

The Effectiveness of Group Counseling with Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) Approach to Improve Prisoners' Emotion Regulation and Reduce Prisoners' Anxiety

Susilowati^{1✉}, Sunawan² & Edy Purwanto³

¹ Lembaga Pemasyarakatan Kelas I Semarang, Indonesia

² Guidance and Counseling, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

³ Psychology, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine the effectiveness of group counseling with Cognitive Behavior Therapy to improve emotion regulation and reduce the anxiety of prisoners of Lapas Perempuan Semarang. The instrument used for this study was emotion regulation scale and anxiety scale. Meanwhile, there were 6 subjects involved in this study. In addition, the study employed pretest and multiple posttest design. The analysis results showed that there was an improvement in emotion regulation, and reduction in anxiety after the group counseling was conducted. These findings showed that group counseling with CBT approach was effective to improve emotion regulation and reduce the prisoners' anxiety. However, in the follow-up assessment, it was found that the prisoners' anxiety tended to improve again, so there was a significant difference in anxiety between pretest and follow-up. At last, the findings of this study provide initial proof that changes in anxiety level are not always in line with emotion regulation.

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✉ Correspondence address:
Raya Semarang-Boja KM.4, Wates, Ngaliyan,
Semarang, Jawa Tengah, 50188
E-mail: susilowati.amd.ip@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

CBT effectiveness for anxiety reduction is generally found in the fields of education (Hasibua, M.A.H., Purwanto, E. & Japar, M., 2018), psychology (Yusuf, Umar, & Patrisia Reisa, 2011), and health (J Bennett-Levy, DA Richard, P Farran, 2010). However, it is rarely done in the field of prison. Therefore, this study was expected to contribute proof regarding CBT effectiveness for prisoners.

When someone has to enter a new life in prison, he will experience a feeling of losing independence. It is when he loses freedom, service, security, and heterosexual relations. These are some of the causes of anxiety. Even though there is a negative side for prisoners, this fact somehow gives knowledge to the researchers that the long anxiety experienced by the prisoners without any treatment can cause depression, and suicide. Based on the data of commit suicide by prisoners, it was known that the suicide was done in several jails, namely Lapas Semarang in 2010 (Joglosemar, 13th of June, 2010), Lapas Sragen in 2012 (Soloraya, 27th of April 2012), Lapas Bentiring Bengkulu in 2016 (Okezone News, 14th of May 2016), Lapas Bekasi in 2016 (Sindo News, 24th of January 2016), Lapas Makassar in 2016 (Pojoksulsel, 28th of January 2016), Lapas Klas 1 Surabaya in 2015 (Bangsaonline, 12th of November 2015), Lapas Krobokan Bali in 2015 (Antara Bali, 21st of August 2015).

Spielberger (2002) defines anxiety as an unrealistic fear which causes psychological tension, and followed by an action of escape or avoidance (Greenberg, 2002). Research on prisoners' anxiety is concerning because of several things: first, traumatic experiences which are related to physical or psychological pressure tendency in the process of arrest/ investigation by police officers, investigation by the public persecutors, and the trial process in court. Second, correctional institution is perceived as a scary place, full of torture, bullying both from officers, and senior prisoners. Third, there is a mindset perceiving correctional institution as a place that is physically stressful or full of pressure. It also has prison cells, strict security, binding

regulations, far from family, and limited communication. Regarding these facts, this study was significant to carry out given that the anxiety experienced by prisoners is far beyond what common people experience.

Emotion regulation is an ability to remain calm under stressful condition. One who lacks of emotion regulation will have difficulties in establishing relationship with others. Gross (2007) mentions that emotion holds important role in forming behavior responses, decision making, and interpersonal interaction. Thus, the anxiety experienced by prisoners of corruption is supposed to be able to be overcome through an ability to improve emotion regulation. Good emotion regulation will help prisoners of corruption reduce emotional reactions, and negative views caused by negative emotional experience and less adaptive behavior responses. The emotional experiences in this study are those that happen during investigation in police office, office of prosecutor, and court. Again, good emotion regulation will lead to positive experiences for individuals. These positive experiences will make individuals feel emotion and positive feelings in their lives. Moreover, treatment for emotion regulation and prisoners' anxiety are strongly required considering the social life of prisoners in jails can bother situation and conducive correctional institution condition.

Group counseling with CBT approach has been done and proven effective to improve emotion regulation and reduce anxiety (Asikhia, 2014; Rahma, 2013; Erfantinni, 2016; Sulistya, 2017; Sugiharto, dkk., 2016; Hasibuan, 2018). In relation to this, the current study was focused on the investigation of how far group counseling with CBT approach can improve emotion regulation and reduce corruption prisoners' anxiety in female correctional institution in Semarang.

METHODS

The subjects of this study were prisoners in the status of suspects in corruption cases (the ones entrusted by the police, office of prosecutor, District court, and the High Court were those

who were undergoing judicial process in Semarang female correctional institution amounted to 6 people).

The instrument used in this study was State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Adult (STAI; Spielberger; 1997), and Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ; Gross&John; 2003). These instruments were adopted to Indonesian. They were back-translated by two language experts from CLT (Centre for Language Training of UNIKA Soegijapranata) in order to obtain equivalence. STAI scale consists of 40 items. Those items were considered valid and fulfilled construct validity requirements through product moment correlation test by comparing item score and its total scores. Next, STAI instrument gained 0.94 for its reliability coefficient. On the other hand, ERQ scale has 10 items. Those 10 items fulfilled construct validity requirements through product moment correlation test by comparing item score and its total scores. Next, ERQ obtained 0.72 for its reliability coefficient.

This study was carried out in four stages. First, the provision of pretest to determine anxiety level and emotion regulation. Second, the

provision of treatment in form of group counseling with CBT approach as many as 6 meetings. Third, the provision of posttest after the treatment using emotion regulation questionnaire and anxiety scale to measure differences before and after the treatment. Fourth, the provision of follow-up after the pretest with two weeks interval.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Changes in group members could be seen in the measurement results after receiving group counseling with cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) approach. The initial condition of the subjects were 1 member at the low level, and 5 at the low level. Meanwhile, for the anxiety level, it was known that there were 4 people at the fair level, and 2 people at the low level. After getting the treatment, in terms of regulation there were 3 people at the fair category, and 3 people at the high category. Meanwhile, for anxiety level, there were 4 people at the low level, and 2 people at the poor level.

Table 1. The Results of Pretest, Posttest, and Followup

Categories	Emotion Regulation						Anxiety					
	Pretest		Post test		Follow up		Pretest		Post test		Follow up	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
High			3	54.76	1	34.38	2	52.81				
Fair			3	45.24	4	37.06	4	47.19				
Low	5	57.43			1	28.56			4	50.31		
Poor	1	42.57							2	49.69	6	100

Table 2. Mean, SD, and The Results of ANAVA Repeated Measure

Groups	T1		T2		T3		F	P
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Anxiety	129.17	9.33	73.83	12.04	115.83	17.22	22.96	<0.01
Emotion Regulation	35.83	4.54	57.50	4.97	57.17	2.40	50.80	< 0.01

Based on the results of ANAVA test in table 3, it was known that group counseling with CBT approach was effective to reduce anxiety ($F(2,10) = 22.96; p < 0.01$) and improve emotion regulation ($F(2,10) = 50.80; p < 0.01$). To further explore the pattern of changes in emotion regulation and anxiety, the researchers performed Wilcoxon test at each measurement time in table 3.

Table 3. The Results of Wilcoxon Analysis

Comparisons	z	p
Anxiety		
T1-T2	-2.20	<0.05
T1-T3	-1.15	>0.05
T2-T3	-2.20	<0.05
Emotion regulation		
T1-T2	-2.20	<0.05
T1-T3	-2.20	<0.05
T2-T3	-0.31	>0.05

In the anxiety variable, the initial condition of subjects' anxiety during the pretest was ($M =$

129.17; SD = 9.33) or was lower than posttest I (M = 73.83; SD = 12.04; $z = 2.21$; $p < 0.05$). Meanwhile between posttest 1 and posttest 2 (M = 57.50; SD = 4.97) there was no difference ($z = -2.20$; $p > 0.05$), namely pretest results were lower than posttest 2 ($z = -1.15$; $p > 0.05$). Additionally, in the emotion regulation, the initial condition of the subjects during pretest was (M = 35.83; SD = 4.54) or was lower than the posttest I (M = 57.50; SD = 4.97; $z = -2.20$; $p < 0.05$). Meanwhile there was no difference between posttest 1 and posttest 2 (M = 57.50; SD = 4.97) ($z = -3.15$; $p > 0.05$), namely pretest results were lower than posttest 2 ($z = -2.20$; $p < 0.05$).

The above values showed that there was a reduction in the prisoners' anxiety, and significant improvement in emotion regulation after the subjects receiving the treatment of group counseling with cognitive behavior therapy approach. In other words, the hypothesis saying that group counseling with cognitive behavior therapy approach is effective to reduce the prisoners' anxiety and improve their emotion regulation was accepted. However, there was no significant changes from pretest to follow-up phase.

The findings of this study are relevant to a study done by Asikhia (2015), namely the effectiveness of cognitive behavior therapy CBT approach to reduce anxiety. Her study reveals that anxiety experienced by prisoners is caused by thoughts of fear of inability to participate in activities. This approach is also effective to reduce anxiety by restructuring students' cognitive aspects. Thus, the findings of this study asserted that cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) approach is able to reduce anxiety.

CBT is realized by assisting students to change their thoughts and behaviors so that any problems arisen from emotional pressures would appear. Finally, the thoughts which cause them do such behaviors can be analyzed. For more, Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) was designed to help individuals gain insight for their problems. By doing so, the individuals are expected to change their distorted thoughts to the rational ones, and do adaptive behaviors (Spiegler & Guevremont, 2003).

In this study, the researchers found time effects in emotion regulation group and anxiety group. They were seen in the results of pretest, posttest, and follow-up. Even though there was no significant results between pretest and follow-up phase, both phases experienced improvement before and after the treatment. It showed that the group counseling with CBT approach was effective to improve emotion regulation and reduce the level of anxiety. This effect was strongly experienced right after the counseling has just ended. However, in the medium term it was indicated that the subject's anxiety tended to increase again although their emotion regulation was still stable. By referring to this finding, there is a need for further study regarding the role of belief and emotion regulation in relation to situational variables in explaining anxiety experienced by corruption prisoners.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the group counseling with CBT approach is effective to improve emotion regulation and reduce corruption prisoners' anxiety in Lapas Perempuan Semarang. However, in the follow-up assessment it was found that the prisoners' anxiety got increased again. It shows that their anxiety does not experience significant change, and tends to decrease. It may be caused by the unfinished legal issues by the prisoners so that there happens some events which influence their anxiety. Through these findings, it is known that the prisoners' emotion regulation remains consistent, while their anxiety experiences changes compared to the initial condition prior to the counseling.

Further studies are expected to consider greater number of respondents by using the same case. It needs to be done due to the unavailability of comparison group in this study. Therefore, the future researchers are suggested to involve control group.

Further researchers are expected to pay attention, the greater number of respondents using a sample of similar cases with a greater number. Considering that in this study there were

no comparison group interventions, the researchers were then expected to test CBT counseling by involving the control group.

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