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Mindfulness Training as Stress Prevention for Guidance and Counseling Teachers During a Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this service activity is to improve the competence of guidance and counseling teachers through group counseling training with mindfulness training. The method used in this service is the method of reflection, group discussion, and simulation. The target to be achieved from the BK teacher is a change in attitude or behavior in developing self-potential to carry out and conduct training for yourself as well as application to counselees on various problems, such as stress with mindfulness training. The results of these activities participants felt a significant impact on themselves both physically, such as feeling less tired, headaches and psychologically feeling comfortable, relieved, and calm.

1. Introduction

Distance learning has caused various problems to be discovered during the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the important roles in the success of the learning process in the field of study is teachers and guidance and counseling teachers. Along with the various problems encountered, it is also important that guidance and counseling teachers have skills in coping mechanisms so that they can provide guidance and counseling services to students so that they can run optimally.

Facing unprecedented difficulties and challenges, the school continues to be tasked with ensuring that all students and stakeholders have the necessary resources to support distance learning. However, recent research has revealed several challenges caused by such a rapid transition, namely in the form

of inadequate online learning infrastructure (e.g. internet signal interference), lack of experience of teachers in using online technology and learning online pedagogy, insufficient time to plan and decision-making for administrators, differences in the student's home environment on the process of accommodating online learning; and distress and concern among students, parents, teachers, and school administrators.¹ As part of a larger evaluation study of the impact of mindfulness practices on the capacity of school leaders to promote healing-centered engagement with students and teachers who have a history of trauma, stress and can also cope with difficult and unexpected situations.

Mindfulness is a manifestation of awareness and full attention to the current condition.² Mindfulness is also interpreted as one of the personality traits

associated with prosocial behavior. Mindfulness is closely related to life,³ psychological well-being⁴ and can also reduce anxiety.⁵ Greco et al. develop a mindfulness measurement instrument with the construct that mindfulness becomes a skill to give full attention and awareness of the present experience with acceptance without giving judgment.⁶

The mindfulness aspect has 3 parts, namely observing, which includes the ability to observe internal phenomena, acting, which includes awareness and involvement in current activities, and accepting without judgment, namely acceptance without judgment and being open to internal events experienced. The solution offered for this service is in the form of mindfulness training as an effort to prevent stress for guidance and counseling teachers during the pandemic. The training was conducted for BK teachers in Kudus City.

2. Methods

The methods used in this service are reflection methods, discussion groups, and simulations. Through mindfulness training, it is expected to be able to provide guidance and counseling teachers with understanding in managing stress. In general, these stages have been carried out and an evaluation of whether the implementation has been effective or not has been carried out. The indicators used to evaluate the success of this training include (1) observing, which includes the ability to observe internal phenomena, acting, which includes awareness and involvement in current activities, and accepting without judgment, namely acceptance without judgment and openness to internal events experienced. (2) Direct observation of the implementation and interactive discussion so that the intended indicator is reducing or eliminating stress with mindfulness Guidance and counseling teachers can be effectively carried out.

3. Results and Discussion

The pandemic period that has occurred for approximately 2 years has had a very extraordinary

impact both in the economic, political, and social, as well as in the field of education. In the field of education itself, the impact is not only on policymakers, namely the government or the education office, but also on students, parents, and teachers, especially guidance and counseling teachers who are not immune from this impact, namely stress.

Based on survey data, it is stated that around 82.2% of BK teachers feel that the COVID-19 pandemic has become increasingly difficult. Counseling teachers also feel stress in the range 4 as much as 22.4%. Stress itself is the body's reaction to difficult situations. Stress causes the body to produce adrenaline hormones that function to defend itself. Stress is a part of human life. Stress can have a negative impact as well as a positive impact. The negative impact is seen in someone with several characteristics, namely feeling dizzy, unfocused, decreased sexual arousal, and unstable emotions. In contrast, the positive impact is to make the body energized and excited to carry out the activities undertaken.

On the positive impact, BK teachers will be eager to carry out their activities, provide maximum guidance and counseling services, and be creative with content that suits their needs, while on the negative impact, BK teachers in carrying out guidance and counseling services become ineffective and on target. There can even be unnatural interactions. For example, when the counselee comes for a consultation, the BK teacher will respond angrily and even curse so that the goals to be achieved, for example, alleviating problems cannot be achieved or are not optimal.

In a situation like an example above, coping with stress that occurs will eventually make the BK teacher feel depressed and guilty. Coping stress itself is an action or behavior that is raised to minimize anxiety or stress. Lazarus et al. state that coping is a process in which individuals try to manage the distance that exists between the demands that come from individuals and demands that come from the environment with the resources they use in dealing with stressful situations.⁷ For BK teachers to be able

to cope with stress well, many things can be done, including managing stress, recognizing signs of fatigue, doing physical activity for at least 30 minutes, eating nutritious food, and practicing mindfulness.⁸

Mindfulness training can be carried out by BK teachers both for themselves and for students and colleagues at school and can even be practiced in the community. Mindfulness is an awareness that arises from paying attention to current experiences intentionally and without judgment.⁹ Aspects of mindfulness, according to Bishop et al., there are (1) awareness that is being present in full awareness in the present, (2) present experience means that the reality of time that a person has in real-time is only now, (3) acceptance means that acceptance makes the subject impartial, defends himself or rejects future events.⁸

Mindfulness training is very useful for both BK teachers and counselees with similar problems, namely stress, during the pandemic. Among the benefits of mindfulness are (1) training the mind and focus, (2) enjoying life, (3) loving yourself, and (4) reducing stress. mindfulness app in daily life, for example, doing meditation, writing a journal, eating, walking, communicating with others, and interacting with family members.

The application of mindfulness in the framework of group counseling services is possible. Apart from being done in a group situation, it will also increase the sense of togetherness in dealing with similar situations, namely stress.^{9,10} The stages of group counseling in the mindfulness approach include: (1) group members are asked to sit together in a circle. (2)

Group members are reminded of the norms in group counseling. (3) Group members are given explanations and problems faced (such as stress and pressures of daily life). (4) Group members are asked to share stories about the stress they experience in dealing with daily life and the efforts that have been made to overcome it.

In group counseling training with a mindfulness approach, this is done online, with 172 participants face to face virtually to conduct mindfulness training with the steps (1) Group members are asked to pay attention to the instructions given by the group leader (2) Group members are given information that mindfulness practice will focus on the present moment (3) Group members need to pay attention to the breath, the whole body, external sensations (smells, sounds), thoughts, and feelings. (4) When the mindfulness process takes place, there are wandering thoughts that must be realized and accepted and then returned to the breath.

At the end of the training session, participants explained the benefits that could be directly felt, including that the participants felt calm, felt comfortable, felt relieved, and the dizzy head gradually reduced the pain. In this training, participants are trained to accept problems, not as burdens but as problems, something that must be solved by positive acceptance of everything that happens in life. This is an indicator that the perceived stress that has a negative impact on the physical and psychological can be reduced so that guidance and counseling teachers can optimally carry out guidance and counseling services.

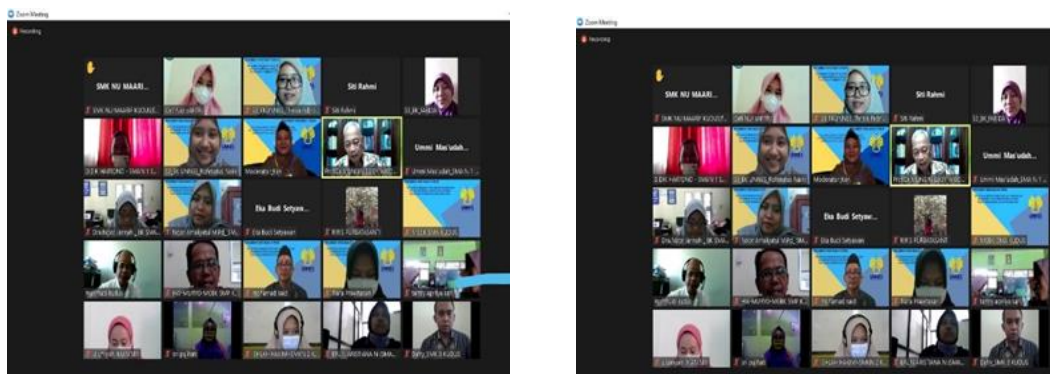


Figure 1. The team provides material for mindfulness training.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of community service activities in the form of mindfulness training to reduce stress for guidance and counseling teachers in Kudus it has provided a new understanding for BK teachers about interpreting stress more broadly, understanding group counseling with a mindfulness approach as well as the direct application of mindfulness in the frame of group counseling. Participants felt a significant impact on themselves both physically, such as feeling less tired, headaches, and psychologically feeling comfortable, relieved, and feeling calm. This is an indicator that mindfulness training is very important and needed in reducing the stress experienced by guidance and counseling teachers.

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