



Therapeutic Communication as an Effort to Increase Rehabilitation Motivation for Female Drug Users at the Cahaya Putra Selatan Foundation, Palembang

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ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the complexity of the rehabilitation process among female drug users, which is influenced by psychological, social, and stigma-related factors, thereby affecting the dynamics of motivation in undergoing rehabilitation. This study aims to analyze the process of therapeutic communication in enhancing rehabilitation motivation and to identify the barriers faced by female drug users at Yayasan Cahaya Putra Selatan Palembang. This research employs a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Data were collected through non-participant observation, in-depth interviews with the program manager, counselors, female clients, religious figures, and police officers, as well as documentation. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This study applies Symbolic Interactionism Theory and Self-Determination Theory (SDT). The findings show that therapeutic communication occurs gradually through empathetic and non-judgmental relationships that build trust, which then develops through individual and group counseling to encourage openness, reflection on experiences, and changes in clients' self-perception, leading to the formation of rehabilitation motivation over time. However, the process faces internal barriers such as emotional resistance, shame, and negative self-concept, as well as external barriers including lack of family support, economic pressure, parental responsibilities, and social stigma.

INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse in Indonesia is still one of the serious challenges that has a direct impact on the health, social, and economic aspects of the community. This impact can not only be seen from the increase in physical and psychological disorders, but also from the emergence of various social issues such as crime, disharmony in family relationships, and declining quality of human resources (Kadarmanta & Effriyanti, 2022). Therefore, this issue requires comprehensive handling through prevention, rehabilitation, and sustainable intervention.

According to the report Indonesian Drug Report 2023 issued by the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) noted that the prevalence of drug abuse in Indonesia reached 1.73% or around 3.33 million people from the total population aged 15-24 years (Thanks, 2023). Although various prevention and rehabilitation efforts have been implemented, these figures indicate that the drug problem is still a major challenge that has not been fully resolved by the government and the community.

At the provincial level, this condition can also be seen from the results of the 2023 drug abuse prevalence survey which shows that South Sumatra is the province with the second highest rate of drug abuse in Indonesia, which is 5% (Tribunsumsel.com, 2025). This figure indicates that South Sumatra is an area that is very vulnerable to drug abuse. This can be seen in the following diagram which presents a comparison of the highest prevalence of drug abuse in several provinces in 2023.



Chart 1. Comparison of Prevalence of Drug Abuse at the Provincial Level
Source: Secondary Data Processing Results

In the context of rehabilitation of female drug users, motivation can be interpreted as an internal and external drive that leads them to start and maintain the recovery process consistently. The importance of motivation in female clients is reinforced by the report United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime In 2020, women who experience drug dependence problems tend to face more complex emotional and social barriers than men, such as a history of violence, psychological distress, and limited access to social support (UNODC, 2018). This motivation is an important foundation because without strong encouragement, the rehabilitation process risks not running optimally.

Therapeutic communication is a form of interpersonal communication that is carried out consciously, directed, and empathic by professionals to help clients recover physically, mentally, and emotionally. Focus on creating an environment where clients feel listened to, appreciated, and supported (Arianti et al., 2016). In the context of drug user rehabilitation, therapeutic communication helps counselors build emotional closeness that allows clients to be more open in expressing problems, so that the recovery process can run more effectively and sustainably.

The relationship between theory and practice needs to be explored more deeply through direct observation in the field. Based on data from the South Sumatra Provincial National Narcotics Agency (BNNP) and official news, it is recorded that in Palembang City there are a number of rehabilitation institutions that play an active role in handling drug abuse, such as the Ar-Rahman Foundation, the Intan Maharani Foundation, and the South Cahaya Putra Foundation (YCPS). Each rehabilitation institution has a different number of clients based on their gender. To obtain a more objective picture, the following is a comparison of the number of male and female clients obtained from each foundation in the last six months of 2025.

Table 1. Data on the Number of Clients of Each Institution

| Name of the Institution | Male | Women | Total Clients |
|---------------------------------|-----------|----------|---------------|
| Ar-Rahman Foundation | 44 people | 1 person | 45 people |
| Intan Maharani Foundation | 26 people | 4 people | 30 people |
| Cahaya Putra Selatan Foundation | 41 people | 6 people | 46 people |

Source: Secondary data processing results

From the data, it can be seen that each institution has a different number of clients, both male and female. The data shows that Yayasan Cahaya Putra Selatan has a relatively higher number of female clients than several other foundations in the same period. This condition provides a basis for researchers to look more deeply at the rehabilitation process, especially related to how the application of therapeutic communication in dealing with female clients.

Furthermore, based on the results of the researcher's initial observation with the Cahaya Putra Selatan Palembang Foundation, this institution shows stable rehabilitation service conditions in each period,

including for female clients. The stability of this number of clients makes the observation process of therapeutic communication more directed, because the interaction patterns and program activities do not change significantly from one period to another.

In addition, although YCPS implements the same rehabilitation program for all clients regardless of age or gender, the foundation explained that there are different dynamics between female and male clients in the implementation process. The difference is not in the form of treatment, but in the way female clients respond to activities, express emotions, and undergo the stages of the program. In the evaluation of the phase increase, the foundation also made several adjustments to the criteria for female clients to better suit their needs.

Based on this description, the Cahaya Putra Selatan Foundation is a relevant research location because it provides a space to understand how therapeutic communication can play a role in increasing rehabilitation motivation in female drug users. Through this research, it is hoped that it will be able to describe in depth the dynamics of therapeutic communication between counselors and female clients, as well as make practical contributions to the development of rehabilitation strategies that are more empathetic, inclusive, and gender-perspectived.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a systematic effort to study and investigate a problem by using careful and meticulous scientific techniques to collect, process and analyze data objectively in drawing conclusions to solve problems to gain knowledge that is beneficial to human life (Abubakar, 2021).

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative approach with a descriptive type of research. According to Creswell, qualitative research is a type of research that focuses on the views of the past or informant; The researcher asks questions at length, asks general questions, collects data mostly consists of words (or text) from participants, describes and analyzes the text into key themes, and makes requests subjectively and biased or provokes other questions (M. Sobry & Prosmala Hadisaputra, 2020). The qualitative method was chosen because it allowed researchers to explore the experiences, perceptions, and interactions between counselors and female clients in a natural context. The data produced are narrative and interpretive so that they are able to describe in depth how therapeutic communication is applied to increase rehabilitation motivation for female drug users at the Cahaya Putra Selatan Foundation Palembang.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis in this chapter refers to the theory of Symbolic Interactionism developed by George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer to explain how self-meaning, rehabilitation experiences, and client motivation are formed through the process of interaction between clients and counselors during rehabilitation programs. In addition, Self Determination Theory is used to analyze the formulation of a second problem that focuses on motivational dynamics and therapeutic communication barriers, especially those related to the fulfillment of the client's basic psychological needs, namely autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the context of rehabilitation. With this framework, the discussion in this chapter is directed to answer the formulation of research problems regarding therapeutic communication practices in increasing rehabilitation motivation in female drug users at the Cahaya Putra Selatan Foundation Palembang, as well as the obstacles faced in the therapeutic communication process.

Therapeutic Communication in Increasing Rehabilitation Motivation of Female Clients

Based on the findings of research in the field, the motivation of female clients to undergo rehabilitation did not appear directly from the beginning of the program. This motivation develops gradually over time and through various treatments given during the rehabilitation process. In this process, the interaction between the counselor and the client through therapeutic communication becomes a space for the client to convey his experience, reflect on his condition, and reinterpret the recovery process that is underway. Through ongoing interactions, clients slowly begin to show openness in communicating and involvement in rehabilitation programs.

Building the Trust of Female Clients

The findings of this study can be understood through the perspective of Symbolic Interactionism which was developed by George Herbert Mead and popularized by Herbert Blumer. This theory explains that human actions are influenced by the meaning they give to a social situation, and that meaning is formed through the process of interaction with others (Siregar, 2016). In the context of this research, the relationship between counselors and clients can be understood as a process of social interaction that allows clients to build new meanings to the role of counselors.

Thus, building trust between counselors and female clients is a decisive initial stage in the therapeutic communication process during rehabilitation. This trust allows clients to be more open in conveying their experiences and reflecting on their personal conditions. Through interactions that take place

in an empathetic and continuous manner, the client begins to interpret the counselor as a trustworthy party so that therapeutic communication can develop more deeply in the rehabilitation process.

Therapeutic Communication Process in Counseling during Rehabilitation

This finding can be explained through the perspective of the Theory of Symbolic Interactionism developed by George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer which states that the meaning of an experience is formed through the process of social interaction. In this case, counseling activities become an interaction space that allows clients to reinterpret their life experiences. Through communication with counselors as well as with other clients in the group, individuals gain new perspectives that affect the way they understand their drug use experience as well as the recovery process they are undergoing.

Based on the results of the study, the implementation of therapeutic communication in the rehabilitation process at the Cahaya Putra Selatan Foundation is carried out through individual counseling activities and group counseling that take place in a structured manner. Through this counseling, clients gain a space to communicate to express their experiences, reflect on their own conditions, and get social support from counselors and fellow clients. The interaction process that occurs in the counseling then becomes an important part in helping clients understand their life experiences and strengthen their involvement in the rehabilitation process.

Motivation for Rehabilitation of Female Clients

The findings of this study are in line with the research (Rodhiyah & Kholid, 2022) Who explains that therapeutic communication plays a role in building an empathic relationship between the counselor and the client so that the client feels accepted and more open to sharing his or her life experiences. These conditions help clients understand the impact of drug use behaviors on their lives and encourage motivation to make changes.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the motivation of female clients in undergoing rehabilitation does not appear directly from the beginning of participating in the rehabilitation program. This motivation develops gradually through a therapeutic communication process that allows clients to reflect on their life experiences, build a new meaning of themselves, and re-understand the importance of the recovery process they are undergoing.

Therapeutic Communication Barriers in the Rehabilitation Process

Based on the findings of the research, barriers in therapeutic communication in female clients at Yayasan Cahaya Putra Selatan Palembang can be classified into two main aspects, namely internal barriers derived from the client's psychological condition and external barriers related to the social and family environment. Both aspects are described in more detail in the following subtheme.

Client's Internal Barriers

Thus, the internal barriers experienced by female clients in this study are not only related to emotional states, but also related to the fulfillment of basic psychological needs that play a role in supporting client involvement in therapeutic communication during the rehabilitation process. These internal barriers suggest that the success of therapeutic communication is determined not only by the counselor's communication skills, but also by the client's psychological readiness to build a therapeutic relationship grounded in a sense of security, trust, and self-acceptance.

External Barriers

Thus, the external barriers in this study are not only related to the conditions of the social environment, but also show how those environments affect the fulfillment of the client's basic psychological needs. When these needs are not met, the client's motivation and involvement in the rehabilitation process becomes hampered.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of a study on therapeutic communication in increasing rehabilitation motivation in drug users at the Cahaya Putra Selatan Foundation in Palembang, the conclusions of this study are as follows:

Therapeutic communication between counselors and female clients in increasing rehabilitation motivation takes place through a gradual process. This process begins with the counselor's efforts to build trust through an empathetic and non-judgmental approach. As the interaction takes place, communication develops through individual counseling and group counseling which becomes a space for female clients to express their experiences and interact with other clients. Through this process, clients begin to show openness, reflect on life experiences, and reinterpret the conditions experienced, so that rehabilitation motivation is formed along with the communication experience during the rehabilitation process, rather than

appearing from the beginning.

Therapeutic communication barriers are influenced by interrelated internal and external factors. Internally, barriers arise from the psychological condition of female clients such as emotional resistance, shyness, and negative self-concept that limits openness in communicating. Meanwhile, from the external side, obstacles are related to lack of family support, economic pressure, parental responsibilities, and social stigma that affect the way clients perceive themselves and their environment.

SUGGESTIONS

For counselors at Yayasan Cahaya Putra Selatan Palembang, it is hoped that they can better adapt the communication approach to the client's condition, especially in the early stages of rehabilitation when the client is still experiencing doubt, embarrassment, and is not ready to open up. In addition, counselors also need to pay attention to the differences in the background and experience of each client, so that the therapeutic communication process can take place according to the individual's needs and readiness.

For Female Clients, it is expected to utilize the therapeutic communication process as a space to gradually express their experiences and feelings. Although the process of openness cannot occur in person, engaging in consistent communication can help clients understand themselves and support the recovery process that is underway.

For future researchers, this study can be used as an initial reference to study more deeply about therapeutic communication, especially by looking at the relationship between the client's psychological condition and social environmental factors in the rehabilitation process. Further research may also develop a focus on the dynamics of client openness or the role of social support in strengthening therapeutic communication processes.

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