

Self-Help Group as a Method to Improve Emotion Regulation in Bullied Students

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Bullying is a phenomenon that can happen to everyone. Bullying victims' mental health can be negatively impacted. It can make victims experience emotional, psychosomatic and psychosocial problems. Adolescents who experience bullying are at greater risk of being hampered in managing or regulating their emotions. Self-help groups are given as a solution for intervention. This study aims to provide self-help group interventions to eight senior high school students aged 15 to 17 years with two males and six females indicated to be victims of bullying and experiencing interference with regulation of their emotions. The pretest and posttest in this study used the emotional regulation scale. Data were analyzed using the Wilcoxon test. The result obtained was 0.012 which means that there is an increase in regulation of emotions to all participants after being given a self-help group. The participants said that they felt more understanding, calm, and more able to control themselves after the intervention. The existence of a new support system also makes them feel more comfortable to be open about their problems because they do not feel alone.

Keywords: bullying, self-help group, emotion regulation, adolescent

Bullying is a phenomenon that is common in any society. Bullying as determined by WHO (2010) is a kind of persecution which has many various formats. Most of them are seen in schools and workplaces. It marked by someone who is repeatedly exposed to physical or emotional aggression, including teasing, calling with bad name, insulting, threatening, annoying, mocking, ignorant, social exclusion, and rumors. Bullying is an aggressive behavior that intent to hurt another person or people (Smith, 2016). According to Dan Olweus whom generally recognized as a pioneer and Founding Father of research on bullying problems (Olweus-gruppen mot mobbing, 2010), there are three characteristics of bullying's definitions. First, negative with intention to create physical injury or discomfort with aggressive behavior. Second, it does repetitive and over time, then third, it

represents a disproportion of strength (Margeviciute, 2017).

Actors and victims of bullying may come from any ages and any groups. However, this phenomenon of bullying tends to increase at elementary school level, reaching its peaks in secondary school, and decreased in grades 11 and 12 (Olweus, 1993; Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, 2001; Ahmed, et al., 2012). At adolescents age whom in the range process of finding identity also contributed to grow this phenomenon. The impact felt by victims of bullying will take various forms. Children and adolescents who are bullied can experience various problems such as on psychosocial, physical, and academic achievement (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016).

Soedjatmiko, et al. (2013) state that emotional and behavioral problems are more common and found in children involved in bullying, in this case the victims of bullying usually experience greater impacts such as psychosomatic and psychosocial disorders. Students who are suffer from bullying usually experience in the physical impact such as painfulness in all over their body as sometimes mentioned in the mass media. (Kusuma & Partini, 2017).

Adolescence is a period of transition from children phase to adult phase. The task of adolescence is to be an independent individual by develop a sense of oneself. They experience transition of physical growth and change, emotional, social, psychological, and mental change (Aro, 2011). In this period, many adolescents live life conflicting with parents, family, friends, teachers, and themselves. One of the common problem to adolescents is behavioral problem. They are developing independence by questioning over rules then breaking it (Hashmi, 2013).

Self-emotion is one of the psychological factors that play an important role in influencing individual behavior. Teenagers who have the ability to manage emotions will help themselves in controlling their behavior. The ability of a person to manage his emotions is called emotion regulation. Emotional regulation aims to minimize the negative impacts of problems faced by individuals by monitoring and evaluating their emotional experiences (Silaen & Dewi, 2015).

An understanding of the importance of emotional regulation in adolescence is very important to do, not only for their lives in adolescence, but also to prevent emotion regulation dysfunction when they are adults (Silvers et al., 2012). This is consistent with the findings of the practitioner of 15 healthy mental school cadres in MAN X. After screening using

Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) results were obtained if there were eight children who turned out to be borderline-abnormal with problems with friends or peers problems. The practitioners will try to get more detailed information from the eight children and it turned out that in the past they were victims from bullying from different executors. It affected them to date as they face difficulty in controlling their emotions and often to keep their feelings to their friends who have hurted them. It makes them very picky in friends and has difficulty being able to mingle with all their friends. They feel that no one can understand their past.

Having bullying experiences may cause problems for students in their regulation of emotions which may result difficulties in blending into their peer groups (Myers, 2012). Hakim, Yusmansyah and Widiastuti (2017) revealed that strong social influences can change a person's attitude towards a belief or event and refer to a behavior. Relationships formed by students and peers will have an impact on students' attitudes and ways of thinking something. Considering that in adolescence phase the influence from peer groups is very important to help teens to grow together and create support systems with their friends, therefore, the intervention that will be used for these students is by doing a self-help group. A self-help group is a form of group therapy that can be carried out in various situations and conditions, consisting of two or more people who have similar problems to share experiences and ways to deal with problems faced (Keliat, et al., 2008).

Method

Design

This study used an experimental method with the design of one group pretest-posttest design. Purposive sampling method was used for sampling. The study

was conducted only in the experimental group without control group.

Participants

Participants in this study were eight students of class X and XI MAN X, Muslim, male and female, and had suffered from bullying, as well as facing emotional regulatory problem.

Instruments

This study aims to improve the ability to regulate emotions in students through a self-help group. Students who get this intervention are expected to have higher emotional regulation scores than before the intervention was given. The emotion regulation scale used in this study was the

scale of Tarigan (2014) which is compiled based on the regulatory aspects of emotion Gratz and Roemer (2004). This scale consists of 22 items which contain four aspects of emotional regulation, i.e. acceptance of emotional response (acceptance), strategy to emotion regulation (strategies), engaging in goal directed behavior (goals), and emotional response (impulse).

Method of analysis used in this study is a method Statistical with analysis techniques nonparametric in Wilcoxon signed rank with the help of SPSS 21.00 for windows. The following is a categorization used by researchers to measure emotion regulation in study participants:

Table 1
Emotional Regulation

Categorization	Range
Low	$X < 58.7$
Moderate	$58.7 \leq X < 95.3$
Height	$95.3 \leq X$

Intervention Procedure

The therapy of self-help group was carried out into four times meetings. Each meeting was run for 4 – 5 hours. Before conducted the therapy, researcher will provide a pre-test sheet that would be used as a benchmark for quantitative intervention. The first meeting was carried out for building rapport, delivering group dynamics, informed consent, delivering procedures and group norms, pretesting, to fill *my problem sheets*, problems sharing and delivering their respective solutions. Goals in this meeting were to build a good rapport among researcher and participants, to make participants know what happened to them by explained group dynamics (since they did not know what really

happened to them and how bullying affect their emotion), to assured them to be opened about their problems (some of them were too shy and afraid to spoke up, repress it all then never told anyone about their feeling) also to be aware with problems itself.

The second meeting was held to help each other by providing solutions to group members, share the experiences with how to find their own solutions, and forgiveness sessions. The second meeting goals were to make them realize the effectiveness of previous solutions by sharing experience when its applied to their problems. Also this to make participants to be active and help each other with delivering their solutions towards others problem. To forgive the bullier might not be easy, hence

they need time to uncovering, make decisions, work it out then deepening it all.

The third meeting was to discuss the efforts to realize the solutions given, what kind of obstacles and further suggestions amongst the group members. This meeting aimed to see their efforts and experiences when trying to do new solution and forgiveness.

The fourth meeting contained of evaluation, post-test, affirmation, termination and closing. Each During therapy, the participants are more active in carrying out the therapy process. Researcher is only as a facilitator and observer so what is needed most to carry out therapy is the participants themselves. The following is the time table of intervention:

Table 2
Time Table

No.	Date	Time	Schedule
1	October 9th, 2018	9 AM – 1 PM	building rapport, delivering group dynamics, informed consent, delivering procedures and group norms, pretesting, fill <i>my problem sheets</i> , problems sharing, delivering their respective solutions
2	October 17th, 2018	9 AM – 2 PM	help each other (by providing solutions to group members), sharing the experiences with how to find their own solutions, and forgiveness sessions.
3	November 2nd, 2018	9 AM – 1 PM	Discuss the efforts to realize the solutions given, what kind of obstacles and further suggestions amongst the group members.
4	November, 17th, 2018	9 AM – 1 PM	evaluation, post-test, affirmation, termination and closing.

Result

Based on the results of the Wilcoxon test, the number $Z = -2,524$ and $p = 0.012$ ($p < 0.05$) which means that the hypothesis is accepted, in other words there is a significant difference between emotional regulation score when conducted pre-test and post-test is. The results also show that

there is an increase in regulation of emotions that occurs in all participants after being given group intervention. Some participants experienced scores increased even though they were still in the same level category. Some other participants experienced significant scores increase that bring them into higher level of categories.

Figure I
Difference Score Emotion Regulation Pre and Post-Intervention

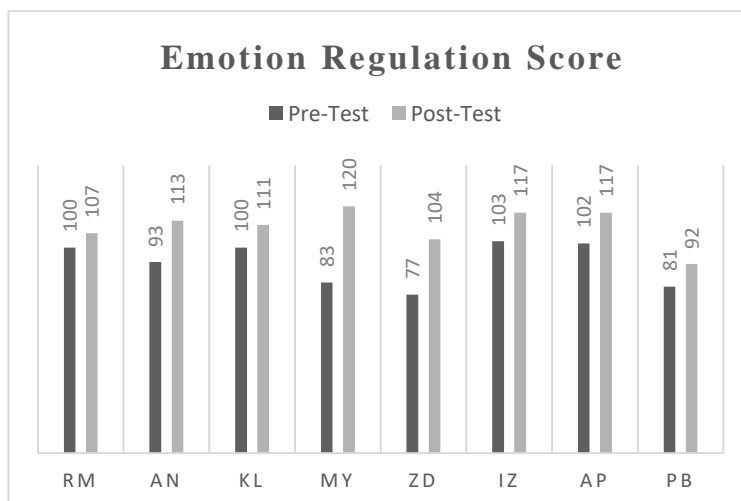


Table 3
Scores Pre-test and Post-Test

Participants	Pre-Test	Category	Post-Test	Category
RM	100	High	107	High
AN	93	Average	113	High
KL	100	High	111	High
MY	83	Average	120	High
ZD	77	Average	104	High
IZ	103	High	117	High
AP	102	High	117	High
PB	81	Average	92	Average

Discussion

Research conducted aims to look at the self-help group as a method for increasing the regulation of emotion of MAN X victims of bullying. Quantitative data analysis shows results that there is a significant increase in the score of participants' emotional regulation before and after intervention. The research score also shows if there are some students who have increased numbers even though they are in the same category. Categorization also shows if the lowest score of the participants is in the "moderate" category. This does not mean that students do not need any help or further intervention. To find out whether an individual is considered capable enough to regulating his emotions, we need to know their strategies and how they use it (Gratz & Roemer, 2004). Upon further explored it is proven that most of them were not aware for the effectiveness of regulation of their emotions as the result of bullying that had happened to them.

The effects of bullying if cannot be handled properly can lead into new problems. These effects may happen either in the short or long period, it can even continue until they become adults. Bullying experienced for children and adolescents is very important because it can affect to well-being and psychosocial functions (Sugiharyati, 2009). Children and teenagers who experience bullying will feel lonely and have difficulty making friends

(Videbeck, 2011). Individuals in adolescence are vulnerable to emotional disturbances due to their limitation to manage emotions. The emotions may arise whenever somebody feeling threatened (Gross, 2002).

Exploring to be more detailed into participants' problems, it showed that at earlier stage, they did not think that they had problem. Therefore, they thought being silent was enough. They preferred to keep their emotions and released it into lesser good actions such as escape from the class, going away from home, slamming things, hitting walls, etc. Upon closer and deeper exploring, the participants realized that they had to manage their problems properly. They found that being a bullying victim affected to their emotions regulation which was not good for them. These problems ultimately also affected their ability to get along with peers or their peer problems. According to Undheim and Sund (2010; Limo, 2015), victims of bullying tend to feel that they are not acceptable in their social environment.

The students who have experienced being bullied may unconsciously carry out an inappropriate coping strategy, called repression. Adaptive coping comes from approaches, self-help, accommodated while maladaptive coping includes avoidance and self-punishment (Zuckerman & Gagne,

2003; Ong & Thompson, 2018). A prolonged repressive action will make their negative emotions stacked without being released. Their tendency to keep silent creates lack of social support where they supposed to get. Combinations between immaturity in their teens ages that basically vulnerable for emotional disturbances combined with incorrect coping makes the participants experienced for any disorders and difficulty in managing their emotions. In other words they overcome an experiencing emotional regulation. This is similar to what Reivich and Shatte (2002; Syahadat, 2013) said about two important things related to the regulation of emotions, namely calmness (calming) and focus (focusing). Individuals are considered to have good emotional regulation ability when they can manage these two things. It will help to reduce the emotions, focus onto interfered thoughts and reduce stress.

The participants also telling that they preferred keep silent rather than telling others about their problems. They thought nobody will hear and understand them and were afraid of being blamed or getting bad labeled by their friends. It was actually disturbing them because at the end they could not express what they feel to their friends. . The shadow of the bully they have received often appears and makes them feel afraid and reluctant to express their feelings. They become picky in making friends and find it difficult to be able to mingle with all their friends because of feelings nobody can understand them.

Research conducted by Ikhsani (2015) shows that victims of bullying get psychological stresses such as arising from feelings of irritation, sadness, lack of confidence, discomfort, not concentration during studying in the classroom. When the victims get social support, they can repress their minds telling that what has happened is not as bad as they thought. Through social support also can help them to deal with their problems. However, in case the

victims do not get any social support, they will be surrounded by negative thoughts.

Therapy of self-help group was given for these students in order to provide social support due to the targets are to make them be able to socialize and open to get new support system within their therapy groups. The goal of self-help group is to be able to make each group member socializing, sharing their problems and experiences with fellow group members (Bensley & Fisher, 2003). Students who take part in this activity reported that they feel calmer and relieved because they do not feel alone as victims of bullying. They also feel happy because they have new support system to share and getting reinforcement. Participants also become aware of what to do to regulate their emotions well.

Conclusions

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that there are significant differences in the regulation of emotions of students who are victims of bullying after being given an intervention self-help group. Therapy of self-help group proven quantitatively and qualitatively to be one of group therapy that is effective enough to be able to increase participants' emotional regulation. The positive response and enthusiasm shown by the participants creating good reciprocal interaction, comfort and openness between the participants and making them become close each other and so a support system new between participants was forming. The participants got the solutions and insights on their problems as long as they help each other and they get new point of views to support each other for channeling their feelings (not always be angry, sad, or run away when facing a new problem).

Participants are expected to continue what they have obtained during the therapy. The techniques and advice given can be applied by the participants to overcome problems related to emotion regulation. During the

process of implementing therapy, a joint group is created which the purpose to facilitate joint communication. The participants are expected to continue to maintain communication and relationships therapeutic to be able to support each other, one way through the existing platform group.

The school should pay more attention on the facts that there are students who became victims from bullying which impacted to their difficulties in regulating emotions. Counseling and guidance teachers (BK teachers) may run routine monitoring and consulting to students who seem to have problems. It would be better for them to start paying attention to students in all classes and all teachers also to support to monitoring all students together with counseling and guidance teachers.

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