The Effectiveness Of Group Counseling With A Motivational Interviewing Technique To Improve The Self-Compassion Of Students Victims Of Bullying

Ikhwan Fauzi ✉, DYP Sugiharto, Ali Formen

Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

Article Info	Abstract
	Self-compassion helps protect an individual from self-evaluation anxiety when considering personal weaknesses. The increase in self-compassion is associated with the increase in mental health of students victims of bullying. Based on this background, the present study aimed at determining the effectiveness of group counseling using a motivational interviewing technique to increase self-compassion of students victims of bullying in grade ten at SMA Negeri 1 Subah. It was an experimental research which used a single group pretest-multiple posttest design. As many as 6 tenth graders were selected through purposive sampling from 69 students. Findings indicated that the motivational interviewing technique was effective in increasing self-compassion in students victims of bullying in grade ten at SMA Negeri 1 Subah. This finding can an implication for designing guidance and counseling services for students victims of bullying.

✉ Correspondence address:
Sekolah Pascasarjana Unnes
Kampus Bendan Ngisor, Semarang 50233
E-mail: ikfauzi@students.unnes.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

This study was generally oriented towards increasing self-compassion in students who were victims of bullying at school. Some urgency motivating it was; First, ideally school students have sufficient well-being to attain their academic success. Prastiwi & Mahanani (2021) explain that an effort that can improve welfare is by doing self-caring, which is usually called self-compassion. In terms of definition, Braehler & Neff (2020) define self-compassion as being kinder and more supportive of oneself and less judgmental. However, self-compassion attainment might get disrupted due to several existing factors at schools, such as bullying.

Second, bullying is a global mental health problem due to its prevalence and negative consequences for its victims. Third, a study by Murray-Harvey et al. (2012) considers victims of bullying are in between the bullies and victims-bullies. This means that victims of bullying may become bullies in the future. Fourth, a study conducted by Cornell et al. (2013) found that bullying is a predictor for the level of academic achievement and dropping out of high school (SMA) students.

Regarding arguments related to the urgency of the bullying impact, it is assumed that victims of bullying experience double victimization. Students who are victims of bullying often experience obstacles related to their academic achievement, such as physical and mental suffering due to bullying. Besides, the victims are at risk of becoming bullies in the future if there is no intervention to heal past trauma.

A previous study conducted by MacBeth & Gumley (2012) on self-compassion found that this variable can increase caring to oneself and lower mental health issues. Conversely, lower levels of self-compassion are associated with higher levels of psychopathology. Of these findings, it is known that self-compassion is one of the skills which is helpful to attain by individuals who experience mental health disorders, particularly students victims of bullying who were the main focus of this study.

Based on some previous studies and preliminary study findings, a relationship is found between bullying victims and self-compassion. Bullying has negative consequences for its victims and results in global mental health problems such as shame, depression and suicide, while self-compassion helps protect oneself from the impact of bullying in the form of self-evaluation anxiety when considering personal weaknesses and its increase is associated with an indication of mental health improvement. Thus, it can be assumed that self-compassion is one of the necessary skills to attain by individuals who experience mental health disorders, which in this research were focused on victims of bullying. By doing so, the present study can provide some consideration for providing suitable intervention as a means of increasing self-compassion in victims of bullying so that individuals can develop optimally in line with their developmental tasks.

Self-compassion has become increasingly prevalent in researches and is used in various interventions due to its significant association with many positive outcomes, such as the improvement of psychological health and well-being (Neff et al., 2018) and coping with stress (Chishima et al., 2018). This is reinforced by the findings of Krieger et al. (2013) namely victims of bullying who have higher levels of self-compassion tend to have lower levels of depression. In addition, the results of a study by Barnard & Curry (2011) explains that self-compassion has been proven to be negatively correlated with anxiety and depression, two negative things which are the impact of bullying and have the potential to harm emotional states. According to these studies, it is possible for schools to provide interventions with the aim of protecting victims of bullying by improving self-compassion skills.

A form of intervention that can be carried out by school counselors in an effort to increase self-compassion in students victims of bullying is group counseling. The assumption is that in the group counseling process, the counselor (group leader) helps group members to gain insight into the problems they face by making use of group

dynamics. It is confirmed by the findings of Yusop et al. (2020) study that group counseling has proven effective for various types of people with different problems.

Practically, there have been various applicable approaches to group counseling. One of which considered appropriate in group counseling is the humanistic approach. Schneider & Krug (2010) identified four important goals of existential-humanistic therapy: (1) to help clients become more present to themselves; (2) to assist clients in identifying ways they are blocking themselves from a fuller presence; (3) to challenge clients to assume responsibility for designing their lives today; and (4) to encourage clients to choose a broader path in their daily lives. Hays & Erford (2018) explains that the humanistic approach is directly related to the feelings and problems expressed by clients who come from disenfranchised groups (lacking social, economic and political power) and historically oppressed groups, who may feel demoralized or alienated. This approach respects clients as individuals, their views on the world and their diverse cultural heritage so that a humanistic approach is considered to be in accordance with the profile of bullying victims who have low self-compassion. In practice, there are several techniques in the humanistic approach that can be applied to students victims of bullying with low self-compassion, one of which is the motivational interviewing (MI) technique.

In Indonesia, the MI counseling technique is recommended by the government in treating drug addicted clients by addiction counselors and psychological treatment within the Ministry of Health in accordance with the Decree of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia (2016) concerning Guidelines for Comprehensive Therapy and Rehabilitation Services on Hospital-Based Substance Use Disorders.

Self-compassion can seemingly be developed through a compassionate therapeutic relationship (Desmond, 2016), for it is reasonable to assume that there is an important relationship between motivational interviewing (MI) and self-compassion. The basic assumption is that because MI has an accepting and compassionate nature which can likely be transferred to MI clients and in turn leads to self-compassion increase. In this study, the MI technique was applied by the researchers to increase self-compassion in students victims of bullying.

This study was done an effort to prove the effectiveness of group counseling with a motivational interviewing technique to increase self-compassion in victims of bullying. It is hoped that the findings can be used for guidance and counseling services for students who are victims of bullying.

METHODS

As many as 69 students victims of bullying in grade ten at SMA Negeri 1 Subah were involved as the population. They were then sampled using a purposive sampling technique with the criterion of having low self-compassion and grouped into an experimental group with the number of 6 people based on random assignment.

A self-compassion scale instrument developed by the researchers was used to collect the studets' data. It has 29 statement items arranged based on 3 aspects, namely self-kindness vs self-judgment, common humanity vs isolation. In filling out the instrument, the likert scale ranging from 1-5 was used to measure the students' tendency (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=less agree, 4=Agree, 5=strongly disagree) with a total score range of 29 to 145. In terms of reliability and validity, the scale obtained alpha reliability coefficient (self-compassion) of 0.886 and validity based on item correlation of 0.315 to 0.672. After the data were collected, those were analyzed using the Repeated Measures Anova test with the help of IBM SPSS Statistics 25.

The present study was an experimental research with a single group pretest-multiple posttest design. The research subjects were given a pre-test before carrying out the intervention. The next stage was providing group counseling intervention using a motivational interviewing technique for 5 meeting sessions with a time allotment of 2x45 minutes for each. In the counseling, the subjects went through some

stages, namely the initial stage, transition stage, activity stage and termination stage.

Motivational Interviewing technique procedures are building involvement (engaging), formulating goals (focusing), generating motivation (evoking) and planning change (planning). Then, it ends with an evaluation of the process and results to find out the extent of the success of the intervention applied to the research subjects. After completing the intervention, the subjects took a post-test. Two weeks after that, the experimental subjects took part in follow-up.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the Repeated Measures Anova test showed that there was an effect of motivational interviewing on increasing self-compassion in students victims of bullying (F(1.101, 11.009) = 28.743, p<0.01). The results of the measurement time analysis are presented in table 1.

Table 1 Results of Repeated Measures Anova Test

Time	M	SD	F	P
T1	71.00	8.00		
T2	98.17	5.91	28.74	<.001
T3	103.67	6.37		

Pairwise comparison analysis was carried out to determine the distance between times in the pre-test, post-test and follow-up with the implementation of the motivational interviewing technique in group counseling intervention. Based on the analysis results, there found an increase in career maturity between T1 to T2 (MD= -27.167, p < 0.01) and T2 to T3 (MD= -5.500 p> 0.01), meaning that that there was an increase in self-compassion for students victims of bullying between T1 and T3 (MD= -32.667, p<0.01). Further details of the pairwise comparison results are presented in table 2.

Table 2 Pairwise Comparison Test Results

Comparison	MD	SE	p
T1 - T2	-27.167	4.498	< 0.01
T2 - T3	-32.667	6.184	< 0.01
T1 - T3	-5.500	2.320	<.0.01

The present study attempted to examine the effectiveness of group counseling with a motivational interviewing technique to increase the self-compassion of students victims of bullying. Regarding the findings, the intervention given contributed the effect of time on the self-compassion increase in the students victims of bullying. It is in line with the findings of the previous studies explaining the effectiveness of motivational interviewing (MI) in the counseling context as a means of increasing clients' commitment to be achieve the desired goals (Lundahl et al., 2010; O'Halloran et al., 2014; Smedslund et al., 2011). In other contexts, meta-analyses have reported medium to large effects of MI on treatment adherence and small to moderate effects on treatment outcomes, such as psychological well-being (Lundahl et al., 2010). Moreover, a study by Santa Ana et al. (2021) supports the application of Group Motivational Interviewing (GMI) to engage patients in outpatient Subtance Use Disorders (SUD) treatment and reduce alcohol use. Apart from that, motivational interviewing has been admitted to be applicable in the world of education as in a study conducted by Indriani et al. (2022) that motivational interviewing (MI) is effective in increasing students' self-disclosure. This technique is also effective for improving student outcomes, such as academic achievement, academic behavior, and school-based motivation (Snape & Atkinson, 2016) .

CONCLUSION

With regard to the findings, it can be concluded that the group counseling with a motivational interviewing technique is effective in increasing the self-compassion of students victims of bullying. In relation to this, the future studies are recommended to give the intervention in an individual counseling setting. Meanwhile, at school levels, including high schools and university may use both techniques to increase

the self-compassion of students victims of bullying.

REFRENCES

Barnard, L. K., & Curry, J. F. (2011). Self-Compassion: Conceptualizations, Correlates, & Interventions. *Review of General Psychology*, *15*(4), 289–303. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025754

Braehler, C., & Neff, K. (2020). Self-compassion in PTSD. In *Emotion in Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Etiology, Assessment, Neurobiology, and Treatment*. Elsevier Inc. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-816022-0.00020-X

Chishima, Y., Mizuno, M., Sugawara, D., & Miyagawa, Y. (2018). The Influence of Self-Compassion on Cognitive Appraisals and Coping with Stressful Events. *Mindfulness*, *9*(6), 1907–1915. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-018-0933-0

Cornell, D., Gregory, A., Huang, F., & Fan, X. (2013). Perceived prevalence of teasing and bullying predicts high school dropout rates. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *105*(1), 138–149. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0030416

Desmond, T. (2016). Self-compassion in psychotherapy: Mindfulness-based practices for healing and transformation. In *Self-compassion in psychotherapy: Mindfulness-based practices for healing and transformation*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Hays, D. G., & Erford, B. T. (2018). *Developing Multicultural Counseling Competence: A Systems Approach*. Pearson. https://books.google.co.id/books?id=5ht uvgAACAAJ

Indriani, I., Wibowo, M. E., & Mulawarman, M. (2022). Effectiveness of Solution-Focused Brief Counseling and Motivational Interviewing in Improving Students' Self-Disclosure. *Jurnal Kajian Bimbingan Dan Konseling*, *7*(2), 81–88. https://doi.org/10.17977/um001v7i2202 2p81-88

Krieger, T., Altenstein, D., Baettig, I., Doerig, N., & Holtforth, M. G. (2013). Self-Compassion in Depression: Associations with Depressive Symptoms, Rumination, and Avoidance in Depressed Outpatients. *Behavior Therapy*, *44*(3), 501–513. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.beth.2013.04.0 04

Lundahl, B. W., Kunz, C., Brownell, C., Tollefson, D., & Burke, B. L. (2010). A Meta-Analysis of Motivational Interviewing: Twenty-Five Years of Empirical Studies. *Research on Social Work Practice*, *20*(2), 137–160. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731509347 850

MacBeth, A., & Gumley, A. (2012). Exploring compassion: A meta-analysis of the association between self-compassion and psychopathology. *Clinical Psychology Review*, *32*(6), 545–552. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2012.06.00 3

Menteri Kesehatan Republik Indonesia Peraturan Menteri Kesehatan Republik Indonesia. (2016). Rehabilitasi Medis Pecandu, Penyalahguna Dan Korban Penyalahgunaan Narkotika Dengan. *Menteri Kesehatan Republik Indonesia Peraturan Menteri Kesehatan Republik Indonesia*, Nomor 49(879), 2004–2006.

Murray-Harvey, R., Skrzypiec, G., & Slee, P. T. (2012). Effective and Ineffective Coping with Bullying Strategies as Assessed by Informed Professionals and Their Use by Victimised Students. *Journal of Psychologists and Counsellors in Schools*, *22*(1), 122–138. https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1017/jgc.2012.5

Neff, K. D., Long, P., Knox, M. C., Davidson, O., Kuchar, A., Costigan, A., Williamson, Z., Rohleder, N., Tóth-Király, I., & Breines, J. G. (2018). The forest and the trees: Examining the association of self-compassion and its positive and negative components with psychological functioning. *Self and Identity*, *17*(6), 627–

645. https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2018.1436587

O'Halloran, P. D., Blackstock, F., Shields, N., Holland, A., Iles, R., Kingsley, M., Bernhardt, J., Lannin, N., Morris, M. E., & Taylor, N. F. (2014). Motivational interviewing to increase physical activity in people with chronic health conditions: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Clinical Rehabilitation*, *28*(12), 1159–1171. https://doi.org/10.1177/0269215514536210

Prastiwi, S. B., & Mahanani, F. K. (2021). Self-compassion dan subjective Well-Being pada calon Tenaga Kerja Wanita (Tkw). *Jurnal Psikologi Ilmiah*, *13*(2), 120–128. http://journal.unnes.ac.id/nju/index.php/INTUISI

Santa Ana, E. J., LaRowe, S. D., Gebregziabher, M., Morgan-Lopez, A. A., Lamb, K., Beavis, K. A., Bishu, K., & Martino, S. (2021). Randomized controlled trial of group motivational interviewing for veterans with substance use disorders. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, *223*(March), 108716. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2021.108716

Smedslund, G., Berg, R. C., Hammerstrøm, K. T., Steiro, A., Leiknes, K. A., Dahl, H. M., & Karlsen, K. (2011). Motivational interviewing for substance abuse. *The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, *2011*(5), CD008063. https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD008063.pub2

Snape, L., & Atkinson, C. (2016). The evidence for student-focused motivational interviewing in educational settings: A review of the literature. *Advances in School Mental Health Promotion*, *9*, 119–139. https://doi.org/10.1080/1754730X.2016.1157027

Yusop, Y., Zainudin, Z., Ahmad, N. A., Norhayati, W., Wan Othman, W. N., Surat, D., & Fung, W. (2020). THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GROUP COUNSELLING: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, *7*, 513–518. https://doi.org/10.31838/jcr.07.13.94