

## A Systematic Literature Review: Behavioral Counseling Intervention in Overcome Childhood Sexual Abuse

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**Abstrak.** Pelecehan seksual terhadap anak cenderung terjadi dalam hubungan dekat, seperti keluarga dan persahabatan. Kekerasan yang terjadi pada anak dapat berdampak pada trauma perilaku dan emosional di masa dewasa. Menurut Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak (2024) sejak 1 Januari 2024 hingga saat ini jumlah korban mencapai 12.558 orang, dengan persentase korban di bawah umur 20,6%, korban dengan rentang usia 6-12 tahun dan 35,5% rentang usia 13-17 tahun. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui intervensi konseling behavioral dalam mengatasi kasus pelecehan seksual pada anak. Salah satu pendekatan konseling perilaku yang dapat dilakukan untuk membantu anak mengatasi trauma akibat kasus pelecehan seksual adalah dengan menggunakan *Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy* (TF-CBT). Hal ini dilakukan untuk mengurangi gejala traumatis dan meningkatkan rasa percaya diri pada anak. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis artikel yang relevan dengan topik dan untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian yang spesifik. Artikel yang ditemukan pada periode 2020 hingga 2024 dengan pencarian artikel Google Scholar melalui aplikasi Harzing's Publish or Perish 8 (PoP) mencapai 100 publikasi. Kemudian hanya dipilih 5 artikel setelah dilakukan pembatasan. Berdasarkan literatur yang dikumpulkan menunjukkan bahwa konseling behavioral dengan pendekatan TF-CBT efektif mengatasi gejala pasca trauma pada korban pelecehan seksual. Bagi peneliti selanjutnya diharapkan dapat mengidentifikasi TF-CBT pada korban yang memiliki latar belakang berbeda.

**Abstract.** Child sexual abuse tends to occur in close relationships, such as family and friendships. Abuse that has occurred in children can affect behavioral and emotional trauma in adulthood. According to the Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak (2024) from January 1st 2024 to the to the present the number of victims reached 12.558, with a percentage of underage victims 20.6% of victims with an age range of 6-12 years and 35.5% age range 13-17 years. This study aims to determine behavioral counseling interventions in overcoming cases of child sexual abuse. One of the behavioral counseling approaches that can be done to help children overcome trauma due to sexual abuse cases is by using *Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy* (TF-CBT). This is done to reduce traumatic symptoms and increase self-confidence in children. This study uses the *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) qualitative research method to identify and analyze articles relevant to the topic and to answer specific research questions. Articles found in the period 2020 to 2024 by searching google scholar articles through Harzing's Publish or Perish 8 (PoP) application reached 100 publications. Then only 5 articles were selected after making restrictions. Based on the literature collected, it shows that behavioral counseling with the TF-CBT approach is effective in overcoming post-traumatic symptoms in victims of sexual harassment. For future researchers, it is hoped that they can identify TF-CBT in victims who have different backgrounds.

**Key word:** "Counseling; Cognitive Behavioral; Childhood Sexual Abuse"

## INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, cases of sexual harassment increase every year. Victims of abuse do not only occur among adults but have spread to teenagers, children, and toddlers. Child sexual abuse has become a social problem that occurs throughout the world. Most cases of child sexual abuse are in close relationships, such as family, friendship, school, social, and internet environments (Noll, 2021). According to WHO (2022) it is estimated that globally, over the past year approximately 1 billion children aged 2-17 years have experienced physical, sexual, and emotional. Meanwhile, according to the Sistem Informasi Online Perlindungan Perempuan dan Anak, data from January to February 2024 stated that the number of cases of violence against children reached 1.993 cases. The number of cases has increased compared to cases of violence in 2023 which reached 3.547 cases. The cases increased compared to 2023 which was recorded by the Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia (KPAI) from January to August the number of victims reached 2,355 victims consisting of 861 cases occurring in the scope of education and 487 cases of sexual violence against children (Fahham, 2024).

Sexual abuse often happens to children directly, but many children do not report it because they feel embarrassed, afraid, or don't understand the abuse they receive. This can happen because usually the perpetrators are the people closest to the victim such as the family environment, school environment, and friendship environment. The Protection of Children From Sexual Offences Act of 2012, which regulates sexual violence and child protection, defines harassment as actions in the form of words, sounds, attitudes, or showing certain body parts that can be seen and heard by children; showing media for pornographic purposes; contacting, and following children digitally and other forms. Threatening via electronic media to fake photos, documents, etc. of the body shape of children involved in sexual acts or giving gifts to children for pornographic purposes (Komnas Perempuan, 2014).

Child sexual abuse can be oriented with verbal and non-verbal sexual activities accompanied by elements of coercion, such as holding someone's genitals to inviting sexual intercourse without the consent of the victim. Punishment for perpetrators of sexual harassment has been regulated in the Criminal Law (Suryandi et al., 2020).

Explained in UU No. 35 Pasal 1 ayat (2) tahun 2014 regarding Perlindungan Anak, it states “Perlindungan Anak adalah segala usaha yang menjamin dan melindungi anak dan hak-haknya agar dapat hidup, tumbuh, berkembang, dan berpartisipasi secara optimal sesuai dengan harkat dan martabat kemanusiaan, serta memperoleh perlindungan dari kekerasan dan diskriminasi” (Republik Indonesia, 2014). This stipulates that everyone must ensure the protection of children in the family or surrounding community to avoid sexual violence, discrimination, or other dangerous things.

Victims of child sexual abuse or violence, which occurs due to neglect or emotional abuse, will affect the mental health of victims in the long term. This will weaken victims in psychosocial development and physical and mental health (Strathearn et al., 2020). The impacts experienced by victims of child sexual abuse cases are physical and psychological impacts. One of the impacts of psychological trauma that can be experienced by victims is loss of self-confidence and loss of children's trust in their elders (Hidayati & Nurhafizah, 2022). Psychological trauma in child sexual abuse can be assumed to be a risk factor for developmental psychopathology (Noll, 2021). Mental health in children who are victims of sexual abuse needs to be considered from an early age. the closest people should be more concerned when children feel stressed, traumatized, or experience emotional problems, it will affect self-confidence and self-development in adulthood. Mental health problems in victims must be addressed immediately. Counseling is one way to help children's problems.

In the case of child sexual abuse, one of the types of counseling that can be used is counseling with a behavioral approach. Behavioral counseling analyzes visible behavior and changes it by changing to positive behavior. The purpose of behavioral counseling is to change cognitive distortions that can affect the victim's negative attitudes and behaviors that focus on the present to be changed from negative to positive by not ignoring the victim's past. This is done to help victims accept the past and develop in the future. A behavioral counseling approach that is often used in overcoming sexual harassment problems is using Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) is an evidence-based

intervention model designed to address post-traumatic symptoms (Molero-Zafra et al., 2024).

According to a study, cognitive behavioral therapy with a Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) provide positive results in helping overcome the trauma of children who are victims of sexual violence. According to Wolpe (1969) Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) provides positive results in helping to overcome trauma and depression in adults. Over time, the use of cognitive behavioral therapy counseling can be used as an intervention to help children and adults who are victims of sexual abuse or violence who show symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Beidel & Turner, 1998; Foa et al., 1991).

In Indonesia, there have been several studies that discuss behavioral counseling interventions in overcoming cases of sexual violence. Kusmawati et al. (2023) discusses the counseling methods used in helping victims of sexual violence. Agustina & Noviasari (2022) discusses the effect of behavioral counseling on adolescent self-confidence as a victim of sexual violence. Damayanti et al. (2022) discusses that Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) are not the most effective methods for reducing sexual behavior problems. From the above research it shows that there is a gap in research regarding behavioral counseling interventions in overcoming sexual abuse in children has different results. Therefore, further research is needed in the hope of obtaining information and answers to research questions.

The purpose of this study is to identify the effect of behavioral counseling interventions in overcoming cases of sexual abuse in children, especially in the level of self-confidence and reducing children's prolonged trauma. The research entitled "A Systematic Literature Review: Behavioral Counseling Interventions in Overcome Childhood Sexual Abuse" is expected to be useful for readers, especially educators, in knowing the level of success in using behavioral counseling interventions in overcoming the trauma of victims of child sexual abuse cases. The benefit for the community is to increase awareness of the importance of counseling for children who experience sexual abuse and for counselors. This article can help counselors in understanding which behavioral counseling interventions are effective in dealing with sexual abuse in

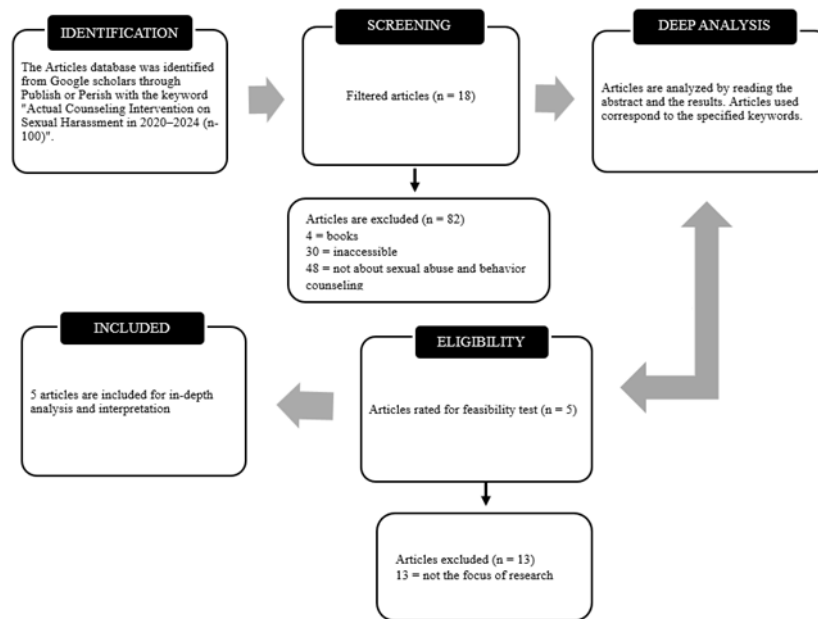
children, so that counselors do not make mistakes in providing counseling. For future researchers are expected to identify TF-CBT for victims who have different background problems.

## METHODS

This article uses the concept of literature using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method. The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method is a systematic method for collecting, evaluating, and synthesizing all relevant information on a research topic (ELH, 2024). By following systematic steps, researchers can ensure that their SLR is comprehensive and informative. Providing a strong foundation for further research and knowledge development. The Systematic Literature Review technique is carried out with five steps, namely: (1) identification, in which the researcher searches for articles relevant to the research topic through various sources of information; (2) screening, in which the researcher conducts an initial selection by reading the title and abstract of the article to evaluate the suitability of the article to the research topic; (3) deep analysis, in which the researcher conducts further selection in more depth by reading the abstract and conclusion; (4) eligibility, in which the selection is based on predetermined inclusion or classification and exclusion or analysis criteria; (5) included, in which the researcher thoroughly evaluates the articles that have been selected for inclusion in the SLR analysis (Dewi & Juandi, 2023).

The researcher determined the theme to be studied, namely "behavioral counseling and child sexual abuse". The researcher conducted a systematic collection of literature through various databases by searching google scholar articles through Harzing's Publish or Perish 8 (PoP) application with the keyword "Behavioral Counseling, Childhood Sexual Abuse". This search was conducted to collect relevant studies on behavioral counseling interventions in addressing child sexual abuse. The researcher limited the number to 100 articles collected from 2020 to 2024. Data from the studies found were processed and analyzed to evaluate the content of the corresponding articles. Based on the evaluation results, the researcher obtained 5 articles that were in accordance

with the predetermined content regarding behavioral counseling interventions in overcoming child sexual abuse.



## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the research data included in the literature review are an analysis and summary related to behavioral counseling interventions for cases of child abuse.

No	Title	Publication Year	Author	Results
1.	Meta Analysis of Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Reducing Child Sexual Behaviour in Sexually Abused Children	2022	Damayanti et al.	Research shows that TF-CBT has the potential to be an effective intervention thanks to its structured approach and focus on behavior change. TF-CBT uses trauma narratives and graded exposure as methods to address trauma-related sexual behavior problems. With some adjustments according to the age and cognitive capacity of the client, TF-CBT can be used by professionals to reduce problematic sexual behavior.
2.	Psychological intervention in women victims of childhood sexual abuse: a randomized controlled clinical trial comparing	2024	Molero-Zafra et al.	Research shows that in addressing the impact on adult victims of trauma related to childhood sexual abuse can use TF-CBT intervention. The use of trauma-focused psychotherapy

	EMDR psychotherapy and trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy			can also reduce trauma symptoms. The effectiveness of CBT applied for eight weeks can reduce chronic post-traumatic stress disease and depressive symptoms that cause dissociation and emotional regulation.
3.	Complex trauma and Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy: How do trauma chronicity and PTSD presentation affect treatment outcome?	2021	Ross et al.	Research shows that the fact that TF-CBT is effective for participants with diverse backgrounds suggests a number of important clinical implications. TF-CBT's flexibility can address different types and severity of mental health problems. For example, clients with significance.
4.	Psychological intervention with adult victims of sexual abuse: A comprehensive review	2021	Favero et al.	Research shows that interventions are generally effective in reducing the symptoms they are intended to reduce, although some therapies show better results for various measures, such as CBT, DBT, CAT, and EMDR. However, it cannot be concluded that one therapy is more effective than another in treating CSA survivors. Interventions can increase self-efficacy, resilience, and awareness of healthy coping skills, leading to positive changes in daily functioning. Such changes are inherently beneficial to the recovery process and can provide survivors with valuable tools in dealing with future experiences.
5.	Development of a Brief Psychological Trauma Intervention for Child Sexual Abuse in India	2023	Choudhary et al.	Research shows that interventions using culturally appropriate CBT can be applied to children aged 7-13 years as victims who have CSA trauma. In the trauma recovery phase, TF-CBT is used to establish a comfortable therapeutic relationship and is important for

				initiating change. This is done because most CSA survivors in India lack therapeutic support from the surrounding environment.
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Based on the results of the literature review of the 5 selected articles, it shows that providing behavioral counseling interventions can be effective in overcoming childhood sexual abuse. There are several reasons for using behavioral counseling in overcoming sexual abuse in children. Behavioral counseling focuses on changing maladaptive behavior into adaptive behavior by reinforcing desired behavior and eliminating unwanted behavior. Thus, the counselee can learn to change unhealthy behaviors into healthier ones, which can increase their self-confidence. The reviewed studies show a consistent trend towards positive outcomes, especially in terms of reducing trauma and fear. Behavioral counseling applied to child victims aged 7-14 years is more active and better able to manage information in overcoming problems (Damayanti et al., 2022). According to Choudhary et al. (2023) The use of behavioral counseling with a CBT approach has proven effective in overcoming the consequences of symptoms of sexual abuse in children. In cases of child sexual abuse, the duration of counseling is carried out between 90-120 minutes. The duration is divided into several sessions with a time span of 20-30 minutes. This is done because children have limited attention and the child should be able to give at least a brief acknowledgment of the trauma to be addressed and be able to recount a neutral experience with some detail.

The provision of interventions such as Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) needs to pay attention to factors such as age, and the intensity of the trauma because it can affect the effectiveness of the counseling provided. TF-CBT has the potential to be an effective intervention because it focuses on behavior change by taking into account the age and cognitive abilities of the counselee (Damayanti et al., 2022). Behavioral counseling using the TF-CBT approach is conducted on children who experience mild Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) due to sexual abuse. Things that need to be considered during counseling sessions on children are a child-safe room full of toys for children, non-dominant communication, and developing a therapeutic



relationship and not getting too involved in cases that cause loss of objectivity (Choudhary et al., 2023). The objectives of behavioral counseling TF-CBT approach are to: (1) explore the impact of childhood sexual abuse involving perpetrators from the child's family (intrafamilial) or involving perpetrators from outside the family (extrafamilial); (2) develop confidence in the victim's self-efficacy; (3) understand the impact on the child's behavior and social dynamics (Molero-Zafra et al., 2024).

The use of TF-CBT approach counseling is effective in addressing the problems of sexual abuse victims who have complex backgrounds. First, TF-CBT can be used with clients who have a history of complex trauma and complex trauma reactions. Secondly, the fact that TF-CBT is an affordable counseling approach because it is cost-effective. This is because the counselee only needs to follow one form of short-term therapy to alleviate various trauma-related symptoms and the counselor only needs to learn one model of intervention for child trauma, which saves the cost of training time, supervision needs, and requirements for competency maintenance. The counseling flexibility of the TF-CBT approach can also address different types and severity of mental health problems. So that if there are counselees who have deficits in interpersonal effectiveness, additional treatments that focus on these problems can be provided (Ross et al., 2021). Driven by the existence of traumatic experiences, the application of CBT behavioral counseling approaches that focus on fear and the impact of trauma that drives fear. The occurrence of these fears can trigger the development of dysfunctional cognitive schemes that cause depression (Fávero et al., 2022). In providing CBT intervention counseling, counselors must evaluate further in order to get more optimal results and not make mistakes in providing interventions. The intervention follows the general principles of CBT with a three-way focus: restoring the child's function, assisting the child in processing and managing trauma effectively, and starting the post-traumatic growth process (Choudhary et al., 2023).

Changes that occur after conducting TF-CBT counseling are improvements in symptoms and adaptive functions, such as PTSD symptom severity, emotion regulation, negative self-concept, and interpersonal problems. The provision of medication to patients who are victims of sexual abuse who have a history of trauma does not affect

significant results in reducing symptoms. Thus, the use of TF-CBT can be used as an appropriate form of treatment in children and adolescents who experience chronic trauma. TF-CBT intervention counseling is used to emphasize emotional regulation and correct trauma-related cognitions and help recognize oneself caused by emotional dysregulation (Ross et al., 2021). According to Molero-Zafra et al. (2024) counseling with TF-CBT group therapy approach can be beneficial in reducing feelings of shame, isolation, and stigma experienced by victims after traumatic events.

The limitations of TF-CBT are that it is unable to see problems originating from intrapsychic mechanisms and counseling does not run effectively if parents or guardians do not cooperate in treating children as victims. According to Damayanti et al. (2022) behavioral counseling using TF-CBT cannot be said to be effective in reducing sexual behavior. There are several factors that TF-CBT is not effective, such as the age of preschool victims, cognitive abilities, the intensity of the victim's trauma, trauma that arises due to stress during counseling. Meanwhile, according to Molero-Zafra et al. (2024) there is still little research on counseling interventions for female victims of childhood sexual abuse. A further limitation of this study is the lack of long-term follow-up, which would provide greater assurance regarding the interpretation of the research and the realities experienced by these women making follow-up after the therapy sessions have ended.

The novelty in this research with the help of VOSviewer application is adding new variables, namely counseling variables. In several articles that have been collected regarding child sexual abuse, there are still few that discuss behavioral counseling with the TF-CBT approach. Therefore, this research discusses more about behavioral counseling intervention in overcoming sexual abuse in children. The contribution of the novelty of this research for knowledge is to serve as a reference for further research. For the community, this research can be used as awareness that counseling is an aid for victims of sexual abuse and can also contribute to the novelty in research on overcoming the sequelae of trauma.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, reality group counseling treatment to increase student learning responsibilities was carried out for 4 sessions by the WDEP stages (Want, Doing & Direction, Evaluation, Planning) and the counselor inserted Al-Qur'an verses in each session. Based on the paired samples test results, the p-value is 0.013 ( $p < .05$ ), leading to the conclusion that the intervention of reality group counseling services is effective in helping students improve their learning responsibility. This aligns with the core concept of the reality approach that emphasizes responsibility and the 3R principles (responsibility, reality, right) in meeting needs and desires. Reality group counseling enables students to meet their learning needs and desires by the 3R principles. This study's weaknesses and strengths have yet to be identified, allowing future researchers to explore and identify them.

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