

## **Counselors' Efforts in Realizing Gen Z Mental Health in the Digital Era**

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**Abstract.** *The digital era has brought significant changes in the way we interact with each other and the world around us. Although these changes have brought many benefits, they have also given rise to new challenges, especially in the field of mental health. On the one hand, digital technology makes it easier to access information and connect with other people, which can be beneficial for people struggling with mental health problems. Online support groups, therapy apps, and mental health resources are now more accessible than ever. In this research the author used the Pustaka Study Method by using various reading materials as research material. This research aims to determine the impact of technological developments in the digital era on the mental health of Gen Z and how counselors are trying to achieve mental health for Gen Z in this digital era.*

**Keywords:** *Counselor Efforts, Mental Health, Era Digital.*

**Abstrak.** Era digital telah membawa perubahan signifikan dalam cara kita berinteraksi satu sama lain dan dunia di sekitar kita. Meskipun perubahan-perubahan ini membawa banyak manfaat, namun juga melahirkan manfaat-manfaat baru tantangan, khususnya dalam bidang kesehatan mental. Di satu sisi, teknologi digital semakin memudahkan akses informasi dan terhubung dengan orang lain, yang dapat bermanfaat bagi orang yang berjuang dengan masalah kesehatan mental. Kelompok dukungan online, aplikasi terapi, dan sumber daya kesehatan mental kini lebih mudah diakses dibandingkan sebelumnya. Dalam penelitian ini penulis menggunakan Metode Studi Pustaka dengan menjadikan berbagai bahan bacaan sebagai bahan penelitian. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui dampak dari perkembangan teknologi di era digital bagi kesehatan mental Gen Z dan bagaimana upaya konselor dalam mewujudkannya kesehatan mental pada Gen Z di era digital ini.

**Kata kunci:** Upaya Konselor, Kesehatan Mental, Era Digital.

## INTRODUCTION

In the era of digital technology development, there are many impacts on a person's daily life, including mental health. Mental Health is the quality that a person has in a normal condition where our mind is in a calm and peaceful condition, so that our daily life allows it to improve day by day. For this reason, if someone experiences mental illness, their condition will experience difficulties. According to (Ruth, Sarah & Damayanti, 2023) mental health includes physical, psychological, and social aspects. Due to the development of electronic accessibility in this digital era, children get their own challenges in maintaining their mental health. Not only children, in this digital era, workers also face tough challenges to maintain their mental health.

This is very worrying, of course, there is no reason quoted from data (Word Population Review, 2023) that the country with the first depressed population is occupied by the Ukrainian state with 2. 800,587 cases or 6.3% of the total population. In the second ururtan there is the United States with 5.9% of its population. Then followed by the country of Estonia with a total of 5.9% of the population. As for the country of Indonesia with a prevalence of 3.7% of its population, where the Indonesian population usually increases every year by more than 3 million people and it is likely that the number of depressed people will increase even more.

Apart from the data above, it is also obtained from a report (American Psychological Association Logo, 2020) that 91% of Gen Z experience stress, then 58% of them experience high anxiety. Supported by the opinion (Williams, 2020) Gen Z is more prone to depression and anxiety than previous generations, especially due to social media addiction and isolation caused by digital life. In facing these challenges, community counseling emerged as a potential solution.

The causes of mental health disruption in this digital era are; Excessive technology, Ubiquitous social media pressure, *Cyberbullying* and Harmful Content (Ruth, Sara & Damayanti, 2023). In this era of digital development, there is indeed a lot of *cyberbullying* on social media and in some existing content. The use of digital technology, especially social media, provides new challenges in the form of social pressure and screen addiction, which causes mental health to be disrupted.

The role of a family and a mental health professional is crucial to provide understanding and education on guiding the younger generation in the use of technology wisely and to be more responsible, and understanding the benefits and risks in the use of technology and the time limits of its use to prevent negative impacts on mental health. Healthy Social Connections also have a positive impact on a person's mental health (Br. Queene, 2024)

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this study, the author uses the Literature Study method, where the author uses books, research articles, notes, and reports to be material to conduct research related to the Urgency of Counselors in Realizing Mental Health for Gen Z in the Digital Era.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Mental Health in the Digital Age**

Mental health is a state of good emotional health and then allows a person to utilize his or her cognitive and emotional abilities, function in the community environment, and meet daily living needs and psychological conditions. However, most of the actors emphasize more on their mental disorders than on their mental health itself. This mental health does not only talk about emotional health but also a person's mental health is also seen in physical, social and psychological aspects. As said by previous research (Ruth et al., 2023) said that mental health is a state where individuals are prosperous and realize their potential, are able to cope with the pressures of normal life, work productively, and are able to contribute to their environment. Thus, mental health includes physical, psychological, social aspects.

In this digital era, counselors have various urgency in realizing mental health, especially in Gen Z. Because the development of digital technology in addition to having a positive impact also has a negative impact on a person's mental health. Like the rise of social media posts that can be accessed that lead to Cyberbullying. This also does not only happen to the content of the post but also to the comment column in the post that has an impact on a person's mental health. For this reason, counselors must provide understanding to Gen Z so that they are smarter in utilizing technology in this digital era in order to maintain a person's mental health (Odja. et al., 2024).

### **The Impact of Technology Developments in the Digital Era on Mental Health**

Because technological developments in the digital era have given several changes and impacts, both in the form of positive and negative things. With this development, especially in Gen Z, it can be easier to access and establish relationships with their friends. Social media can have a positive impact on its users, including being able to facilitate learning activities, establish wider relationships, relieve fatigue, increase knowledge and insight and information, as a forum for promotion or introduce something to the public, and so on. However, on the other hand, social media has a negative impact on its users (Isniah & Amirah, 2024). Young generations or Gen Z are asked to assess the performance of each social media platform they use, this has an impact on issues related to mental health and well-being.

It turns out that the bad impact of social media on mental health has an effect in the form of Anxiety, Loneliness, Depression, Difficulty sleeping, even in self-image and the fear of missing out

on information. This is supported by a statement from (RSPH, 2017) which says that one of the social media, namely Instagram, ranks as the worst social media platform for mental health and well-being, based on the negative impact measured from anxiety, depression, loneliness, sleep quality, self-image problems, relationships in the real world, and fear of missing out (FoMo). They also point out that the younger generation who are heavy users of Instagram are prone to psychological distress including anxiety and depression.

The role of counselors in realizing mental health is very important regarding the impact given by social media in this digital era. If someone is able to control and utilize this social media in a good direction, the impact will get a good impact as well. This can keep Gen Z's mental health maintained. Student mental health is one of the goals of counseling services. This challenge must be answered by BK teachers whose task is to help students develop themselves according to the stages of development optimally, help students overcome difficulties and problems in learning, and help students adapt to the surrounding environment.

#### **Counselors' Efforts to Maintain Gen Z's Mental Health in the Digital Era**

BK teachers have an important role in helping students overcome the negative impact of social comparison, namely by providing comprehensive BK services, where this comprehensive service model allows counselors to focus not only on the client's emotional disturbances, but on efforts to achieve developmental tasks, bridging tasks that arise at certain times, increasing client potential and optimal development patterns. With that, from the hype of technological developments in the digital era, it can help counselors in efforts to realize mental health in Gen Z. Supported by (Isniah & Amirah, 2024) concluding that it is recommended to conduct counseling, teachers are able to provide an understanding of the importance of self-esteem, provide training to students to recognize themselves so that they are able to overcome social comparisons that occur, in order to realize mentally healthy students.

Then the importance of providing education about the importance of digital literacy in classical services. Generation Z needs to be taught how to use technology wisely so that it does not have a bad impact on their mental health. Digital literacy can help them recognize the dangers of excessive social media use and how to establish healthy boundaries between online and offline lives. Involving collaboration with schools and families also provides support for efforts in realizing mental health. (Chen & Liu, 2019) in his research explains that community-based counseling that focuses on digital literacy has a significant impact in helping adolescents better manage their use of technology. Through this training, Generation Z can learn how to manage the time they spend on social media and digital technology more wisely, which in turn improves their overall mental health. Collaboration between community counseling and support networks is a very important aspect in creating a comprehensive support system for Generation Z.

## CONCLUSION

It should be noted that in this digital era, it has many positive and negative impacts on the younger generation, namely Gen Z. Counselors or BK teachers as educators need to provide counseling services and information services to provide learning and understanding to Gen Z in using technological addiction, especially on social media so that their mental health is maintained. Then they can recognize themselves so that they are able to overcome the social comparisons that occur, in order to realize mentally healthy students.

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