

Gratitude Therapy to Reduce Suicidal Ideation in Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

This study is motivated by the observation of adolescents who have suicidal thoughts. Suicidal ideation refers to an experience where the individual feels that his life is useless. This examination is carried out to help group problems regarding *Suicide Ideation*, namely by collecting information data by conducting assessments and developing a history of issues that each group member has as a basis for intervening in-group members. The subjects of this study were 5 adolescents from the orphanage. In this case, the group was formed from referrals and complaints from the head of the Orphanage. The group members came from the same education but different schools. Three group members came from SMA A, while 2 members came from SMA B. This study used an experimental research design. The data collection technique used in this study is a measurement with BSS (*Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation*) to measure the severity of suicidal ideation and plans. The results showed that the Gratitude technique was quite successful so that they could be aware of the good things they still had.

Keywords: *Adolescents, Orphanage, Suicidal Intention, Gratitude Therapy*

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence comes from the Latin adolescence, which means growing into adulthood. Adolescence is a time of storm and stress (Hurlock, 2006). Adolescents in orphanages sometimes cannot accept their condition in the new world. Some adolescents, due to the loss of their parents, will lose their identity, which leads to psychological disorders. In this condition, the environment with a new family is one of the motivators for adolescents to rise from adversity and lose the actual family figure. Self-acceptance is one of the processes adolescents undergo when living in orphanages. Adolescents must accept their condition that they will stay in the orphanage for a long time.

The condition of adolescents who are under constant stress due to their inability to solve their problems can lead to depression (Sumiati, 2009). The American Psychiatric Association (APA, 2013) in DSM V describes a person's experience of depression as a mood disorder in which the person is overwhelmed by depressive feelings such as sadness, emptiness, hopelessness, and loss of interest for two weeks or more. Feelings that arise in individuals, such as feelings of sadness, emptiness, hopelessness, and loss of interest for at

least the last two weeks, are called feelings of depression. Depression tendency explains the extent to which an individual experiences symptoms of depression (Utaminings et al., 2021). The worst effects of depression can lead a person to commit suicide. Every year, more than 800000 people die by suicide due to depression (WHO, 2017). According to Beck et al. (1979), individuals who have suicidal ideation are individuals who currently have plans and desires to commit suicide but have never made a suicide attempt. This is because suicidal ideation logically comes first before a suicide attempt or committing suicide. According to research by Pratiwi & Undarwati (2014) conducted in the city of Semarang, the results showed that, out of 442 adolescent respondents, 133 respondents had suicidal ideas, showing that 78 teenagers just wanted to die, 44 teenagers who wanted to die by suicide, and 11 people who just wanted to kill themselves. Three hundred nine teenagers did not have suicidal ideas. The causes of adolescent suicide are internal and external factors (Sudhita, 2009). These factors include psychological factors, social environment, family, biology, romance and history of suicide. Cognitive development, understanding of the concept of death, affective factors and attachment also influence suicide. According to Iswari (2019), there is an influence of depression, hopelessness, loneliness, and suicidal ideation. From this explanation, it is said that suicide is preceded by suicidal ideation. Suicide attempts that begin with suicidal ideation caused by various factors in the individual's life (Karisma & Fridari, 2021).

One intervention that can reduce symptoms of depression is gratitude. Gratitude is a branch of positive psychology that focuses on the positive things within individuals. An emotion that centres on the pleasant feeling of the benefits received by the individual and is the idea of feeling undeserving of something is the definition of gratitude (Emmons & McCullough, 2004). According to Emmons and McCullough (2004), the benefits in question can be emotionally and spiritually material and non-material. Gratitude can arise in a variety of life experiences. Gratitude comes from the result of a person's positive perception that is not necessarily deserved or earned by the individual and comes from the behaviour of others. According to (McCullough et al., 2002), gratitude comprises several aspects: intensity, frequency, span, and density. With gratitude, it is hoped that individuals will be able to see the various positive things that exist in themselves and change the focus of their previously negative views and thoughts to focus more on the positive things that exist in themselves.

Gratitude is associated with positivity and appreciation of life, so life orientation will become more positive (Wood et al. in Lin, 2015). This positive orientation is contrary to a depressive orientation that views self, life and the future as unfavourable (Beck in Lin, 2015). With gratitude, individuals will make positive attributions, which can protect them from stress and depression (Lin, 2015). When individuals feel discouraged, anxious or depressed and even want to end their lives, a view of gratitude can help balance perspectives and remind them that events that occur in life are challenges that will produce something positive (Worthen & Isakson, 2007). Based on the exposure of the research background, the researcher then wants to know the effect of gratitude therapy on reducing depression symptoms.

METHOD

The methods used were observation, interviews and several psychological tests. Subjects totalled 5 adolescent girls aged 17 years. Determination of the subject is the age range of less than 15 years, has a BSS (*Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation*) score with a moderate to high category, has a relatively similar problem, namely the desire for suicidal ideation, and the subject is willing to participate in a series of activities until the end. Observation is carried out to know the condition or physical condition, how to communicate, psychomotor and social relationships, and symptoms of disorders experienced by clients. Interviews were conducted with the client to extract data about the symptoms present in the client, causative factors, internal complaints (physical, psychological, social), client life history, and other information from the client related to the problems he experienced. Not only that, interviews with the Head of the orphanage were conducted to explore data about family background, history and external complaints related to the problem. Data collection of diagnostic test tools was carried out as supporting data using the BSS to measure the level of suicidal thoughts and plans and the BDI II (*Beck Depression Inventory*) test to measure the level of depression in the subject.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

RESEARCH RESULT

Based on the results obtained from the Head of the Orphanage, the children who live in the orphanage have different backgrounds. Most are from families that are not harmonious or facing economic problems. The head of the orphanage said that he often saw them crying and having difficulty sleeping; they also told the head several times about what they experienced about feeling lost and burdened, and many felt lonely. The headmistress said she had created a comfortable and supportive environment for them by constantly telling stories or chatting casually and providing activities such as picketing, sports and religion. The current problems include symptoms of moderate to high depression as well as BSS results that show *Low Risk* to *High Risk*. Each group member experiences similar problems with different causes, such as a deep sense of loss of parental figures that makes them trapped in prolonged grief. This condition strengthens members' feelings of helplessness. In addition, they consider themselves a burden to the family, which makes them lose hope and motivation to live. Other problems that arise are difficulty sleeping, often crying at night, and the emergence of desires and thoughts to end life, which are common symptoms experienced by each group member. The desire to end life in each group member reflects their hopelessness, where they cannot see hope, other good things to do and solutions to their problems. In addition, problems such as the lack of emotional support felt by each group member even though they had family, they felt that the relationship was not deep enough or could provide the security needed. Overall, the group members' problems were rooted in feelings of loss, loneliness, low self-esteem and lack of

adequate social support. This led to thoughts of ending one's life as a way to escape the emotional suffering

Table 1: Gratitude Therapy

No.	Client Name	Before Intervention	After Intervention
1.	LN Client	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since LN's father died, LN has felt lonely, useless and with a bleak future. She wanted to end her life because she had no purpose in life. • LN Pre-test result score: 15 (<i>High-Risk Category</i>) 	<p>After the intervention, LN can see other perceptions of the events that happened to her and the feelings she experienced. Namely, LN is grateful that other people still love her, such as friends from the orphanage, so that LN no longer feels lonely. LN is also grateful to have been born in the world and still have a mother, and she is grateful to be the child of her late father, who is more sincere and makes himself strong.</p> <p>Post-test result score LN: 10 (<i>Low Risk</i>)</p>
2.	Client VN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VN felt he continued to trouble his family, especially his older brother and biological mother. VN felt useless, so several times, he had thoughts of suicide. VN said he had several close friends at the client's home, but VN said he was not very close; he was just an ordinary friend. • VN Pre-test result score: 12 (<i>Low-Risk Category</i>) 	<p>VN was able to find happiness and hope despite her problems. VN still sees the positive side of family relationships and appreciates her mother and sister's support. This resulted in a decrease in the desire to end her life.</p> <p>VN Post-test result score: 10 (<i>Low-Risk Category</i>)</p>
3.	MS Client	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS felt that no one cared about her, only focusing on her father's younger brother, thinking that her life was meaningless 	<p>MS is positive even when faced with severe challenges and adverse experiences or events. MS's gratitude for her existence as a child of MS's</p>

	<p>because of the problems she experienced and also thinking that she was thrown away. At night, MS often cries and has suicidal thoughts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MS Pre-test result score: 19 (<i>High-Risk Category</i>) 	<p>mother reflects the deep bonds within the family. MS realises how precious it is to have a mother who gives simple greetings and the existence of a younger sibling who is a summer of happiness and motivation. Although MS initially felt outcast, MS was able to see her sister as an encouragement in her life, which made her feel like she had a purpose and a reason to keep</p> <p>VN Post-test result score: 11 (<i>Low-Risk Category</i>)</p>
<p>4. Client SK</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SK appeared to have feelings of uselessness about death because no one understood her, even though it was her mother who felt unable to protect her grandmother and was only a burden on the family. Feeling that no one loves and cares about her SK Pre-test result score: 24 (<i>High-Risk Category</i>) 	<p>SK can see the positive things in his life, namely showing gratitude for being born in the world and seeing that there are still those who love and care about him, namely his pantry friends, mbak Ruro and Mak Elok, who provide support and affection. In addition, SK sees that the grandmother is a substitute for a mother figure who also loves her dairy and is not different from her mother. Moreover, SK's father, although far away and not communicating, makes guidelines and hopes. For SK, his father is a source of inspiration that helps him find direction or provides encouragement to move forward. So, despite the many problems experienced by SK, SK is grateful to have still a small family, which is a strength and motivation in life.</p>

		SK Post-test result score: 12 (<i>Low-Risk Category</i>)
5. WK Client	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WK thought of herself as an unwanted child, felt abandoned by her family, and wanted to end her life. • WK Pre-test result score: 18 (<i>High-Risk Category</i>) 	<p>WK can see the positive side of the problems she faces. SK is aware of his existence and ability to breathe and see. Despite anger and disappointment, WK could find and remember her mother. Without her mother, WK would not have been born in this world, and she would not have met her other friends and been born. Even though she was alone, WK was grateful for being in an institution that provided support from people who cared and accepted her situation.</p> <p>WK Post-test result score: 11 (<i>Low-Risk Category</i>)</p>

The post-test scores of all subjects showed a significant decrease from high-risk to low-risk categories, as follows:

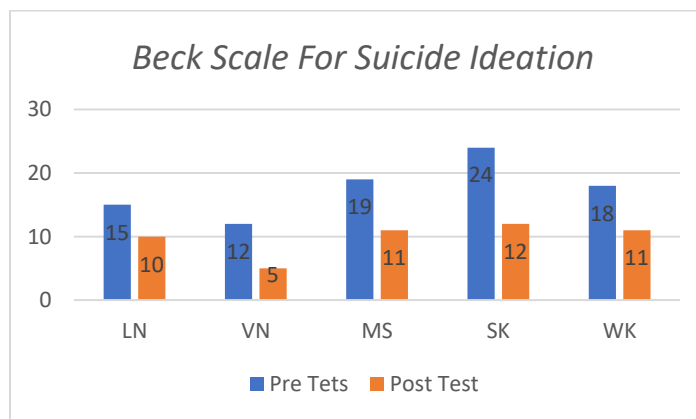


Figure 1: Beck Scale For Suicide Ideation

Based on the results of the "Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation" chart show the pre-test and post-test results of five clients (LN, VN, MS, SK, and WK) before and after the intervention. These results illustrate a significant decrease in the risk level of suicidal

ideation after the intervention. Initially, most clients were in the *high-risk* category (e.g., LN with a score of 15, MS with a score of 19, SK with 24, and WK with 18). However, after the intervention, all clients decreased their scores to the *low-risk* category. For example, LN's score dropped to 10, MS's to 11, SK's to 12, and WK's to 11. The most significant decrease was seen in VN, whose initial score of 12 dropped to 5 after the intervention. This data reflects the success of the intervention in helping clients manage emotions, see a positive perspective in their lives, and reduce thoughts of ending life. With a focus on emotional support, cultivating gratitude, and realising the value of life, the intervention proved effective in reducing the overall risk of suicidal ideation. During the intervention, all members were cooperative, following directions from start to finish, which can be classified as successful. Each group member can be aware of the good things they still have. The results obtained showed a decrease in the level of suicidal ideation.

DISCUSSION

Research conducted by Wogpy, N. & Dianovinina (2019). Based on this research, the results obtained are that the subjects who experience depression but are still in the mild depression category show emotional, cognitive, motivational and physical symptoms. The causative factor is the subject's thoughts that focus on negative things from events in his life so that he judges himself negatively. This shows that the *gratitude* intervention provided can reduce the symptoms of depression felt by the subject. In addition, research by (Wardani & Junior, 2022). This study aims to analyse the nursing care process in suicide-risk patients through the application of *gratitude journal* writing exercise techniques. The generalist interventions provided include identifying positive aspects in the client, family, and environment, discussing future expectations and ways to achieve these expectations, as well as additional interventions for gratitude journal writing exercises that aim to identify positive things as a way to make meaning in life. The results of this study showed a decrease in the client's suicidal ideation score from 25 to 22 and a decrease in signs of suicide risk symptoms during 6 days of treatment. Supported by research (Putra, Listiyandini, Rhmatika et al., 2019), Theoretically, gratitude can increase various types of positive emotions, such as happiness and can even last long term (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). In this case, gratitude is a subjective experience that can be a source of human strength in interpreting life so that it can increase positive emotions and, at the same time, also become satisfied with life (Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010)

The dynamics of the problems experienced by group members include many factors, namely internal and external factors, that affect their psychology. Each group member experienced feelings of loneliness, low self-esteem, lack of social support, and the loss or rejection of parental figures in their lives. In the context of dynamics, it refers to several aspects that influence each other, namely loneliness and emotional isolation. In this aspect, the group members live in a social environment, namely an orphanage. However, although each member has friends, they still feel that no one can understand every problem they experience. This loneliness is due to a lack of social interaction and their inability to find the proper emotional support. This exacerbates their condition and makes it difficult

for them to open up and seek help. Prolonged loneliness also leads to feelings of hopelessness, which in turn leads to thoughts or desires to end one's life.

In addition, a major contributing factor was low self-esteem. All group members felt that they had no value or were useless, either to themselves or others, feeling a burden to the family, reinforcing the belief that they were unwanted. This low self-esteem limited their ability to see their positive side and the good things they had done in their lives. This low self-esteem has them increasingly believing that they are worthless. These feelings then became serious as the idea of ending their lives emerged as a way to escape the constant pain they felt. Each group member experienced the loss of an important figure, such as facing deep grief after losing a parent, which triggered feelings of emptiness and hopelessness and the rejection by one of the parental figures, which made them believe that they were not wanted. These problems not only affected the psychological state of the group members but also affected the group members' ability to rebuild healthy and supportive relationships. Suicidal thoughts in each group member emerged as an attempt to "catch up" with someone important to them and to end the pain of rejection. Without strong support, it was difficult for each group member to find ways to process their emotions or gain a more positive perspective. The lack of strong support impacted each group member's ability to cope, exacerbating their feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness. Each group member experienced sleeplessness and frequent night crying, which are symptoms of protracted emotional stress. The lack of sleep worsened their situation and made each group member more prone to physical and emotional exhaustion, affecting their daily activities and lives. It can be concluded that from the above, each group member has many contributing factors, such as loneliness, low self-esteem, loss or rejection and lack of social support. Some of these causes worsen the psychological condition of each group member, which triggers the emergence of suicidal ideation as a form of escape from the pain felt.

Based on the intervention data on the five subjects, there was a significant change in their perspective and psychological condition after being assisted. Before the intervention, most subjects felt lonely, useless, and had no purpose in life, which led to thoughts of ending their lives. However, after the intervention, the subjects were able to find a new, more positive perspective on their lives. For example, subject LN began to be grateful for the affection of friends and family at the orphanage. Similar things were experienced by other clients, such as VN, who valued family support more; MS, who found the spirit of life through the existence of her younger brother, SK, whom his grandmother and father inspired; and WK, who was grateful for the support from the orphanage environment. Thus, the effectiveness of this intervention helped the subjects develop gratitude, find a purpose in life, and reduce thoughts of ending life. This intervention provides evidence of the importance of emotional support, positive perspective, and gratitude in restoring the psychological condition of individuals experiencing severe distress. And based on the results of the "Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation" chart show the pre-test and post-test results of five clients (LN, VN, MS, SK, and WK) before and after the

intervention. This data reflects the success of the intervention in helping clients manage emotions, see a positive perspective in their lives, and reduce thoughts of ending life

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the provision of the gratitude intervention had a positive impact on changing their mindset. By focusing on things to be grateful for, the group members were able to see the positive side of negative feelings about themselves and suicidal thoughts. The gratitude intervention helped the five clients (LN, VN, MS, SK, WK) to begin to realise and appreciate the positive things in their lives, even though they each experienced severe emotional difficulties and trauma. By noting or mentioning what they were grateful for, whether it was people who supported them, good experiences, or small things in their lives, they began to focus on the positive side even though there were still deep negative feelings. Overall, this intervention can help group members reduce suicidal thoughts in group members by increasing each group member's awareness of the good things they still have.

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