

Do Guidance and Counseling Teacher Know About Students Mental Health Problems?: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract: It is known that adolescent mental health problems at school continue to increase in Indonesia. Guidance and counseling teachers are uniquely positioned to play a critical role in early identification and intervention. This research aims to determine teachers' understanding and knowledge regarding the forms of student mental health problems, efforts to deal with them and obstacles or problems in dealing with adolescent mental health problems at school as well as gaps or problems that schools have not been able to do to overcome mental health problems. The research method used in this research is qualitative. This research was conducted with a consensus qualitative study design. The research results show that teachers have recognized and understood the forms of mental health problems faced by students. The forms of mental health problems found through this research are anxiety, depression, severe emotional disorders, and attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder and have led to self-harm. Teachers are known to have used a variety of treatments aimed at promotion, prevention with class orientation, group and individual counseling. Problems that have not yet had to be addressed by schools are focused on the availability of infrastructure, collaboration and cooperation with parents or students' families as well as teacher capacity building programs. The results of this research contribute to guidance and counseling services in schools so that they can pay more attention to efforts to prevent and alleviate students' mental health problems.

Keywords: Adolescents; Guidance and Counseling Teacher; Mental Health

Introduction

Attention to increasing health problems is increasing. Various research findings that have been conducted show the complexity of mental health problems. Most mental health problems appear early in life, with research results showing that 50 percent appear before the age of 14 and 75 percent in their mid-20s (W.H.O., 2022). It is estimated that mental health conditions globally affect around one in seven children and young people aged 10–19 years (Erskine et al., 2016; Kessler et al., 2007). Depression is one of the main causes of mental health problems among teenagers, while suicide is the fourth largest cause of death among teenagers worldwide (W.H.O., 2022) One thing that is widely researched is the factors that determine the mental health of children and adolescents, who is most at risk, and what works to improve and foster mental health.

The increasing prevalence of students with secondary school mental health problems is a serious problem, as these conditions can hinder academic progress. Various findings show that students with mental health problems are unable to maintain productivity levels in learning. The sources of this disorder are often multiple and not single. Students with mental health problems can experience problems with concentration, memory, motivation, self-esteem, decision making and organizational skills (Collins & Mowbray, 2005; Markoulakis & Kirsh, 2013). However, mental health problems do not systematically cause disorders, in this case dropping out of school or academic failure. According to the model proposed by Fougeryollas, the presence of mental health problems can interact with protective factors, which can result in full social participation (Fougeryollas et al., 2019).

Among these protective factors, teachers' positive attitudes towards students with mental health problems have proven to be particularly important. But on the other hand, the teacher's negative attitude can also have a critical influence. There are three main components of teachers' attitudes towards students with mental health problems documented in the

literature: their feelings, perceptions, and behavior. First, regarding teachers' feelings, most of them are not afraid of students with mental health diagnoses (MHD) in general, but only 50 to 70% feel comfortable interacting with them (Becker et al., 2002; Brockelman et al., 2006). As for the second component, teacher perception, most teachers admit that students with mental health problems have a serious condition, but remain confident that they can succeed in their studies (Becker et al., 2002; Brockelman et al., 2006). Unfortunately, however, the most frequently reported source of influence on teachers' perceptions of mental health problems is their personal experience, followed by the media and formal training (Brockelman et al., 2006). A lack of accurate information may explain teachers' difficulty in identifying students with MHD (Becker et al., 2002; Brockelman et al., 2006). Regarding the third component, namely teacher behavior, there is something worrying, namely related to the statement: "I am not sufficiently qualified or trained to interact with students who suffer from mental disorders (Brockelman et al., 2006). Regarding actual teacher behavior, some of the most popular positive practices are discussing with students about their mental health problems or giving them extra time for exams (Becker et al., 2002; Brockelman & Scheyett, 2015).

Bearing in mind the assumption that adolescent mental health is an important aspect at every stage of human life. Meanwhile, the prevalence of mental health problems has continued to increase in recent years, with the majority of problems occurring in those aged 15 to 24 years. One person who can help the process of dealing with adolescent mental health problems is a teacher. This research aims to find out how teachers know about the forms or mental health problems faced by students and how to deal with them as well as obstacles or problems in dealing with adolescent mental health problems at school and what schools have not been able to do to overcome the problems. The aim of the research carried out is to obtain a comprehensive picture of how knowledge, efforts or handling strategies and obstacles faced by teachers are an important instrument in dealing with students' mental health problems at school.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach. The research design used consensual qualitative research (CQR), using partially structured interviews to collect and support recordings, interview transcripts plus a form regarding adolescent mental health problems. The population of this research is Guidance and Counseling Teachers in Senior High Schools and Vocational High Schools in the Yogyakarta Special Region. This research sample used a simple random sampling technique. The research also limited research participants to teachers with at least one year of work experience. This research data was collected through interviews set in a Focus Group Discussion. Analysis of research data was carried out using a thematic approach using the open-coding method.

Results and Discussion

Students make a very important transition from adolescence to early adulthood to college. When students are in high school, it is a critical period because it becomes a bridge to college. Based on the research results, it is known that the specific stress triggers faced by students are closely related to the high school period. Some of the problems faced by students in college include new living arrangements, homesickness, academic performance and expectations, time management, and social maladjustment (Linden & Jurdi-Hage, 2017).

For many college students, stress and feelings of overwhelm can be associated or related to mental health conditions, especially during significant transitions in their lives (Cuijpers et al., 2016; Pedrelli et al., 2015). Both studies state that stress when starting and

attending college is one of the main reasons students face mental health problems or conditions. Other reasons include academic pressure and arriving on campus with a mental health condition. An alarming thing, Blanco et al. states that 12-50% of all students meet the criteria for one or more common mental health disorders (Blanco et al., 2008).

This research examines three topics related to mental health, namely the forms of student health problems, the efforts made to overcome students' mental health problems and what schools have not been able to do to overcome mental health problems. First, related to the forms of mental health problems found in schools. Efforts to improve psychological well-being and protect adolescents from bad experiences and risk factors that can affect their potential to develop are very important. These improvement efforts are directed at well-being during adolescence and the future, as well as physical and mental health in adulthood (Organization, 2020). On the contrary, this period opens up the possibility of being exposed and vulnerable to mental health problems. About half of all mental illnesses, including anxiety, depression, severe emotional disorders, and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, begin in childhood or adolescence (Daniszewski, D; Rodger, 2013).

The various forms of adolescent mental health problems in Indonesia must be known. Mental health problems experienced by teenagers who are currently in high school are based on research results, namely "The forms of mental health problems in teenagers are more often anxiety disorders, mood and friendship disorders and lack of self-confidence" YR (GRBK1). Other teachers also experience almost the same forms of mental health problems. The same thing was conveyed that the problem of controlling emotions is also a concern and a problem that often occurs. "Some of the mental health problems faced in our school are emotional disorders, anxiety, irritability, emotions that tend to be excessive".

The results of research regarding the forms of mental health problems are in line with the results of research conducted by Merikangas et al. (2010), who sought to find out what mental illnesses most commonly affect American adolescents. This shows that anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness (32%) with the earliest symptoms occurring at around six years of age. Apart from that, there are risky behaviors, namely dating, smoking and fighting. Meanwhile, according to ARA (GRBK3) "There are various problems faced by teenagers related to mental health. However, based on records, every year/generation there are always students who experience problems: excessive anxiety, hallucinations, suicidal thoughts, recurring feelings of meaninglessness. Apart from that, there are also feelings of anxiety, there are already 3 students who are currently being treated by a psychiatrist."

The results of other research revealed that 19% of the sample had a diagnosed behavioral disorder, such as oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, or ADHD disorder, mood disorders, including bipolar and depression, amounted to 14%, and substance abuse disorders reached 11%. Nearly half of the students in the study (40%) were found to have comorbidity between the two disorders, indicating the high likelihood that a teenager struggling with mental health issues is likely also struggling in multiple areas (Organization, 2020).

Other concerns about forms of mental health problems are not limited to adolescence; we must consider the long-term impacts that mental illness can have. For individuals, the possibility of developing symptoms such as depressive disorders into adulthood will be higher if these symptoms develop during late adolescence (Humensky et al., 2010). This is the same as stated by SS (GRBK 4) "Based on my experience at school, I often encounter forms of mental health problems encountered at school, some of which are self-harm. Apart from that, I also often see students with mood swings in the form of crying and then laughing." Meanwhile, almost the same findings were conveyed by RIW (GRBK 5) and SP (GRBK 6) who said that: "Mental health problems experienced by students at school today "There are indeed many variations, including: excessive fear during exams, injuring oneself, often being

alone and avoiding friends and having a tendency to be inferior (lacking self-confidence) in the majors taken at Vocational High Schools" RIW (GRBK 5)

With this in mind, it is important to realize that the formative period in a person's life is an important window for improving mental well-being and preventing mental illness. To achieve this, schools are an important piece of the puzzle of how young people can be supported and guided through this challenging time (Hymel et al., 2017, hal. 98). "Some of the problems faced by students at Vocational High Schools are lack of motivation in studying, anxiety and fear about the future and low emotional control. Another thing that has been handled is the problem of children as victims of sexual violence at home carried out by people closest to the family. "This also triggers mental health problems experienced by students," SP (GRBK 6).

The second is related to efforts made to overcome students' mental health problems. Various kinds of efforts are made by teachers to deal with mental health problems faced by teenagers at school. This aims to prepare students or teenagers for the world of work. In schools, creating space to collaborate theory and practice to improve student well-being is one of the important functions of teachers, carrying out collaborative work with school communities who plan to follow this subject (Wyn et al., 2000). Therefore, improving students' mental well-being in the classroom will be related to the creation and maintenance of a positive classroom climate. Teacher support can reflect the enthusiasm to create a learning and school climate that encourages students' mental well-being (Mælan et al., 2018). The findings of this study are not much different, as expressed below. "We as Guidance and Counseling teachers have made various efforts. "However, what we do more often is carry out a mentoring process by listening to stories about children's problems, and then collaborating with psychiatrists regarding the information needed and carrying out further monitoring and providing more intensive attention to children who are known to have mental health problems," SS (GRBK 4).

A study conducted in Norway by Maelan, Tjomsland, Samdal & Thurston (Mælan et al., 2020) revealed that the provision of services by teachers aimed at improving mental well-being by being oriented to the classroom setting had an impact on students' positive feelings and perceptions. This includes a sense of belonging, actions that make them feel emotionally supported, and the possibility of strengthening bonds between classmates. These findings are in line but with different strategies as revealed as follows. "The first thing to do is explore the problem by inviting students who are experiencing problems to talk. After these steps, various combinations of services are carried out in the class. Through classical guidance services and group guidance services. But I definitely combine it with individual services" RIW (GRBK 5).

Teachers can be the first to hear signals or see the condition of students who have problems that affect their well-being and even identify some of the signals they send, and are sometimes ignored or unnoticed at home. Vieira et al., (2014), This can happen because school is one of the main places where students can express their struggles related to their mental health conditions, and this makes teachers special individuals (witnesses) because of the contact between students and teachers in the classroom.

This research shows the same thing as that research. Teachers try to collaborate with parents in dealing with adolescent mental health problems. As expressed by a teacher at school in an interview as follows. "We certainly cannot do our efforts alone. In fact, most of our efforts to deal with mental health problems are by presenting parents/home visits and directing parents to see a psychologist/psychiatrist (reveral). "Encourage the environment around these students, whether in the classroom, at the madrasa or at home, to make it more conducive," ARA (GRBK3). The same information was also conveyed by SP (GRBK 6). "Some of the efforts made to deal with problems are through counseling, coordination and communication with parents and homeroom teachers. As well as collaborating with other professions such as psychologists and related institutions."

The results of this study support previous international research (Froese-Germain et al., 2012; Moon et al., 2017; Reinke et al., 2011; Walter et al., 2006) which evaluated teachers' perceptions of their role in supporting and promoting positive mental health among students and 92.7% of teachers agreed that schools should play a role in identifying and correcting mental health problems. Graham dkk. (Graham et al., 2011), the results of this research indicate that teachers recognize mental health problems in the context of their daily teaching practice, but feel that some aspects of support remain the responsibility of other support professionals. The dominant view that emerges is that teachers see themselves as the most appropriate party to support problems related to student mental health through monitoring and implementing behavioral interventions in the classroom and learning.

Although teachers are well positioned to observe and recognize any changes in behavior or personality expressed by students, participating teachers have varying roles in the assessment/identification and provision of specialist referrals of students exhibiting mental health distress for additional support. This study shows that teachers who have not received training are statistically less likely to view screening and referral-related tasks as the teacher's responsibility, suggesting a need for greater professional development targeting these roles and the guidance provided by educational psychologists can play a role in supporting teachers. Teacher. Similar to previous research, the results of this survey indicate that more than half of participating teachers (65.7%) received little or no training (Moon et al., 2017; Reinke et al., 2011; Rothì et al., 2008).

Third, regarding things that schools have not been able to do to overcome emerging mental health problems. Effective school mental health programs place greater emphasis on targeting increased social and emotional learning (SEL) and resilience as well as preventing social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties, including risk behaviors (G. Browne et al., 2004; Cavioni et al., 2020; Cefai et al., 2018; O'Reilly et al., 2018). Therefore, the proposed framework for addressing mental health problems in schools is based more on research on mental health promotion and prevention. These two main aspects represent efforts to deal with school mental health problems which include three main domains.

The results of the research show that guidance and counseling teachers in Indonesia focus more on administrative problems first as a foundation for providing services for handling mental health problems. As stated by RK (GRBK 7) "So far, I see that there has been an MoU with psychologists. Even though there is an MoU with the community health center, psychologists from the community health center have limited schedules and are less flexible. So we seem to just wait until the psychologist comes to get more comprehensive services." Apart from that, schools still do not provide strong support in dealing with student problems related to mental health problems. This assessment was conveyed by SS (GRBK 4) who said "In-depth and comprehensive treatment cannot yet be carried out optimally. Especially in children with cases of self-harm because there is a tendency for students to repeat this behavior. We have never received special training in dealing with new problems that we did not receive in college."

Research evidence also shows the importance of interactive and experiential learning approaches and integrating learning into the general process of school life in treating mental health problems (Weare, 2015). In addition, social and emotional competencies must be ranked in the sense that activities need to be coordinated and developmentally appropriate (Durlak, 2011; O'Reilly et al., 2018). Mental health literacy, which refers to knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders, reducing stigma and encouraging help-seeking behavior, has also been targeted in some literature (Campos et al., 2018). However, family support is also needed in creating resilience in adolescent mental health. Parents should feel that their views, wishes and feelings are taken into account; they should always be fully informed about decisions that impact their child and feel supported in their role (Weare, 2015). This exposure shows the

importance of the family in supporting the resolution of adolescent mental health problems. However, this is precisely what Guidance and Counseling teachers need to improve and carry out in a structured manner. As stated by RIW (GRBK 5) "What schools have not been able to do to overcome mental health problems is to help bridge between children and parents with various activities. Even though it is very important, it is often neglected."

Another thing that must also be maintained is the understanding that apart from family and parents, teachers must be the point of emphasis in increasing the success of youth mental health improvement programs. Based on various research studies conducted regarding mental health promotion in schools, teachers are the biggest asset (Rowling, 2009). High levels of teacher stress and burnout, poor relationships with colleagues, students and families, and work intensification are significant barriers to mental health (Frank et al., 2013). Better teacher well-being is associated with better student well-being and lower student psychological difficulties (Harding et al., 2019). Therefore, prioritizing teacher well-being is as important as focusing on student mental health (Rowling, 2009). Another important thing that schools have not done in dealing with mental health problems is the provision of infrastructure to provide guidance and counseling services. This was stated by SP (GRBK 6) below. "What schools do not yet have are adequate facilities and infrastructure to provide assistance or guidance and counseling services. "The space is still limited and not ideal, the size, comfort and other aspects related to maintaining principles in guidance and counseling services are disturbed."

Conclusions and Suggestions

Mental health problems are a problem that must continue to receive attention and treatment. The various types of treatment currently available cannot be said to be completely successful, because they still require modification and development to suit the circumstances of teenagers at school. Although the promotion of prevention and treatment of mental health problems may compete with other demands in schools, research that can support holistic, inclusive and participatory practices in the field of mental health promotion is essential. The focus of research that must be carried out is regarding teachers' knowledge regarding the forms or mental health problems faced by students, treatment and various deficiencies that must be carried out together with the school. The research results show that teachers already have knowledge about the forms of mental health problems among adolescents in schools, but still need additional information about various other forms of mental health problems in more detail. Some forms of mental disorders that are known to teachers are: anxiety disorders, mood and friendship disorders and lack of self-confidence. In the aspect of handling mental health problems in this research, it shows that teachers have used various types of treatment aimed at promotion, prevention with class orientation, group and individual counseling. However, based on research results, it is still known that there are various problems that schools cannot do to overcome mental health problems. The problem of availability of infrastructure, collaboration and cooperation with parents or students' families as well as programs to increase teacher capacity in dealing with mental health problems are things that schools must continue to strive for.

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