

Gestalt counseling application to resolve psychological disorder

Ni Putu Harisila Mutari^{1*)}, Kadek Suranata¹, Ketut Gading¹

¹Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha, Bali, Indonesia

^{*}Corresponding author, ✉e-mail: harisilamutari88@gmail.com

Abstract

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children in Indonesia is getting bigger and wider. Based on an analysis of various policy responses and research findings, it was found that one of the impacts caused by the pandemic was that it greatly impacted children's mental health. health protocols, most children have fear, anxiety, are starting to adapt to crowds of people because for almost a year they have only been undergoing the learning process online. Moreover, the impact caused by this virus is death. Gestalt therapy is a therapeutic approach used by many groups in their research. This approach is still rarely used in the school environment by counselors due to a lack of knowledge in using this Gestalt approach technique. The purpose of writing can provide information that the Gestalt approach with the techniques in it makes a good contribution in overcoming psychological disorders in children. The author uses the literature analysis method through Publish or Perish and uses VOS (Vos of viewers). This literature review has explored research on the benefits of the Gestalt approach for children. The results of using this literature analysis is that the Gestalt approach is beneficial for children, namely: emotional self-expression, conflict resolution, contact with therapists, well-being, self-esteem, communication skills and are useful in treating psychological disorders including reducing depression, child anxiety, parental anxiety, and symptoms of trauma and other psychological disorders. From the results of the literature review it shows that evidence of Gestalt interventions is effective in dealing with psychological disorders in children.

Keywords: Gestalt counseling, psychological disorder, literature review

How to Cite: Mutari, H., Suranata, K., & Gading, K. (2021). Gestalt counseling application to resolve psychological disorder. *COUNS-EDU: The International Journal of Counseling and Education*, 6(4), 157–165. <https://doi.org/10.23916/0020210638840>



This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. ©2021 by author.

Introduction

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has created unimaginable challenges for children, young people and their families around the world. The virus was first identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. Many factors are stated to contribute to the appearance of symptoms of mental health disorders. Research shows that social isolation and feelings of loneliness increase the risk of depression and anxiety, with the duration of these feelings having the greatest impact on children's mental health. Use of mobile phones and the internet has also increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, where overuse in children and adolescents has been linked to increased depression.

In addition to Internet use, lack of physical activity can increase depression and anxiety concerns over the significant negative impact of sedentary behavior on children's mental health, noting that children's play activities are very important in children's development. Exposure to information about COVID-19 and the difficulties experienced by parents, including the loss of jobs, income, and the

Table 1 <10 Articles were Obtained Which were then Reviewed>

Article Identity	Research Design and Number sample	Problems/Psychological Symptoms	Counseling Techniques	Study Results
Ibad, I. D. I. (2021). Gestalt Therapy for Psychological Coping with Students from Broken Home Families (Case Study at SMPN 3 Kota Serang). repository.uinbanten.ac.id. http://repository.uinbanten.ac.id/id/eprint/6185	Qualitative research N = 5	Children experience psychological disorders because they come from broken home families	The "I'm Responsible" Technique	Reducing the number of psychological problems that have been complained of.
Ahmad, B. (2021). The Gestalt Approach: Concepts and Applications in the Counseling Process. IJoCE: Indonesian Journal of Counseling and https://www.lp2msasbabel.ac.id/jurnal/index.php/IJoCE/article/view/1976	-	-	<i>Gestalt approach</i>	This approach is humanistic.
Prawitasari, I. (2021). Literature study on the application of empty chair therapy in gestalt therapy. Counsel Journal of Islamic Guidance and https://www.lp2msasbabel.ac.id/jurnal/index.php/counsel/article/view/1724	Library method	<i>Child psychology</i>	<i>The Empty Chair Technique</i>	The Gestalt approach with the empty chair technique is widely used for curative treatment of troubled children.
Paramita, R. W. (2020). Gestalt counseling to resolve stress symptoms. Procedia: Case Studies and Psychological Interventions. https://scholar.archive.org/work/jlfg374libedbkewl4ipn65r24/access/wayback/https://ejournal.testsumm.ac.id/index.php/procedia/article/download/14306/pdf	The assessment method uses interviews, observation, and psychological N = 1	<i>Stress</i>	<i>The Empty Chair Technique</i>	Disclosure of the subject's feelings directly to family members in conflict also had a good impact on the subject's interpersonal relationship with the father.
Lestari, L. M., Baharudin, Y. H., & ... (2021). The Effectiveness of Gestalt Counseling Using the Empty Chair Technique to Increase Self Esteem in Students who are Bullying Victims. Mirror: Journal of Science http://jurnal.unugha.ac.id/index.php/crm/article/view/135	Kind Pre Experiment by design one group pretest - posttest	<i>Bullying Victim</i>	<i>The Empty Chair Technique</i>	Gestalt counseling using technique empty chair effective to deal with problems for victim students bullying who have low self-esteem

Article Identity	Research Design and Number sample	Problems/Psychological Symptoms	Counseling Techniques	Study Results
Romadhon, A. F., & Sanyata, S. (2020). Implementation of Gestalt Therapy in Counseling to Overcome Parental Divorce Trauma in Adolescents. 2nd International Seminar on https://www.atlantispress.com/proceedings/isgc-19/125943319	library method	<i>traumatized</i>	-	According to research with a meta-analysis that the gestal approach is effective for children who experience trauma due to divorce in their families.
Bayan, M., & Khusnul, A. (2021). The Effect of Individual Counseling and Empty Chair Techniques on Overcoming Psychological Problems of Students Memorizing Nadhom Alfiyah Students of Grades X and XI http://repository.iainkudus.ac.id/5689/	Field research (field research) N = 36	<i>Psychological disorder</i>	<i>The Empty Chair Technique</i>	According to research, the empty chair technique has an effect on coping with psychological problems.
Chamidah, Atien Nur. "Early detection of growth and development disorders in children." <i>Journal of special education</i> 5.2 (2009): 83-93.	library method	<i>Detection of disorders and child growth</i>	-	Revealing the problem of child psychological disorders.
Paramita, Rizki Wira. "Gestalt counseling for resolving stress symptoms." <i>Procedia: Case Studies and Psychological Interventions</i> 8.3 (2020)	observation, interviews, and psychological tests N=1	<i>Stress</i>	<i>The Empty Chair Technique</i>	Showing child subject feeling can be better before it get the therapy.
Husniah, W. O., & Ulfa, M. (2019). Mengurangi Kecemasan Siswa Dalam Menghadapi Ujian Semester Melalui Konseling Kelompok Gestalt. <i>Psikologi Konseling</i> . https://jurnal.unimed.ac.id/2012/index.php/Konseling/article/view/16204	Quantitative method N=123	<i>Anxiety</i>	<i>The Empty Chair Technique</i>	After getting treatment through the empty chair technique, it can reduce children's anxiety

Results and Discussions

Child Psychological Disorders

Disorders of Child Growth and Development Problems that often arise in children's growth and development include disturbances in physical growth, motor development, language, emotions, and behavior. 1. Physical Growth Disorders Physical growth disorders include growth disorders above normal and growth disorders below normal. Monitoring body weight using KMS (Health Card) can be done easily to find out the child's growth pattern. According to Soetjningsih (2003), if a child's weight chart is more than 120%, it is likely that the child is obese or has hormonal abnormalities. Meanwhile, if the weight chart is below normal, it is likely that the child is malnourished, suffering from a chronic disease, or hormonal disorder. Head circumference is also an important parameter in detecting growth and development disorders in children. Head circumference measures describe the contents of the head including the brain and cerebrospinal fluid. Head circumference that is more than normal can be found in children who suffer from hydrocephalus, megaencephaly, brain tumors or just normal variations. Meanwhile, if the head circumference is less than normal, it can be suspected that the child is suffering from mental retardation, chronic malnutrition or just a normal variation. Early detection of visual impairment and hearing loss also needs to be done to anticipate the occurrence of more several disorders. Types of visual impairment that can be suffered by children include delayed visual maturity, refractive disorders, squint, nystagmus, amblyopia, color blindness, and blindness due to cataracts, optic neuritis, glaucoma, and so on. (Soetjningsih, 2003). Meanwhile, deafness in children can be divided into conductive deafness and sensorineural deafness. According to Hendarmin (2000), deafness in children can be caused by prenatal and postnatal factors. Prenatal factors include genetics and TORCH infection that occurs during pregnancy. Meanwhile, postnatal factors that often cause deafness are bacterial or viral infections associated with otitis media. 2. Disorders of motor development Slow motor development can be caused by several things. One of the causes of impaired motor development is abnormal muscle tone or neuromuscular disease. Children with cerebral palsy may experience limited motor development as a result of spasticity, athetosis, ataxia, or hypotonia. Spinal cord disorders such as spina bifida can also cause delays in motor development. Neuromuscular diseases such as muscular dystrophy exhibit delays in the ability to walk.

However, motor development disorders are not always based on the presence of the disease. Environmental factors and the child's personality can also affect delays in motor development. Children who do not have the opportunity to learn, such as being carried or placed in a baby walker, may experience delays in achieving motor skills. 3. Disorders of language development Language ability is a combination of all child development systems. Language skills involve motor, psychological, emotional, and behavioral abilities (Widyastuti, 2008). Disorders of language development in children can be caused by various factors, namely genetic factors, hearing loss, low intelligence, lack of child interaction with the environment, late maturation, and family factors. In addition, speech disorders can also be caused by physical abnormalities such as cleft lip and false cerebral. Stuttering is also one of the language development disorders which can be caused by pressure from parents so that children speak clearly (Soetjingsih, 2003). 4. Emotional and Behavioral Disorders During the developmental stage, children can also experience various disorders related to psychiatry. Anxiety is a disorder that occurs in children and requires a special intervention if it affects social interaction and child development. Examples of anxiety that children can experience are school phobia, separation anxiety, social phobia, and anxiety after experiencing trauma. Pervasive developmental disorders in children include autism as well as behavioral and social interaction disorders. According to Widyastuti (2008) autism is a neurobiological disorder that shows communication, interaction, and behavior disorders. Autism is characterized by delays in language development, the appearance of strange movements such as spinning, jumping, or throwing tantrums for no reason.

Unaccounted for by these feelings in consciousness, they remain in the past and are carried into present life in ways that hinder effective relationships with oneself and others (Corey, 2013). Unfinished business problems can be overcome with gestalt counseling. Gestalt counseling focuses on the subject's feelings, awareness of present.

Research Regarding the Application of the Gestalt Approach in Counseling/Psychotherapy

Gestalt therapy is a client-centered approach to psychotherapy that helps clients focus on the present moment and understand what is really happening in their life right now, rather than what they think is happening based on past experiences. Instead of simply talking about past situations, clients are encouraged to experience them, perhaps through re-enactment. Through the Gestalt process, clients learn to become more aware of how their own negative thought patterns and behaviors get in the way of true self-awareness and make them unhappy (B. Bowins, 2021).

Gestalt therapy can help clients with issues such as anxiety, depression, self-esteem, relationship difficulties, and even physical problems such as migraine headaches, ulcerative colitis, and back spasms. Good individuals for Gestalt therapy are those who are interested in developing self-awareness but may or may not understand the role they play in their own unhappiness and discomfort (Zahm & Gold, 2004).

Several studies prove that the Gestalt approach contributes theoretically, strategically, and tactically/technically to the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Cohen, 2003; Nazari, Mohammadi, & Nazeri, 2014). From a theoretical point of view, conceptualizing PTSD as a special case of "unfinished business" positions Gestalt therapy as the strategy of choice for this problem. From a strategic perspective, Gestalt therapy offers phenomenology and the "I-Thou" dialogue as components of effective therapy. Then from a tactical perspective, Gestalt therapy offers a unique mechanism for eliciting trauma-related conflicts from the past and resolving them in the present. These mechanisms include: paying attention to body movements "here and now," and non-verbal behavior, insisting on retelling the traumatic event as if it were happening in the present, use of fantasy and visualization, creative enhancement of body language, empty chairs, and psychodrama (Cohen, 2003).

The Gestalt approach is also considered effective for overcoming anxiety disorders in students in facing exams (Hosseini, 2017; Serok, 1991), as well as general anxiety experienced by individuals (Herrera Salinas, Mstibovskiy, Roubal, & Brownell, 2018). Viewed from the Gestalt therapy approach, anxiety is considered as a process that affects the physiological, emotional, and intellectual components, as well as a state of non-differentiation between the present and the future.

Other studies also prove that the Gestalt approach can be used to overcome academic procrastination (Gading, 2020). Researchers use group treatment to overcome the problem of procrastination. According to researchers, Gestalt is an effective technique for this case. This technique is basically a counseling approach that is carried out in a group setting by utilizing group dynamics and aims to create a context that allows the counselee to fully realize what he is experiencing; and improve the quality of the contacts they make with others (Gading, 2020). Acceptance of personal responsibility, personal oneness, and experiencing ways that block awareness. In therapy, the Gestalt approach focuses on restoring awareness and on integrating polarities and dichotomies within oneself. Therapy is directed not at analysis, but at integration that goes step by step in therapy until the client becomes strong enough to support his own personal growth (Taufik, 2012).

Counseling Techniques

Several techniques are often used in the gestalt counseling approach according to some experts, namely

1. Empty Chair

The empty chair technique aims to help overcome interpersonal conflict from intrapersonal. This technique helps the counselee get out of the introjection process. The counselor uses two chairs and asks the counselee to sit on one chair and play the role of top dog. Then move to another chair and become the under dog. Dialogue is carried out continuously in these two roles. With this technique, introjection will be seen and the counselee can feel the conflict he is feeling in a more real way. The conflict will be resolved by acceptance and integration between the two roles. This technique helps the counselee to feel his feelings about conflicting feelings by experiencing them fully.

The empty chair technique is a powerful intervention that can be used to help counsees of all ages who have conflicts with third persons who are not present in the counseling process. Examples of conflicts with siblings, teachers, parents, friends, superiors, and partners. The counselee is invited to speak directly with the person who is the source of the conflict as if the person is present in an empty chair. This is better done to solve the problem than counseling to be invited to tell about how bad, painful and unpleasant the person who is the source of the conflict is.

Empty chairs are used to complete unfinished business with loved ones. The counselee is asked to talk to a loved one who has left him as if that person were present in an empty chair. The implementation of this technique can be in the form of a monologue in which the person being spoken to in an empty chair does not answer, or it can be in the form of a dialogue in which the person answers as the person might answer.

2. Making the Series (making the rounds)

Serialing is a Gestalt exercise that involves individuals talking or doing something to other people in the group. The purpose of this technique is to confront, take risks, to open up, practice new behavior, and to make changes. Example :

Individuals who have a fear of trusting others. The counselee was asked to tell the other group members by coming to them one by one saying "I don't believe you because"

3. "I am responsible for...." ("I Take Responsibility for")

Techniques aim to help the counselee to recognize and personalize his feelings and behavior and take responsibility for their feelings and behavior. The counselee is asked to fill in the blanks as a way of evaluating personal responsibility and how the counselee manages his life.

Example:

The counselee was asked to say: "I feel lonely and I feel responsible for my feelings". This exercise can open the eyes of counsees who usually tend to see other people as a source of good and bad feelings.

4. Play Projection (Playing Projection)

The dynamics of projection are individuals who see clearly to others what they don't want to see and accept in themselves. The individual tries hard to deny his feelings and blames others for what happened to him. This technique is usually done in a group setting, but can also be given in an individual setting.

In this technique, the counselor asks the counselee who often says that he cannot trust other people to play the role of someone who cannot be trusted. By playing the role, the counselee can be expected to find the level of distrust of others. In other words, the counselor asks for counseling to try to measure based on the sentences he utters about how big and heavy his level of distrust is in other people.

5. Reversal (Reversal Technique)

The assumption of this technique is that certain symptoms and behaviors often represent repressed and latent impulses within the individual. This technique aims to invite the counselee to take risks against fear, anxiety and make contact with parts of himself that have been rejected and suppressed. For this reason, the counselor asks the counselee to do the opposite behavior of what he says.

Example :

The counselee said that he had been tormented because he was too shy and lacked self-confidence. The counselor instructs the counselee to behave like a confident person

6. Rehearsal Experiment (The Rehearsal Experiment)

According to Perls, the individual's mind is repetitive. Individuals tend to repeat fantasies that individuals feel are the expectations of their environment. So that when the individual is in that environment, he becomes afraid, anxious because he will not be able to display what he wants

Conclusions

The results of studies that have been carried out using the literature method are adjusted to predetermined criteria that gestalt counseling is used to treat children who experience psychological disorders such as anxiety, children who experience bullying, and other psychological disorders, expressed from 10 literature read by researchers both journals published nationally and internationally obtained through the VOS viewers method. Another thing that proves that Gestalt counseling is able to overcome children's psychological disorders is that it can be seen from the mapping images obtained through VOS Viewers. All the techniques used in the gestalt approach are widely used in overcoming psychological disorders. This can also be seen in the journals read by researchers. This proves the study that the gestalt approach is widely used by researchers to treat children's psychological disorders.

References

- Ahmad, Bukhari. "The Gestalt Approach: Concepts and Applications in the Counseling Process." *IJoCE: Indonesian Journal of Counseling and Education* 2.2 (2021): 44-56.
- Edwindha Prafitra Nugraheni, S.Pd.2019, M.Pd., Kons. "Learning Activities 1 Psychoanalytic and Humanistic Oriented Counseling Approach". Ministry of Education and Culture.
- Ibad, I. D. I. (2021). Gestalt Therapy for Psychological Coping with Students from Broken Home Families (Case Study at SMPN 3 Kota Serang). repository.uinbanten.ac.id. <http://repository.uinbanten.ac.id/id/eprint/6185>
- Ahmad, B. (2021). The Gestalt Approach: Concepts and Applications in the Counseling Process. *IJoCE: Indonesian Journal of Counseling and Education* <https://www.lp2msasbabel.ac.id/jurnal/index.php/IJoCE/article/view/1976>
- Prawitasari, I. (2021). Literature study on the application of empty chair therapy in gestalt therapy. *Counsel | Journal of Islamic Guidance and Education* <https://www.lp2msasbabel.ac.id/jurnal/index.php/counsele/article/view/1724>
- Paramita, R. W. (2020). Gestalt counseling to resolve stress symptoms. *Procedia: Case Studies and Psychological Interventions*. <https://scholar.archive.org/work/jlfg374libedbkewl4ipn65r24/access/wayback/https://ejournal.uinmm.ac.id/index.php/procedia/article/download/14306/pdf>
- Lestari, L. M., Baharudin, Y. H., & ... (2021). The Effectiveness of Gestalt Counseling Using the Empty Chair Technique to Increase Self Esteem in Students who are Bullying Victims. *Mirror: Journal of Science* <http://jurnal.unugha.ac.id/index.php/crm/article/view/135>
- Romadhon, A. F., & Sanyata, S. (2020). Implementation of Gestalt Therapy in Counseling to Overcome Parental Divorce Trauma in Adolescents. 2nd International Seminar on <https://www.atlantispress.com/proceedings/isgc-19/125943319>
- Bayan, M., & Khusnul, A. (2021). The Effect of Individual Counseling and Empty Chair Techniques on Overcoming Psychological Problems of Students Memorizing Nadhom Alfiyyah Students of Grades X and XI repository.iainkudus.ac.id. <http://repository.iainkudus.ac.id/5689/>
- Chamidah, Atien Nur. "Early detection of growth and development disorders in children." *Journal of special education* 5.2 (2009): 83-93

- Husniah, W. O., & Ulfa, M. (2019). Reducing Student Anxiety in Facing Semester Exams Through Gestalt Group Counseling. *Counseling Psychology*.
<https://jurnal.unimed.ac.id/2012/index.php/Konseling/article/view/16204>
- Hanapi, Trie Fadilah. "The empty chair technique: Gestalt therapy to reduce adolescents' angry feelings toward fathers." *Procedia: Case Studies and Psychological Interventions* 9.3 (2021): 088-098. *Internasional Journal*
- Gading, I. "Group counseling with the gestalt technique to reduce academic procrastination." *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (iJET)* 15.14 (2020): 262-268.
- Lestari, Kiki Elfi, and Firman Firman. "The effectiveness of group guidance services using the Gestalt Counseling Approach with projection techniques in preventing bullying among students." *International Journal of Applied Counseling and Social Sciences* 3.1 (2021): 9-15.
- Agustin, Nanik LINDIA. "Effectiveness of gestalt counseling empty chair engineering to minimize feeling of trauma victims bullying." *Proceeding Humanities: Teacher Training and Education* 1.1 (2019): 22-27.
- Handayani, Wendy, and Dessy Pranungsari. "The Gestalt Group Therapy Effectiveness in Reducing Student Bullies."
- Paramartha, Wayan Eka, I. Ketut Dharsana, and Ni Ketut Suarni. "Gestalt Counseling with Dialog Game Techniques and Hipno Counseling Techniques for Self Achievement." *Bisma The Journal of Counseling* 1.1 (2017): 39-49.
- Trijayanti, Yessinta Wahyu, Juntika Nurihsan, and Anne Hafina. "Gestalt counseling with empty chair technique to reduce guilt among adolescents at risk." *Islamic Guidance and Counseling Journal* 2.1 (2019): 1-10.