found it difficult in controlling themselves, getting angry easily, speaking rudely, being lazy to do the activities scheduled, and often being involved in fights with others

Leading to this view, those with low emotion regulation could face difficulties in socializing and actualizing themselves. In order to improve emotion regulation of the beneficiaries at PSKWMJ, the Prospective Psychologist would apply existential therapy carried out in groups.

According to Gerald Corey (2009), the existential humanistic approach emphasizes philosophical reflections on what it means to be a complete human being. Therefore, most of its therapies are basically helping individuals to be able to act, accept freedom, and take responsibility for their actions. Humanistic existential therapy is based on the premise that

humans cannot escape freedom and that freedom and responsibility are inter-related. In its implementation, this approach focuses on the philosophical assumptions that become the basis for the therapy.

B. EMOTION REGULATION

Emotion regulation is the capacity to control and adjust emotions at the right intensity level to achieve a certain goal. Appropriate emotion regulation includes the ability to regulate feelings, physiological reactions, cognitions related to emotions, and emotional reactions (Shuffer, 2014).

Meanwhile, Gross (2013) stated that emotion regulation is the way individuals influence their emotions, understand emotions when they experience them, or express those emotions. In addition, Gross (1999) also revealed that emotion regulation is a strategy that is carried out consciously or unconsciously to maintain, strengthen, or reduce one or more aspects of emotional responses, including emotional experience and behavior. Someone who has emotion regulation can maintain or increase the emotions he feels, both positive and negative ones. In addition, someone can also reduce his emotions, also both positive and negative ones.

In line with Gross, Thompson (2001) also suggested that emotion regulation is the ability to evaluate and alter emotional reactions to behave in a certain way according to the existing situation. As individuals, we recognize various kinds of emotions, such as happiness, sadness, anger, disappointment, and many other emotions. In order for these emotions not to overflow excessively, we need to process them through a mechanism we usually call emotion regulation.

Based on the above definitions, it can be concluded that emotion regulation is the ability to control and adjust emotions to a situation or experience experienced by a person consciously or unconsciously. These abilities cover regulating feelings, physiological reactions, cognition related to emotions, and emotional reactions so that the emotions felt do not overflow excessively.

1. Causes of Low Emotion Regulation

Gross and Thomson (2007) stated that emotion regulation is a series of processes in which emotions are regulated according to individual goals, either in an automatic or controlled manner, consciously or unconsciously, and involves many components that work continuously over time.

Human emotions are influenced by various factors and that regulate their emotional state. According to Gross (in Lewis, et al, 2008), these factors are as the following:

a. Environmental Factor

The environment in which the individual is existing includes the family, school, and community environment that all can affect emotional development. This is also directly related to cultural factors, where the norms or beliefs contained in certain community can affect the way individuals receive and assess an emotional experience, and then display an emotional response. In terms of emotion regulation, what is considered appropriate or culturally permissible can affect the way a person responds in interacting with other people and in the way he regulates emotions.

b. Experience Factor

The experience that individuals gain during life will affect their emotional development. Experience in interacting with other people and the environment will act as references for individuals in displaying their emotions. In addition, determining the purpose of emotion

regulation is what individuals believe can influence experience, emotional expression, and physiological responses that are appropriate to a certain situation (Gross, 1999).

c. Parenting Style

Some parenting styles are authoritarian, indulgent, and indifferent, while some others are full of love, which all can affect a person. Those several ways of parenting applied in raising children can form their ability to perform emotion regulation. Parke (in Brenner & Salovey, 1997) suggested several ways for parents to socialize emotions to their children through: applying indirect approaches in family interactions (between children and parents); teaching and coaching techniques; and matching opportunities in the environment.

d. Traumatic Experience

Some past events can give a traumatic impression that affects one's emotional development. Excessive fear and also being overly vigilant will affect his emotional state. People who have a neurotic personality with characteristics of sensitive, moody, restless, often feel anxious, panic, low self-esteem, lack of self-control, and do not have effective coping skills against stress, will show low level of emotion regulation (Cohen & Armeli in Coon, 2005).

e. Gender

Several research have found that men and women differ in expressing emotions, both verbal and facial expressions. Women show their feminine traits by expressing emotions of sadness, fear, anxiety, and avoidance, while men show their masculine traits by expressing emotions of anger and pride. Gender differences in expressing emotions are associated with differences in the goals of men and women in controlling their emotions. Women express more emotions to maintain interpersonal relationships and make them appear weak and helpless. While men express more emotions to maintain and show dominance. Therefore, it can be concluded that women are more able to regulate the emotions of anger and pride, while men are more prone to the emotions of fear, sadness, and anxiety (Fischer in Coon, 2005).

Hormonal conditions and physiological conditions in men and women also cause differences in emotional characteristics between the two. Women must control their aggressive and assertive behavior. This causes anxiety in them so that automatically the emotional expressions between men and women are different.

f. Age

Emotional maturity is influenced by one's growth and physiological maturity. As a person gets older, his hormonal levels decrease, resulting in a decrease in his emotional influence.

g. Physical Changes

Physical changes are hormonal changes that begin to function according to each gender. Changes in outlook on the outside can cause conflict in one's emotions.

h. Religiosity

Every religion asserts teachings for their believers to control emotions. Those with good level of religiosity will try to display emotions that are not excessive when compared to people who have low level of religiosity (Krause in Coon, 2005).

It can be concluded that emotion regulation involves changes in the dynamics of emotions or the timing of their emergence, magnitude, and duration, to keep in check with behavioral, experiential, or physiological responses. Emotion regulation can affect, strengthen, or maintain emotions depending on the individual's own goals. Emotion regulation can also affect one's behavior and experience, the result of the regulation can be behavior that is increased, reduced, or inhibited in the expression. In addition, emotion regulation comes from social sources which are part of the interest in other people and the norms of social interaction. These were as experienced by the beneficiaries at PSKWMJ of East Jakarta where the rules or discipline

applied in the institution made them feel controlled, and that all activities carried out were felt very different compared to when they were in the outside.

While a discipline is shaped for the occurrence of a better life or habit. According to Prijodarminto (1994), discipline is a condition that is created and formed through a process of a series of behaviors that show the values of obedience, compliance, loyalty, or order. It is supported by the opinion of Tulus (2004) that the main function of discipline is to teach control, self-respect, and obeying authority. Discipline is needed in educating children to show assertiveness about what has to be done and what cannot be violated.

Diener and Lucas (2000) argued that subjective well-being can be seen from one's feelings and emotions. The feelings can vary between very pleasant and unpleasant. Unpleasant or negative feelings cause discomfort and are an indication of the subject's low well-being. This discomfort is of course very closely related to the social environment.

Utami (2009) stated that when a person has a high subjective well-being, he or she will experience life satisfaction and experience joy more often, and rarely experience unpleasant emotions such as sadness and anger. On the other hand, someone with low subjective well-being will feel dissatisfied with his or her life, experience less affection and joy and more often experience negative emotions such as anger or anxiety.

This is the reason why the beneficiaries' emotional regulation was low, because of the necessity to obey the existing regulations in the institution and their low subjective well-being that led to life dissatisfaction and the emergence of other negative emotions.

Every person has a different way of doing emotion regulation. According to Martin (2003), the characteristics of individuals who have emotion regulation are:

- a. Take personal responsibility for his feelings and happiness
- b. Capable of turning negative emotions into a learning process and an opportunity to grow
- c. Be more sensitive to other people's feelings
- d. Perform introspection and relaxation
- e. Experience positive emotions more than negative emotions
- f. Not easily discouraged in facing problems

Based on the descriptions above, it can be concluded that the characteristics of positive emotion regulation are being able to know one's own state and being responsible to one's self, being able to control emotions, and adapt to the environment and not easy to despair. In addition, showing good interpersonal relationships and able to review the actions and attitudes that have been done also reflect good emotion regulation.

In addition, there are several aspects of emotion regulation. According to Gross (2014), there are four aspects of emotion regulation. The first, strategies to emotion regulation, which is the individual beliefs to be able to overcome a problem, has the ability to find a way that can reduce negative emotions, and can quickly calm down after experiencing excessive emotions. The second, engaging in goal directed behavior, which is the individual ability not to be affected by the negative emotions he feels so that he can keep thinking and doing things well. The third, controlling emotional responses, is the ability of individual to be able to control the experienced emotions and displayed emotions, so that the individual will not experience excessive emotions and show appropriate emotional responses. The fourth, acceptance of emotional response, is

the individual ability to accept an event that causes negative emotions and not feel ashamed to feel those emotions.

2. Impacts of Low Emotion Regulation

Emotion regulation needs to be done because some parts of the human brain want an action in certain situations, while other parts consider that emotional stimulation is not appropriate to the existing situation, thus making individuals do or not do things (Gross, 2003). Emotion regulation aims to minimize the negative impact of the problems encountered by managing emotional experiences (Kring, 2010). It is supported by a statement from Goleman (2007) that individuals who can regulate emotions tend to have good interpersonal relationships, capable of being careful, can adapt, and capable in handling challenges that arise. In addition, these individuals are better able to control themselves by managing negative emotions and impulses and can handle real situations which can actually make them frustrated.

Makmuroch (2014) revealed that someone who has done emotion regulation well is able to understand the situation and change thoughts or judgments about the situation they are facing in a positive way, thus generating positive emotions too. This is in line with Goleman (2007) that individuals who have the ability to regulate emotions tend to have a positive view of themselves and their surroundings.

C. HUMANISTIC EXISTENTIAL THERAPY

1. Definition of Humanistic Existential Therapy

In (Corey, 2009) the humanistic existential approach emphasizes philosophical reflections on what it means to be a complete human being. Therefore, most of its therapies are basically helping individuals to be able to act, accept freedom, and take responsibility for their actions. Humanistic existential therapy is based on the premise that humans cannot escape freedom and that freedom and responsibility are interrelated. In its application this approach focuses on the philosophical assumptions that become the basis of the therapy.

Existential therapy, according to Irvin (2001), is a dynamic approach to therapy that focuses on the importance of a person having an existence. At the heart of reality is the acceptance of personal responsibility that equates to mental health. According to Glasser (2001), the basis of reality therapy is to assist clients in meeting basic psychological needs which include "the need to love and be loved and the need to feel that we are useful to ourselves and to others.

Humanistic existential psychology focuses on the human condition whose concepts consist of self-awareness; freedom, responsibility and anxiety; and the creation of meaning for human in the present, and not in the past. This is because the past cannot be changed and the future can change.

The objective of this therapy is for the client to experience his existence authentically by becoming aware of his existence and potentials and realizing that he can open up and act on his abilities.

2. Techniques of Humanistic Existential Therapy

Although existential therapy is not a single method, there is an agreement regarding the duties and responsibilities of the therapist. According to Buhler and Allen (Corey, 2009), psychotherapy is focused on approaches to human relationships rather than technical systems, where humanistic psychologists have a shared orientation that includes the following:

- a. Recognize the importance of a personal to personal approach.

- b. Recognize the role and responsibilities of the therapist.
- c. Recognize the reciprocal nature of the therapeutic relationship.
- d. Oriented to growth.
- e. Emphasizes the need for the therapist to engage with the client as a whole person.
- f. Recognize that final decisions and choices rest with the client.
- g. View the therapist as a model, in the sense that the therapist with his lifestyle and humanistic view of humans can implicitly show clients the potential for creative and positive action.
- h. Recognize the client's freedom to express views and to develop his or her own goals and values.
- i. Work towards reducing client dependency and increasing client independence.

D. METHOD

This research made use of pre-experimental design (non-design) of research, which is often referred to as a quasi-experimental research. This design is commonly used to overcome a difficulty in determining the control group in the research (Sugiyono, 2013). This quantitative research implemented single group pretest-posttest. According to Arikunto (2010), single group pretest-posttest design is a research activity that provides an initial test (pre-test) before being given treatment, then a final test (posttest) is administered after being given treatment.

This research was conducted at PSKWMJ of East Jakarta. The research population amounted to 5 respondents, all of whom were prostitutes who were fostered at the institution. The number of samples involved in this research were 5 respondents, or the entire population. The research instruments were interviews, observations, several psychological tests, and the provision of an emotional regulation scale.

CLOSING

a. Conclusion

The general descriptions of emotion regulation of the beneficiaries in PSKWMJ of East Jakarta on the five respondents were: emotional, introverted, easily disappointed, and had hard time to socialize. Their low emotion regulation was further emphasized by the results of the pre-test which showed a total average score of 142, categorized as low emotion regulation.

Based on the results of the implementation of humanistic existential therapy for the beneficiaries in PSKWMJ of East Jakarta, the respondents became: able to control emotions, open up, accept circumstances, being optimistic, and able to socialize well. This result was supported by the post-test results using the emotion regulation scale to get an average score of 213, categorized as moderate emotion regulation.

The interventions using existential humanistic therapy for the five beneficiaries in PSKWMJ of East Jakarta were given by the Prospective Psychologist. They could increase the emotion regulation of the five beneficiaries. The Prospective Psychologist provided information for them to improve emotion regulation in order to be able to control the emotions they feel. Thus, the emotions they feel could be controlled better, and they would be more confident and able to actualize themselves in social and work environments.

In addition, self-confidence in becoming a better person and consistent in self-improvement would help them to improve higher emotion regulation. The current thinking pattern tended to be negative and easily influenced by information that was not yet true. Negative stigma towards

their existence also formed a pessimistic feeling in doing things related to the future, such as opening a new business or another better job.

b. Suggestion

- 1) Suggestion for case study enthusiasts; To researchers who are interested in studying the implementation of humanistic existential therapy to improve emotion regulation for the beneficiaries in PSKWMJ of East Jakarta, it is necessary to consider the factors that influence the low emotion regulation of the beneficiaries' condition. That way, the results could be optimal, and it is recommended to control these factors. Thus, it is expected that the results of the intervention by applying humanistic existential therapy can be more profound, and it can overcome problems or disorders that arise in thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Other kind of interventions or therapies are also worth studying.
- 2) Suggestions for this research subjects; they are expected to be committed to implementing the plans that have been made during the intervention process and to maintain positive thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that have been obtained after completing the intervention process.

REFERENCES

- Alwisol. (2007). *Personality Psychology*. Jakarta UMM Press
- Arikunto, Suharsini. 2010. *Research Procedure of Practical Approach*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Corey, Gerald. (2010). *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy*. Jakarta: Refika Aditama.
- Davison, G. C., Neale, J. M., & Kring, A. (2004). *Abnormal Psychology Ninth Edition*. United States of America: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Davison, G. C., Neale, J. M., & Kring, A. (2010). *Abnormal Psychology Eleventh Edition*. Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Feist, J. & Feist, J. G. (2008). *Theories of Personality Seventh Edition*. Jakarta: Salemba Humanika.
- Kaplan, I. H., Sadock, J. B., Grebb, A. J., (2010). *Psychiatry Synopsis: Science Behavioral Clinical Psychiatry Seventh Edition*. Jakarta: Bina Rupa Aksara.
- Makmuroch. (2014). The effectiveness of emotional regulation skills training on decreased level of emotional expression in caregivers of schizophrenic patients in Surakarta Mental Hospital. *Journal of Psychology*, 4(11), 13-34.
- Mawardah, M., & Adiyanti, M. G. (2014). Emotion regulation and group of friends cyberbullying peers. *Journal of Psychology*, 41(1), 60-73.
- Sugiyono. 2013. *Educational Research Methods (Quantitative, Qualitative and R&D Approaches)*. Bandung: Alfabeta.