

Psychoeducation: Facing Challenges through Social Support as A Foundation for Self-efficacy and Family Wellbeing of Children with Disabilities in Piyungan

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ABSTRACT

Families of children with special needs have more complex problems including care, negative stigma from the community, and lack of concern from related parties. For this reason, families of children with special needs require something that supports them to be more self-confident as well as in the community. They need to have knowledge that can support the welfare of society in various timelines. One of these activities is Psychoeducation. Participants in this activity were 9 people consisting of children with special needs and families of children with special needs (ABK). Based on the activities that have been carried out, it can be concluded that this psychoeducation activity has succeeded in increasing parents' understanding of the importance of accepting the condition of children with special needs.

Introduction

In globalization era, mental health and community wellbeing have become important issues in the social sphere. These issues become more complex for families of children with special needs who live in rural areas. The challenges can be on the lack of social support, negative stigma from the community and the financial burden. Many of these families of children with disabilities are also marginalized from the mainstream of society due to a lack of access to public services or facilities and equal opportunities to develop their talents. This condition, if sustained, can affect anxiety, self-confidence and can increase stress in families of children with disabilities (Park & Lee, 2022).

According to data from the Bantul Education, Youth and Sports Office (Disdikpora), there are at least 2111 students with disabilities who are attending school from kindergarten to junior high school in 2024. This number is quite high compared to other regions in Yogyakarta. One of the areas that is quite active in handling mental health, including the

program for children with special needs is *Dusun Piyungan*. Located on the border of Bantul and Sleman, the area provides its own dynamics for its residents, including for the fulfillment of the implementation of community activities and inclusive education of children with disabilities. Although there is already a program related to empowering children with disabilities and their families, this program is not comprehensive, so some families feel that support is only available from the school.

Through interviews and discussions with representatives of families of children with disabilities, the team identified the problem such the confidence of families of children with disabilities is not fulfilling their children's needs due to the lack of social support they receive. Self-efficacy is one of the driving forces for families of children with disabilities in their parenting activities. self-efficacy is belief in their own ability to perform a behavior or complete a task (Feist, 2010). However, the reality is that they often feel inadequate and even insecure. Children who attend special schools are bad and troublesome. These conditions affect self-beliefs of families of children with disabilities and perceptions of social support for them in facing challenges.

This condition is also reinforced by economic limitations and the working mothers' condition so that they do whatever they can. The families also shared that they were not sure they could fulfill all of their children's medical needs due to financial constraints. The existence of various kinds of support provided by the community to parents shows that social support as one of the things that is very important (Fu, Li, Zhang, & Huang, 2023). Parents of children with disabilities show that social support as one of the things that is very influential in the formation of self-confidence is something they need. Social support can be obtained from parents, friends, teachers, relatives and the environment. Parents of children with disabilities who get support from the surrounding environment tend to have motivation and positive emotions (Jenaabadi, 2013).

The difficulties experienced by families of children with special needs require a supportive social environment to increase self-efficacy in the family (Walsh, 2010). Thus, things that help the well-being of families are important to promote and pursue. The aim of this this psychoeducation is to find out how to understand the importance of social support and self-efficacy in the prevention of stress for families of children with special needs and as a promotional effort that the welfare of families of children with special needs.

Method

The implementation of psychoeducation as a form of community service and empowerment began by conducting observations and interviews with representatives of the Special Needs Children (ABK) family group in Piyungan. Moreover, the process continued by conducting focus group discussions (FGD) with representatives of children with disabilities and their families to identify problems. The next step was to carry out psychoeducation using the workshop method which introduced self-efficacy and social support mapping as a form of strengthening the welfare of families of children with disabilities in villages that are still lack education and other interventions and simple practices that support them. The activities were held face-to-face on July 17, 2024 for 2.5 hours and was attended by 9 participants from the family group of children with disabilities, several educators in the Piyungan area, and community representatives who live in Piyungan and its surroundings.

Through these activities, several related materials were delivered: 1) the role of self-efficacy in families of children with disabilities for strengthening their sense of empowerment, 2) family self-efficacy case studies based on their role in caring for children with disabilities. 3) basic understanding of social support to strengthen the self-efficacy of children with disabilities and their families in facing daily challenges, and 4) identification of social networks and self-reflection activities related to strengthening social support and cohesiveness in family groups with children with disabilities to their self-efficacy. The psychoeducation process, which combined cognitive methods and practical reflection, was also accompanied by a pre-test and post-test in the form of an achievement test questionnaire to determine the participants' knowledge before and after being given the psychoeducation.

Results and Discussion

Results

Psychoeducational activities were conducted on self-efficacy recognition. It also faced the challenges of families of children with disabilities based on self-efficacy, social support recognition, reflective social support networks and letters of support. The methods used by the facilitators in implementing this psychoeducation were lectures, question and answer, roleplay, group presentation and simulation.

Tabel 1. Result Psychoeducation

No	Before Psychoeducation	After Psychoeducation
1	Families and children with disabilities are not open and do not have the courage to express their feelings, circumstances and problems.	Families and children with disabilities begin to open up and share their feelings, circumstances, problems and experiences as children with disabilities or families of children with disabilities.
2	Families and children with disabilities not feel proud enough of their achievements.	Families and children with disabilities feel prouder of their own or their children's achievements and feel appreciated by outsiders.
3	Families and children with disabilities do not realize their ability or competence in carrying out various tasks or challenges as children with disabilities or families of children with disabilities.	Families and children with disabilities begin to understand the meaning of self-efficacy and begin to realize the various abilities or competencies they have in facing various tasks and challenges as children with disabilities or families of children with disabilities.
4	Families and children with disabilities understand that social support is only material or financial.	Families and children with disabilities realize that there are many types of social support, including emotional, informational, appreciative and instrumental support.
5	Families and children with disabilities think that social support only focuses on the family and the government.	Families and children with disabilities know that the sources of social support are very wide and can even be found in the surrounding environment, from friends, coworkers, teachers, canteen vendors and others. They provide support to other children and families of children with disabilities.

3.1 Opening, introduction and pre-test

This psychoeducation activity began with an opening with the aim of facilitators and participants getting to know each other and participants could know the purpose of their involvement in this psychoeducation. This opening was carried out by means of introduction using games, presentation of the psychoeducation rundown shown in PowerPoint slides, making informed consent, and conducting a pre-test using paper. The questions for the pre-test are as follows (1) What is self-efficacy?, (2) Why is social support important for families with children with special needs?, (3) How can self-efficacy be increased?, (4) What can families of children with disabilities do to obtain social support?, (5) What is the main role of psychoeducation in supporting families of children with disabilities?

3.2 Ice Breaking

Before the explanation in psychoeducation began, there was an ice breaking session that aimed to restore the focus of the participants and made the atmosphere not tense and not boring so that it could optimize the implementation of psychoeducation. This activity was done with a group game.

3.3 Psychoeducation on self-efficacy recognition

The psychoeducation activity on self-efficacy recognition provided participants with information on the definition of self-efficacy, the concept of self-efficacy, a better understanding of the importance of self-efficacy, effective strategies to strengthen family members' self-efficacy, and identification of challenges and stress experienced by family members in caring for children with disabilities. The relationship between self-efficacy and families of children with special needs is important in terms of the development and well-being of children with special needs such as providing social support, forming a positive identity and establishing a good and open communication and being able to increase the motivation and quality of life of children with special needs. Self-efficacy plays an essential role and tends to provide better support in helping children with special needs develop their potential and responsibilities. So the level of self-efficacy can influence how well they overcome challenges and fulfill their potential.



Figure 1. Screening of the self-efficacy video



Figure 2. Self-efficacy material session

This activity provided participants with information about the importance of self-efficacy for the development of children with disabilities and optimizing their potential and quality of life. It was expected that participants would be able to perform a particular task well by providing support, encouragement and motivation to achieve good self-efficacy as a means of achievement.

3.4 Roleplay: Facing the challenges of families of children with disabilities based on self-confidence

In this session, participants were asked to share their experiences and inspirations with each other so that they could get to know each other in their groups. Participants were also asked to write down their abilities and strengths which were then discussed together and related to solving problems that occurred, such as problems at school, friendship, social environment, and neighbors, and other problems that participants had experienced. Through this activity, participants were inspired to deal with challenges that occur significantly in their lives and in the future. They could have practical skills such as dealing with communication challenges or other stressful situations that are often faced by families of children with disabilities and can be used as ongoing learning as an effective way to develop skills.

3.5 Recognizing social support

This session of psychoeducation activities was about providing an understanding of social support, teaching how to maintain family mental health, providing an understanding of the role of social support with psychological wellbeing, encouraging involvement in peer support groups to share experiences and inspiration, and creating an action plan to increase self-efficacy. These activities helped participants understand the important role of social support so that in the future it can increase adaptability. Social support allows families to be more adaptive to changes and challenges that may arise in caring for children with disabilities. In addition, this activity helped participants understand the importance of strengthening interpersonal relationships that provide moral and practical support.



Figure 3. Social support material session

3.6 Simulation and reflective practice: social support networks and letters of support.

In this session, there were practical techniques to increase confidence and create social networks and reflect on experiences related to social support. A simulation of writing a social

support network, sharing the social network with other participants, and utilizing the social network to empower families of children with disabilities, as well as writing letters to support each other and expressing hopes. Through the activities, it was purposed to get possibility to help participants gain strengthened social skills for building good and effective relationships with people in the support network. In addition, participants could deepen the understanding of how social support networks function in real situations and be able to solve a problem that might arise in interactions with support networks. Through reflective practice, participants were able to express their feelings and hopes deeply to people in the support networks and strengthen relationships by reminding people in the support network of the value and importance of their role in the lives of families of children with disabilities, thus building a deeper sense of involvement.



Figure 4: Simulation and reflective practice

Discussion

Psychoeducation is supposed to provide education about social support that can help families who have children with special needs. Social support is the presence of other people who can be relied upon to provide assistance, encouragement, acceptance, and attention to improve the welfare of life for the individual concerned (Shin & Park, 2022). (Feeney & Collins, 2015) explain that social support has various forms including emotional support, informational support and instrumental support. Emotional support includes support that is realized in the form of affection, trust, and attention. Second, informational support aims to suppress stressors, where the information provided by the family is expected to provide special suggestions to the mother. Information provided by the family is expected to be able to provide special suggestions to mothers who have mentally retarded children. Third, appreciation/appraisal support is that the family has a role as a provider of appraisal support such as providing feedback guidance, guiding and mediating problems, as well as a validator

of the problems, and as a validator of family identity. Fourth, instrumental support, which aims to revive the energy and enthusiasm that began to decline. Social support in general is very important for every individual to help mental health and prevent stress (Acoba, 2024).

Social support in the form of special assistance is also very much needed for families of children with special needs in dealing with their problems (Tian et al., 2022). The benefits of social support for individuals provided by closest friends and family will form a self-concept, self-confidence, ability to take responsibility for the actions that have been done, a dare to try new things, always be optimistic in facing difficulties (Afita & Nuranasmita, 2023).

In addition, according to Siedlecki et al., (2013), the benefits of social support are able to improve psychological well-being and self-adjustment by providing a sense of belonging, clarifying self-identity, increasing self-esteem and reducing stress. Social support can also help in managing stress by providing services, care, sources of information and feedback needed to deal with stress and pressure. Meanwhile, according to (Muhsin et al., 2023), the benefits of social support are to increase individual confidence, especially in facing stress and pressure. Social support is intended to increase individual confidence, especially families of children with special needs. According to Bi et al. (2021), it can make families who have children with special needs able to live life more positively and have good well-being.

Conclusion

Psychoeducation is addressed as an effort to understand the importance of social support for self-efficacy which has a very important role in increasing individual confidence, especially parents who have children with special needs. On the other hand, it is also meant to anticipate the impact of stress for children with special needs. Social support can be in the form of motivation, guidance and advice that can come from people who live around individuals. This activity is expected to be able to provide information related to increasing self-confidence in parents who have children with special needs.

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