

The Urgency of Counseling Services to Realize Mental Health in Children with Special Needs

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Abstract. *Counseling services are assistance provided by counselors to students or clients to help them overcome their problems. The main objective of this service is to support the mental health of Children with Special Needs. Children with special needs have various physical, cognitive, or social limitations that require different counseling approaches. The research method used in this article is a literature review from various national and international sources, yielding 10 relevant articles from 2020 to 2024. The results show that Children with Special Needs face various types of mental disorders such as communication difficulties, anxiety, and emotional disorders. Recommended counseling services include individual counseling, group therapy, and family counseling, all of which are tailored to the specific needs of the child. With proper intervention, counseling can help improve the mental health and self-confidence of Children with Special Needs, enabling them to interact better in social and educational environments. This research emphasizes the importance of special attention to Children with Special Needs to maximize their potential.*

Keywords: *Counseling Services, Children with Special Needs, Mental Health*

Abstrak. Layanan konseling merupakan bantuan yang diberikan oleh konselor kepada siswa atau klien untuk membantu mereka mengatasi masalah yang dihadapi. Tujuan utama dari layanan ini adalah mendukung kesehatan mental Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus. Anak berkebutuhan khusus memiliki berbagai keterbatasan fisik, kognitif, atau sosial, yang memerlukan pendekatan konseling yang berbeda. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam artikel ini adalah tinjauan literatur dari berbagai sumber nasional dan internasional, menghasilkan 10 artikel relevan dari 2020 hingga 2024. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus menghadapi berbagai jenis gangguan mental seperti kesulitan komunikasi, kecemasan, dan gangguan emosional. Jenis layanan konseling yang direkomendasikan meliputi konseling individu, terapi kelompok, dan konseling keluarga, yang semuanya disesuaikan dengan kebutuhan spesifik anak. Dengan intervensi yang tepat, konseling dapat membantu meningkatkan kesehatan mental dan kepercayaan diri Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus, memungkinkan mereka untuk berinteraksi lebih baik dalam lingkungan sosial dan pendidikan. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya perhatian khusus terhadap Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus untuk memaksimalkan potensi mereka.

Kata Kunci: Layanan Konseling, Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus, Kesehatan Mental

INTRODUCTION

Counseling services are assistance provided by BK teachers or counselors to students or clients that aim to provide understanding in overcoming problems faced by students or clients. In general, the type of counseling services can be provided individually or in groups, which is usually referred to as individual counseling and group counseling. Counseling services need to be provided to every individual, both to normal children and to normal children or children with special needs.

Children with special needs are children who have exceptions or limitations in terms of physical, spicological, cognitive, mental, or social behavior characteristics that are different from the average child in general, because there are problems in the ability to think, see, hear, socialize, and move (Sahara, Yuvira. et al., 2021). Children with special needs also need to get counseling services like normal children in general, although with different aspects or ways of providing counseling services according to the needs of children with special needs.

Data from the World Bank shows that the population of children with special needs worldwide reaches 10 percent. It is estimated that 85 percent of children with special needs worldwide under the age of 15 are in developing countries. More than two-thirds of the population is in Asia. Therefore, the government made Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection mandating that children with special needs are part of Indonesian children who need to receive attention and protection from the government, society and family (Susi Saswita, et al, 2024)

Counseling services provided to children with special needs have a deeper purpose, one of which is to help realize the mental health of children with special needs in living their daily lives. Mental health is a condition of a person that allows the development of all aspects of development, both physical, intellectual, and emotional that are optimal and in harmony with the development of others, so that they are subsequently able to interact with the surrounding environment. Symptoms of the soul or function of the soul such as thoughts, feelings, wills, attitudes, perceptions, views and beliefs of life must coordinate with each other, so that harmony emerges that avoids all feelings of doubt, anxiety, anxiety and inner conflict (Fakhriyani, D. V, 2019).

The problems that can be explored in this article are the types of children with special needs that exist, both in Indonesia and in the world. In addition, mental health disorders experienced by children with special needs and counseling services that can be provided to children with special needs.

This article aims to explore the urgency of counseling services in the context of the mental health of children with special needs, by discussing the types of children with special needs, mental health disorders that may be experienced by children with special needs, and counseling services that can be provided to children with special needs. Through this discussion, it is hoped that it can provide better insight and understanding of the importance of counseling interventions to support the mental health of these children.

METHODOLOGY

The research method used for this article, namely literature review, is a literature search both national and international using Google Scchoolar and Publish or Perish databases. In the initial step of searching for journal articles, 200 articles from 150 to 170 were obtained, with the keywords "Counseling Services for Children with Special Needs", "Mental health disorders of ABK", "Characteristics of ABK" identified that have not been explored for relevance to the article to be complicated. Of these, only about 10 articles are

considered relevant. There are 8 articles that are of medium quality and 3 articles that are of low quality.

The basis of the reading that has been obtained from this research is then used as a reference for research presented through the following table:

Table : List of Research Materials

No	Judul Artikel/Skripsi	Tahun	Penulis
1.	Pengaruh Perkembangan Psikologis Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus di SLB Negeri Keleyan No 8 Socah Bangkalan	2020	Agung Satyawan, Clarisa Dwi Mawarni, Bahiratul Ghina, Novita Rahma Dwi Yanti, Alief Alvina
2.	Pelaksanaan Layanan Bimbingan dan Konseling Pada Peserta Didik Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus (ABK)	2020	Muda'im dan Putri Solekhah
3.	Proses Konseling Populasi Khusus Terhadap Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus	2021	Yuvira Sahara, Wichy Fadillah Putri, Siti Mardiah, Adelia Salsa Della, Fadli Saputra Pane
4.	Upaya Guru Bimbingan dan Konseling dalam Menangani Masalah Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus Tunarungu dan Tunawicara di SMKN 4 Kota Jambi	2022	Taufik Hidayat, Nelyahardi Gutji, Fellicia Ayu Sekonda
5.	Menghadapi Tantangan Hidup: Menjelajahi Konseling Pastoral dengan Pendekatan Humanistik untuk Dinamika Sosial Anak Autis	2023	Imroatul Lutfiyah, Ushwatun Hasanah, Maya Aprilia Saputri, Maya Widiyanti
6.	Karakteristik Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus	2023	Tetty Silitonga, Yohana Purba, Helena Munthe, Emmi Silvia Herlina
7.	Analisis Penerapan Strategi Pembelajaran Bimbingan Konseling Untuk Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus (ABK) dengan Autisme	2024	Acep Ega Wihara, Dahlia Mutiara, Frisya Naomi Nurezalita, Novita Alvionita, Nur Aliyah, Ridha Nurkholifah, Umi Kalsum dan Winarsih
8.	Layanan Konseling Untuk Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar Siswa Berkebutuhan Khusus (Autisme)	2024	Cony Kapitalia, Siti Mutiah, Nur Alya Tiara, Yulia Elfrida Yanty Siregar dan Nuke Rosiana Dewi
9.	Menghadapi Tantangan Hidup: Menjelajahi Konseling Pastoral Dan Pendekatan	2024	Nency Aprilia Heydemans, Veibe Salindeho, Incha Kasalang, Monika Kahimpong dan Deissy Christi Nani
10	Penggolongan Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus Berdasarkan Mental Emosional Dan Akademik	2024	Susi Saswita, Cory Octavia, Ahmad Pauzan Hermandi, Opi Andriani

The total number of articles that have been reviewed to determine the urgency of counseling services to realize mental health for children with special needs is as many as 10 articles from various journals within a period of 4 years and above, starting from 2020 to 2024 from various writers and researchers in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Types Of Children With Special Needs

Children with special needs have their own types and criteria. Children with special needs have divisions and groups of each type of extravagance or deficiency that exist in children with special needs.

According to Agung dsetyawan, et al., in 2020 the division and groups of children with special needs have 4 divisional groups. The division of children with special needs indirectly has the same meaning regarding the types of children with special needs. The 4 group divisions of children with special needs who are the types of children with special needs are as follows:

1. Children who have significant visual impairment that affects their ability to learn and interact with their environment. Cognitive development can be hampered by their difficulty in processing visual information, which is crucial for education. (Agung dsetyawan, et al., 2020).

In another article, namely by (Silitonga, et al. 2023) it is stated that children who have visual impairments are called visually impaired. Blindness is a child who has visual impairment in the form of total or partial blindness.

The characteristics of visually impaired children are as follows:

- a. Unable to see
 - b. Unable to recognize people at a distance of 6 m
 - c. Often groping/tripping while walking
 - d. Having difficulty picking up small objects nearby
 - e. Eyes are constantly shaking. (Silitonga, et al. 2023)
2. Hearing Loss (Deafness) is Children face challenges in their daily lives, which can affect their language skills and social interactions. Cognitive development can also be hampered by their difficulty in receiving information about the problem. The definition of deaf children is also explained by Hidayat, et al. 2022 who explain that deaf or deaf children are a child these children have hearing impairments that affect their ability to hear sounds, which can affect their communication skills and social interactions.

According to Silitonga, et al. 2023 there are 5 characteristics of deaf children that we can see in children who have partial or complete hearing loss. The 5 characteristics are as follows:

- a. Dependence on instruction in class
 - b. Language and speech barriers
 - c. Have low academic ability, especially in reading
 - d. Unable to hear
 - e. Unclear speech
3. Intellectual Disability (Tunagrahita): Disability refers to the intellectual capacity of a child, a child measured with an IQ that is below average. This condition results in difficulties in cognitive function (Agung dsetyawan, et al., 2020)
4. Autism (Autism Spectrum Disorder) is Children with autism show difficulties in social interaction and communication, and they may also exhibit erratic behavior. Their development can have a significant impact, especially in areas such as language and social-emotional skills. Each of these categories reflects a range of unique challenges that require the right educational strategies and support systems to guide their development efficiently. The category reflects a range of unique challenges that require the right educational strategies and support systems to guide their development efficiently. that the child's psychological development includes cognitive, language, and social-emotional aspects. much slower than the usual development theme. Understanding these categories is essential for parents and guardians to provide the right interventions and environments to enhance the child's learning experience based on their specific needs. (Agung dsetyawan, et al., 2020).

Of the 4 divisions of groups of children with special needs according to Agung dsetyawan, et al., 2020 above, the types of children with special needs are not only these 4 types. There are 4 types of children with special needs that we get, namely the blind, the deaf, the downsyndrome and the mentally retarded (Kapitalia, et al. 2024).

Therefore, it can be concluded that from the 10 journals studied in this article, there are 8 types of children with special needs, namely blind, deaf, deaf, autistic, deaf, deaf, downsyndrome and mentally retarded.

Mental Health Disorders Experienced by Children with Special Needs

Mental health disorders experienced by children with special needs (ABK) are often a major challenge in their development. These children experience different types of disorders,

such as cognitive impairment in children with autism and disability, which are related to intellectual limitations and affect their ability to process information and learn. This limitation makes it difficult for them to participate in the social and academic environment like their peers (Hakim, 2002). These cognitive disorders hinder children's development in various aspects of their daily lives.

In addition, communication disorders are also a common problem in ABK. Children with autism or disabilities often have difficulty understanding and producing language. This not only makes it difficult for them to interact socially, but also increases their risk of experiencing emotional problems and frustration due to the inability to express themselves or understand others well (Muarifah, 2012). As a result, these children often feel isolated from their social environment.

Children with special needs are also prone to experiencing emotional disorders such as anxiety and low self-confidence. For example, children with physical disabilities often feel insecure and experience increased anxiety when faced with challenges that are considered difficult (Surya, 2007). This low level of confidence can trigger various negative emotional reactions, such as nervousness, stuttering, and even withdrawing from the social environment.

Mental health disorders experienced by ABK not only have an impact on their academic and social abilities, but also on their emotional control. Children with autism, for example, often have difficulty controlling their emotions, leading to tantrum-like behaviors or excessive emotional reactions to situations that for other children may not be significant. The lack of support from the surrounding environment also exacerbates this condition, as they often feel misunderstood or accepted (Janah, 2017).

Thus, various forms of mental health disorders experienced by children with special needs, such as difficulties in communication, anxiety, and emotional disorders, require special attention. Proper parenting and education, as well as counseling services that are tailored to the individual's needs, are essential to help them overcome the challenges they face and maximize their potential in daily life (Jauhari Auhad, 2017).

Counselling services for children with special needs

Individual Counseling is a one-on-one session with a trained counselor, this can help children express their feelings and thoughts in a safe environment (Kapitalia, 2024). This can be especially important for children with autism, who may struggle with emotional regulation and social interaction. Individual counseling can provide them with coping strategies to manage their emotions and behaviors.

Group Therapy is a type of therapy in which groups can facilitate the development of social skills among children with special needs. These sessions can provide a platform for children to interact with peers, practice communication skills, and learn from each other's experiences. This is especially relevant for children with autism, who may benefit from structured social interactions.

Family Counseling and involving family members in counseling can help create a supportive home environment. Family counseling can educate parents and siblings about the needs of children and how best to support them. This approach can also address any family dynamics that may be affecting the child's mental health.

Group Guidance Services material to several ABK students together in order to improve socialization skills with normal students. The goal is so that ABK students do not feel different.

This Information Service allows students and other parties to be able to receive and understand information that can be used as material for daily consideration and decision-

making (Fitri, 2016). In addition, this service aims at the daily needs of students in order to realize their daily effective lives (KES) and their development. For example, providing information on ways to cultivate confidence, the importance of self-confidence in facing success in life, etc.

Content Mastery Services are assistance services for individuals (alone or in groups) to master certain abilities or competencies through learning activities (Prayitno, 2014). Content mastery services can help students with disabilities master these aspects of content in a synergistic manner. With mastery of content, students with special needs have knowledge and skills that are useful in increasing their confidence. The material that can be provided is for example, the skills of expressing opinions or speaking in public, how to increase confidence despite all the shortcomings that they have, as well as planning for the next five years, etc.

Group Counseling Services is a service that allows students to get opportunities for discussion and resolution of their personal problems through group dynamics, with the aim that students with disabilities can get opportunities for discussion and alleviation of personal problems through group dynamics (Prayitno, 2012).

Placement and Distribution Services are services that allow students to be placed in positions, places that are in accordance with the student's abilities and he can channel his potential (Prayitno, 2012). Students with disabilities who have a lack of self-confidence can be placed in a position that can demand themselves to be active and must be able to blend in with their social environment. It can also be placed in an extracurricular activity that is in accordance with the abilities and potential possessed by students with disabilities, so that it can help students with disabilities in increasing their confidence. Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the confidence of students with physical disabilities can be developed through guidance and counseling activities at school, by using various guidance and counseling services for students will be helped in increasing their confidence.

CONCLUSION

Counseling services for children with special needs aim to support their mental health and development. This counseling can be done individually or in groups, and is important for normal children and children with special needs. Children with special needs include those with vision, hearing, intellectual, and autism impairments. Mental health problems such as communication difficulties, anxiety, and emotional disturbances are often experienced by these children, requiring special attention. Individual counseling helps children express feelings and manage emotions, while group therapy can improve social skills. Family counseling also plays an important role in creating a supportive home environment. Group tutoring and content mastery services aim to improve children's social skills and confidence. The government and the community are expected to pay more attention through policies and support for children with special needs, as mandated by the Child Protection Law. With this approach, children can overcome challenges and maximize their potential in daily life.

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