

## ***Literature Review: Self-centered focus and Its role in Achieving Mental Health: Implications for Counseling Practice***

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**Abstract.** Mental health disturbances today are influenced by negative perceptions of self-centered focus, often seen as selfishness or self-serving behavior. Historically, this concept has been viewed negatively due to its potential to harm social relationships. However, modern understanding suggests that Self-centered focus can be beneficial if managed properly, serving as an essential tool for maintaining mental health and well-being. In a positive context, Self-centered focus refers to an individual's attention to their own needs and personal development to achieve mental and emotional well-being, thereby enhancing self-efficacy, self-esteem, and healthy self-centeredness. This research employs a literature review method, analyzing literature related to the keywords "self-centered focus," "mental health," "psychology," and "counseling" from databases such as ProQuest, EBSCO, and Google Scholar over the past five years. Self-centered focus encompasses elements like self-esteem, self-love, and self-confidence, which help individuals cope with social pressures and enhance self-care capabilities. Approaches such as mindfulness, Emotional Intelligence (EI), and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) are utilized to aid in the management of self-focus. Counseling plays a crucial role in helping individuals achieve a balance between self-focus and social relationships, supporting long-term mental health.

**Keywords:** *Self-centered focus, Mental Health, Literature Review, Psychology, Counseling*

**Abstrak :** Gangguan kesehatan mental saat ini dipengaruhi oleh persepsi negatif terhadap *self-centered focus*, yang sering dianggap sebagai egoisme atau sikap mementingkan diri sendiri. Secara *historis*, konsep ini dinilai negatif karena berpotensi merusak hubungan sosial. Namun, pemahaman modern menilai bahwa *self-centered focus* dapat membawa manfaat jika dikelola dengan baik, menjadi alat penting dalam menjaga kesehatan mental dan kesejahteraan. Dalam konteks positif, *self-centered focus* merujuk pada perhatian individu terhadap kebutuhan dan perkembangan diri untuk mencapai kesejahteraan mental dan emosional, meningkatkan *self-efficacy*, *self-esteem*, dan *self-centeredness* secara sehat. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode *literature review*, menganalisis literatur terkait dengan kata kunci "*self-centered focus*", "*kesehatan mental*", "*psikologi*", dan "*konseling*" dari database seperti *ProQuest*, *EBSCO*, dan *Google Scholar* dalam lima tahun terakhir. *Self-centered focus* mencakup elemen seperti *self-esteem* (harga diri), *self-love* (cinta diri), dan *self-confidence* (kepercayaan diri), yang membantu individu mengatasi tekanan sosial dan meningkatkan kemampuan untuk merawat diri. Pendekatan seperti *mindfulness*, *Emotional intelligence (EI)*, dan *ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy)* digunakan untuk membantu pengelolaan fokus diri. Konseling berperan dalam membantu individu mencapai keseimbangan antara fokus pada diri sendiri dan hubungan sosial, mendukung kesehatan mental jangka panjang.

**Kata Kunci:** *Self-centered focus, Kesehatan Mental, Literatur Review, Psikologi, Konseling*

## INTRODUCTION

Mental health plays an essential role in determining an individual's quality of life, as it affects their ability to interact socially, work productively, and contribute to the community. According to the *World Health Organization* (2020), mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which individuals realize their potential, are able to deal with the pressures of daily living, and function productively in society. Nevertheless, the prevalence of mental health disorders continues to increase globally, with recent data showing that more than 1 in 4 people experience mental health problems at some point in their lives (WHO, 2021). These disorders can include depression, anxiety and various other behavioral disorders that affect the psychological well-being of the individual.

In the educational environment, the role of counseling is increasingly crucial in supporting the mental health of learners, helping them in the face of emotional, social and academic challenges. Counselors in schools are expected to provide effective services to develop students' potential and support their psychological well-being (*American Psychological Association*, 2021). However, there are still many learners who are reluctant to take advantage of counseling services, often due to difficulties in verbally expressing their problems or the inability to realize the root of their problems.

*Self-centered focus*, an approach that emphasizes self-understanding and personal reflection, is emerging as a method that can help overcome these obstacles. *Self-centered focus* involves a process of reflection in which the individual focuses on their own experiences, feelings and thoughts, in order to better understand themselves. If implemented well, *self-centered focus* has the potential to improve an individual's mental health by aiding them in exploring and managing the underlying feelings of their psychological problems (Insani, FD 2019).

Based on the existing literature, this study aims to explain the definition of *self-centered focus* and how this concept is understood in psychology and counseling literature. In addition, this study will also identify the history of the development of *self-centered focus* and the main originators of this concept, as well as analyze the key elements that make up *self-centered focus*. Furthermore, this study will explore the application of *Self-centered focus techniques* in counseling practice in various contexts and explain their implications for individual mental health, especially in the context of counseling services in Indonesia.

## METHODOLOGY

The research method used in this study is literature review. Literature review is a systematic method of identifying, evaluating, and analyzing relevant research results from a variety of sources. The Data was collected through searching literature or research articles, both international and National, using academic databases such as *EBSCO*, *ScienceDirect*, and *ProQuest*.

In the early stages of the search, the keywords used were "*Self-Centered Focus*," "*Mental Health*," and "*counseling*," with a focus on literature published between 2019 and 2024. From the initial search results, 38 articles were obtained which were then evaluated based on relevance and quality criteria. After going through a rigorous selection process, only 10 articles were considered to meet the inclusion criteria and have qualities that match the topic of this study. The selected articles are the basis for the analysis and discussion of this study.

The formulation of the problem that is the focus of this study includes the definition of *self-centered focus* and how this concept is understood in the psychology and counseling literature, the history of the development of *self-centered focus* and the main originators of

this concept, the key elements that make up *self-centered focus*, the technique of applying *self-centered focus* in counseling practice in various contexts, as well as the implications of the application of *self-centered focus* on individual mental health, especially in the context of counseling services in Indonesia.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of 10 articles through *literature review*, the definition, history, and inventor of *self-centered focus*, along with the parts of *self-centered focus*, its implications in counseling practice, and techniques in counseling to manage *self-centered focus* have been identified in depth as follows:

### Definition of Self-Centered Focus

Self-centered focus in a positive context refers to the individual's attention to one's own needs and development as a strategic step towards achieving mental and emotional well-being. This approach not only focuses on the self, but also includes deep self-reflection. Auliya Nasir (2021) states that this process of reflection allows individuals to understand their personal strengths and weaknesses, set realistic goals, and take care of overall psychological health. Thus, *self-centered focus* becomes an important tool in the effort to achieve a better life balance.

With development of self-centered focus, people forces to raise their *self-love*, *self-compassion*, and *self-efficacy*. These three elements support each other in forming a healthy sense of self-confidence and self-acceptance. For example, research on *self-love* by Okello and Calhoun (2024) and Febria Savitry Arum Melati (2024) shows that loving yourself can help individuals cope with stress, increase happiness, and strengthen their ability to face life's challenges. This approach teaches that taking care of yourself is not a form of egoism; rather, it is an important foundation for healthy emotional well-being. Thus, *self-centered focus* can enrich social relationships and interactions with others.

In addition, *self-centered focus* also encourages individuals to develop *self-awareness*, which is the ability to recognize one's own emotions, motives, and behaviors. Maidatus Sholihah et al. (2024) emphasize that *self-awareness* is very important in the counseling process because it allows individuals to better understand themselves holistically. By increasing *self-awareness*, counselors can help clients identify negative patterns in their behavior and formulate more effective coping strategies. In other words, *self-centered focus* creates the foundation for more balanced and integrative self-development, so that individuals can lead more fulfilling and meaningful lives.

### History and inventors of the term

The term *self-centered* has undergone a transformation in meaning from a negative connotation to a more positive one. Originally, the term was used to describe selfishness or self-centeredness without considering others. However, with the development of psychology and mental health studies, this concept began to be interpreted as the importance of *self-care* and *self-awareness*, an approach that emphasizes that attention to one's own needs does not necessarily mean ignoring others, but rather helps in maintaining a healthy balance of life.

These changes are driven by the understanding that taking care of yourself is an essential part of mental well-being. For example, research by Di Fabio and Saklofske (2021) shows that *emotional intelligence* (EI) plays an important role in increasing *self-compassion*, which can reduce feelings of anxiety and depression, as well as encourage individuals to be more empathetic to others. By improving EI and fostering a sense of acceptance towards oneself, *self-compassion* can change the way individuals interact with

the world around them, creating more harmonious and healthy relationships in the work environment.

According to Insani, FD (2019) in his journal this concept was also influenced by the thinking of psychologists such as Carl Rogers, who emphasized the importance of *a client-centered approach* in therapy to help individuals achieve self-actualization. Rogers argued that individuals have the potential to thrive and achieve a state of self-actualization if provided with a supportive environment, where they feel valued and accepted unconditionally. This idea created the foundation for the focus on *self-centered* as a counseling approach that prioritizes self-understanding and personal growth.

Research by Maidatus Sholihah and Yusria Ningsi (2024) supports this idea by showing that the influence of *client-centered counseling* accompanied by self-reflection can help bilingual students in overcoming *overthinking behavior*. This demonstrates the importance of a client-focused approach in increasing self-awareness and managing excessive thoughts.

Thus, focusing on *the self-centered* is no longer considered a selfish trait, but as a positive approach that allows individuals to get to know themselves better, manage emotions wisely, and build strong mental well-being. This understanding encourages counseling practitioners to see focusing on *the self-centered* as an important part of therapy, which can help clients find a balance between self-needs and social interactions, thereby achieving a better overall quality of life. Research by Wafiq Syafinatuohmah Pulungan and Ade Chita Putri Harahapdianihdioor (2024) also shows the effectiveness of group counseling services based on *a client-centered approach* in increasing the self-confidence of students who are victims of *body shaming*.

### Parts of Self-centered focus from research at 10 Article Journal

Self-centered focus encompasses various aspects that have implications in counseling practice for supporting the emotional and mental well-being of individuals. **First**, *Self-esteem* refers to an individual's self-evaluation that affects how they adapt to the social environment. According to Prasetyo, Purnama, and Prasetya (2020), *self-esteem* has a significant influence on the ability to self-adjustment or *self-adjustment*. *Good Self-esteem* allows individuals to more easily adjust in a variety of social and environmental situations, while *low self-esteem* can inhibit these abilities. **Second**, *self-efficacy* is an individual's belief in their ability to complete tasks and face challenges. Auliya Nasir (2021) mentioned that increasing *self-efficacy* through counseling can help clients be more confident in facing problems, reduce stress, and strengthen self-resilience. **Third**, *self-management* is the ability to regulate and control oneself, including emotions and behavior. John Dinsmore et al. (2021) emphasized that *self-management techniques* in counseling are used to help clients manage stress, regulate emotions, and adopt healthy behaviors. **Fourth**, *self-centeredness* is often associated with egoism, Brunila and Siivonen (2023) point out that in the context of neoliberal societies, this term refers to the individual's drive to focus on self-development and personal achievement. This concept includes a deeper understanding of oneself, which often places the individual at the center of their experiences and responsibilities, but can lead to neglect of the social or collective context. **Fifth**, *self-love* is a sense of acceptance and love for yourself. Okello and Calhoun (2024) show that in counseling, emphasizing *self-love* can help clients reduce self-criticism as well as increase overall self-confidence and happiness. **Sixth**, *self-compassion* involves a loving attitude toward oneself in the face of failure or adversity. Di Fabio and Saklofske (2021) mention that *self-compassion techniques* in counseling can help clients overcome feelings of guilt or anxiety, encouraging them to be more accepting and forgiving of themselves.

**Seventh**, *self-reflection* is a process of introspection in which individuals reflect on their experiences and actions in order to better understand themselves. Maidatus Sholihah et al. (2024) emphasize that in counseling, *self-reflection* can be an effective tool for fostering personal growth through a deeper understanding of thought and behavior patterns. **Eighth**, *self-confidence* is an individual's belief in their ability to achieve goals and face life's challenges. Wafiq Syafinaturohmah Pulungan et al. (2024) states that counselors can help clients build *healthy self-confidence*, thereby increasing courage in taking risks and interacting with others. **Ninth**, the concept of *self-love* also includes the importance of maintaining a balance between caring for yourself and others. Febria Savitry Arum Melati (2024) mentions that through counseling, clients can be taught to build *healthy self-love*, which contributes to the quality of interpersonal relationships and emotional well-being. **Tenth**, a *self-compassion approach* focused on positive non-judgmental self-acceptance, especially when facing emotional challenges, can reduce stress and increase emotional resilience. Diani Akmalia Apsari et al. (2024) showed that in counseling, *self-compassion* is taught as a tool to help clients deal with emotional challenges and improve their well-being.

### **Implications of Self-centered focus in Counseling Practice**

*Self-centered focus* has various implications in counseling practice, especially in improving important aspects of an individual's emotional and mental well-being. **First**, increased *self-esteem* is very important to support the process of self-adjustment, as revealed by Prasetyo et al. (2020). Counselors can help individuals improve *self-esteem* through positive reflection techniques and the reinforcement of a positive attitude towards oneself, which in turn contributes to their ability to adapt to the social and emotional environment. **Secondly**, according to Auliya Nasir (2021), increased *self-efficacy* contributes to stress reduction among adolescents and increases confidence in completing tasks and facing challenges. Counseling strategies that support the formulation of realistic goals help clients feel a positive increase in *self-efficacy*. **Ketiga**, penelitian oleh Dinsmore et al. (2021) highlights the importance of self-management in the regulation of emotions and behavior. Counselors can develop clients' self-management skills through timing techniques and effective stress management strategies. **Fourth**, Brunila and Siivonen (2023) discuss the concept of *self-centeredness* within the framework of neoliberal societies, where individuals are encouraged to focus on personal achievement and self-development. They explain that *self-centeredness* in this context reflects a deeper understanding of the self, allowing the individual to recognize and manage personal needs and desires. However, this emphasis often leads to increased personal responsibility, which can lead to a lack of attention to social aspects and the community around them. **Fifth**, the development of *self-love* has also been shown to improve the quality of life of individuals. Okello and Calhoun (2024) revealed that counselors can facilitate *self-love* by encouraging healthy self-reflection and self-acceptance. **Sixth**, *Self-compassion* can reduce stress and increase emotional resilience. Di Fabio and Saklofske (2021) show that by increasing emotional intelligence (EI), individuals can be more accepting and forgiving of themselves, which in turn contributes to stress reduction. *Self-compassion techniques*, such as self-compassion exercises, can be applied in counseling sessions to help clients deal with emotional challenges in a more constructive way.. **Seventh**, *self-reflection* plays an important role in personal growth and self-understanding. Maidatus Sholihah et al. (2024) emphasize that counselors can encourage clients to engage in *self-reflection* as a tool to develop a better understanding of themselves. **Eighth**, building *self-confidence* is also an important aspect in achieving life goals, as found by Wafiq Syafinaturohmah Pulungan et

al. (2024). Counselors can support clients in building *healthy self-confidence* through positive support and techniques to increase courage in taking risks. **Ninth**, maintaining a balance between caring for yourself and others is part of building *healthy self-love*. Febria Savitry Arum Melati (2024) emphasizes that it contributes to improving the quality of interpersonal relationships and emotional well-being. **Tenth**, the application of *self-compassion* for mental health can help clients accept themselves positively when facing emotional challenges. Diani Akmalia Apsari and Hanggara Budi Utomo (2024) affirm that counselors can teach *self-compassion* as a tool to improve client mental health. Thus, these different aspects of *self-centered focus* show how counseling practices can play an important role in supporting an individual's personal growth, emotional well-being, and mental health.

### Techniques in counseling to manage *Self-Centered Focus*

**The first approach** is a *Client-Centered Approach* that emphasizes the client's active role in finding solutions. The counselor serves as a facilitator who supports the exploration of the client's feelings (Maidatus Sholihah et al., 2024). **Second**, the *Self-Love Approach* focuses on loving yourself, similar to the *Solution-Focused Therapy technique*, which helps clients find strength in themselves and increase *self-love*. This approach includes four main aspects: self-awareness, self-confidence, self-esteem, and *self-care* (Okello and Calhoun, 2024, Febria Savitry Arum Melati, 2024). **Ketiga**, *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)* mendorong penerimaan emosi dan komitmen pada tindakan sesuai nilai pribadi, mengurangi fokus pada diri sendiri (Diani Akmalia Apsari & Hanggara Budi Utomo, 2024). **Fourth**, *Group Counseling* helps change negative thought patterns to be more balanced and positive, allowing clients to more easily adapt in social life (Wafiq Syafinaturohmah Pulungan et al., 2024). **Fifth**, *Mindfulness* combines *mindfulness techniques* with positive psychology, emphasizing mindfulness, confidence, self-esteem, and *self-care* (Okello and Calhoun 2024). **Sixth**, *Affirmations* or positive affirmations are used to increase self-confidence and reduce adverse negative thought patterns (Febria Savitry Arum Melati, 2024), **finally** *Emotional intelligence (EI)* helps individuals recognize and change negative thought patterns that contribute to *self-centered focus*, supporting increased mental well-being (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2021).

## CONCLUSION

*This Literature review* confirms that *self-centered focus*, which is often perceived negatively, can actually provide great benefits in achieving good mental health if managed appropriately. Research shows that elements such as *self-efficacy*, *self-love*, *self-esteem*, and *self-confidence* play an important role in helping individuals cope with social pressures and develop balanced mental well-being. Although the history of the concept of *self-centered focus* tends to view it as a selfish attitude that damages social relationships, modern understanding recognizes that attention to oneself can be used to improve an individual's ability to care for and understand oneself. Pendekatan konseling seperti *client-centered*, *mindfulness*, *EI*, dan *ACT* terbukti efektif dalam membantu klien mengelola *self-centered focus* secara positif. Counseling facilitates a balance between self-focus and social interaction, fostering long-term mental health and enhancing the client's capacity to deal with psychological challenges. Therefore, it is important for counseling practitioners to understand and apply these concepts, so that clients can benefit from *self-centered focus* optimally, not only for their own well-being but also in establishing healthy relationships with others.

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