

Poetry Therapy to Improve Visual Sensory Mental Expression: PPSDN Pendowo Kudus Regency

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Abstract: It is important for the expression and mentality of the visually impaired to be given space to develop according to their talents and interests. The limitations of the visually impaired in expressing emotions and mental conditions are due to minimal access to communication and expression media. This condition can affect the psychological well-being of the visually impaired including self-confidence and the ability to interact effectively with the social environment. Poetry therapy, as a form of art literacy, has the potential to be an effective medium to help improve the mental expression of the visually impaired. This community service program aims to provide space for the visually impaired to channel emotions, explore creative potential, and improve mental well-being through poetry. Poetry therapy activities were carried out at the PPSDN (Social Service Center for the Visually Disabled) Pendowo, Kudus Regency, involving 14 visually impaired. The methods used included training sessions for writing and reading poetry, group therapy, and reading poetry in an open forum. Program evaluation was carried out through observation, interviews, and analysis of the poetry works of the visually impaired. The results of the activities showed a significant increase in the ability of the visually impaired to express feelings verbally and non-verbally. In addition, Netra's sensory disabilities also show developments in aspects of self-confidence, creative thinking skills, and social involvement.

Keywords: Therapy, Poetry, Expression, Mental, Disability

1. Introduction

Visually impaired people face complex challenges in living their daily lives. Visual impairment results in reduced access to various sources of visual information, limited participation in social activities, and a lack of media that supports visually impaired people to express themselves optimally. In addition to physical challenges, psychological aspects are often a major concern in the process of expressing themselves. The inability to effectively express emotions or feelings of visually impaired people causes a buildup of negative emotions, which have the potential to trigger stress, anxiety, and depression. If this condition is not treated, it will have an impact on the quality of life and mental well-being of visually impaired people as a whole. According to Fathurohman et al. (2024); Raharjo et al. (2024) and Kara et al. (2020) explain that through the reading and writing process in understanding literary works, the implementation of poetry therapy can run smoothly. According to Mason, (2023); Maler & Komaniecki, (2021) and Clark, (2023) explains that people with disabilities have reading and writing skills that need to be improved to hone motor skills related to soft skills.

Self-expression is an important element in maintaining mental and emotional balance. However, visual sensory disabilities often experience limitations in finding appropriate media to channel their expression. Expressive media such as fine arts or visual media are difficult to access for visual sensory disabilities. An alternative approach that is more in line with the characteristics of the needs of visual sensory disabilities is to use literary arts media, especially poetry. According to Fatkhur, (2023); Fathurohman, (2015) and Aziza et al., (2021) explain that expression in art allows someone to convey thoughts resulting from the sedimentation of life that has been passed through interesting works. According to Hanif, (2018) and Fathurohman, (2019) explains that poetry as a literary work has a positive role in providing space for writers to convey their hopes and thoughts. According to Song & Cai, (2024); Molek- Winiarska & Kawka, (2024) and Joo et al., (2022) explains that a person's mental state can be accommodated well through appropriate media and according to needs.

Poetry is not just the art of writing, but a form of creative communication that can touch a person's emotional and spiritual dimensions. Poetry therapy provides a space for individuals to express emotions, explore personal experiences and find new ways to understand themselves with sensory disabilities. Poetry provides a means to create meaning and good relationships with oneself and others. Through an art-based approach, it has been proven to provide significant therapeutic benefits such as reducing stress, increasing emotional balance and strengthening self-confidence. According to Laily et al. (2022) and Prayitno, (2013) explains that poetry has its own uniqueness in its writing, so that the words in the poem can bring out meanings both implicitly and explicitly. According to Cavelagna, (2024) and Yeo et al. (2023) states that poetry has an imaginative power that can increase a person's sensitivity in understanding life. According to Fitriyani & Fathurrahman, (2021); Widiyanto & Fathurohman, (2019) and Hidayatulloh & Pujiati, (2020) explains that through literary works, something important in life and living becomes a story that needs to be studied as material for reflection in responding to circumstances.

The Pendowo Social Service Center for the Visually Disabled (PPSDN) in Kudus Regency focuses on the rehabilitation and empowerment of the visually impaired. PPSDN Pendowo in Kudus Regency plays a role in meeting physical and economic needs, but supports the psychological health and mental well-being of its beneficiaries. The challenge of PPSDN Pendowo in Kudus Regency is the lack of specific programs to help beneficiaries (PM) express themselves creatively and deeply. Activities involving art, especially literacy, have not been the main focus in supporting the psychological development of the visually impaired.

Based on these problems, this community service activity focuses on Poetry Therapy to Improve Mental Expression of Visual Sensory Disabilities at PPSDN Pendowo Kudus Regency. This activity aims to provide space for visual sensory disabilities to express themselves, explore emotions, and find new ways to communicate with the environment through poetry. Poetry therapy is designed through an inclusive approach that focuses on the involvement of visual sensory disabilities in exploring verbal and auditory to feel the benefits of literacy art directly.

This community service program involves several stages, including poetry writing training, poetry reading sessions, group reflections and poetry performances. In the process, Netra's sensory disabilities explore personal experiences, recognize emotions, and convey their feelings in the form of poetry.

2. Methods

The design of this community service activity uses an art-based intervention approach designed inclusively and adaptively to the needs of visual sensory disabilities. (School Education Service Delivery, nd) explains that inclusive methods need to be used through management that is in accordance with the needs in the field. The methods used in this community service activity include the design of activities, data and tools used, methods and stages of activities (Fig.1).

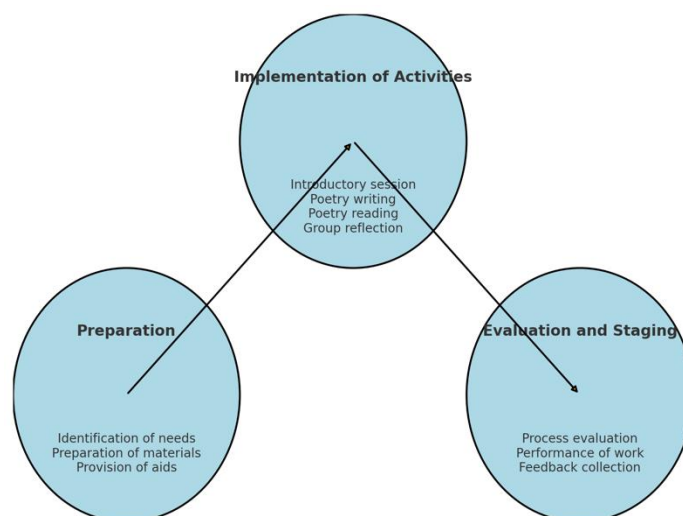


Figure 1. Chart of Stages of Community Service Program Methods

Design stage

At the design stage, community service activities are divided into three stages, namely creative exploration, verbal communication exercises, reflection and group interaction. In the creative exploration stage, the researcher provides space for visual sensory disabilities to express experiences and emotions through poetry.

In the verbal communication training stage, the researcher focuses on training visual sensory disabilities to convey poetry verbally as a form of developing communication skills. The reflection and group interaction stages are carried out by encouraging visual sensory disabilities to share experiences, discuss the work of visual sensory disabilities and get feedback from fellow visual sensory disabilities and trainers.

Data and tools used

The data collected in this community service activity is in the form of a profile of visual sensory disabilities starting from age, gender, educational background, early experience related to literacy or writing arts, initial psychological conditions obtained through interviews and observations. The data in this community service program is in the form of works by visual sensory disabilities in the form of poetry written during therapy sessions. Documentation during poetry reading by visual sensory disabilities is important to know and evaluate the development process.

The tools used for community service are supporting equipment such as microphones, speakers, and acoustically supportive rooms for poetry reading sessions. The evaluation instruments for this community service activity use observation forms, simple questionnaires, audio or video documentation to assess the development of visual sensory disabilities. Methods and Stages of Activities

Stage 1 preparation

In the first stage of preparation, identification of needs is carried out through interviews with visual sensory disabilities to understand the psychological and social conditions of visual sensory disabilities. Conducting an initial assessment of abilities in writing or speaking in front of a group. Preparation of materials is carried out by preparing training modules that include basic techniques for writing poetry, exploring themes and poetry reading techniques. Preparation of materials is carried out by preparing training modules on basic techniques for writing poetry, exploring themes and poetry reading techniques. Preparation of a guide to the steps of poetry therapy is carried out based on the needs of visual sensory disabilities.

Stage 2 implementation

In the second stage, the implementation of activities begins with an introduction session for poetry therapy activities and their benefits, followed by a discussion on the themes that inspire poetry. The researcher explains simple writing techniques for visual sensory disabilities in writing skills and recording voices when expressing themselves verbally. In the poetry writing session, visual sensory disabilities are given the freedom to use WA, Facebook social media which already has talkback on the gadget to detect incoming and outgoing words, symbols, and messages. In addition, visual sensory disabilities can also write on Braille paper. Visual sensory disabilities are asked to explore personal experiences, emotions, and ideas in the form of poetry. The results of the poems of visual sensory disabilities are given the opportunity to read them according to the expressions in the contents of the poems that have been made. Through this poetry reading process, visual sensory disabilities are trained to dare to appear, be confident, and be able to express the results of their thoughts.

Reflection is carried out at each stage to provide positive feedback on the process of writing and reading poetry that affects the feelings and mental conditions of visual sensory disabilities.

Stage 3 evaluation and staging

In this third stage, it begins with process evaluation, poetry performance, and final feedback or reflection. Process evaluation at this stage is carried out by assessing the development of visual sensory disabilities in expressing emotions and creative thinking and observing changes in the level of self-confidence of visual sensory disabilities during poetry therapy activities. The poetry performance stage is used to demonstrate abilities and increase appreciation for visual sensory disabilities. The final feedback and reflection stage is carried out through the process of collecting input from visual sensory disabilities regarding the poetry therapy process.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Result

The results of this community service activity explain about the space for channeling emotions, exploring creative potential, and improving mental well-being.

a. Space to Express Emotions

Based on the implementation of community service that has been carried out, the results obtained regarding the space to channel emotions, namely the visual sensory disability found a space to channel emotions through the poetry therapy process as illustrated in Fig.2. Poetry therapy carried out through the process of reading and writing poetry is able for visual sensory disabilities at PPSDN Pendowo Kudus Regency to provide a positive space to channel emotions in visual sensory disabilities. Channeling emotions such as gratitude, longing, sadness, happiness, and struggle are written in poetry by visual sensory disabilities.



Figure 2. Training in channeling emotions through the poetry therapy process for visual sensory disabilities in PPSDN Pendowo, Kudus Regency.

The storm blows, the wind blows
 But the steps do not retreat,
 the determination remains firm
 Searching for the meaning of life
 behind a dim career
 Traces left behind,
 scattered memories
 Laughter and tears are engraved
 in the heart
 Friends and comrades come one
 after another
 Teaching the meaning of life
 in every growth
 High mountains are surpassed,
 deep valleys are passed
 (Excerpt from a poem by AM (Beneficiary))

Other poems by people with sensory disabilities, such as Netra, also provide color related to the channeling of emotions that can be used as a reflection of life (Fig. 3.).

School, the place where I gained knowledge,
 has now become a nightmare.
 No longer cheerful, only the shadow
 of fear looms. My desire to learn
 is suppressed by fear.
 Lost spirit, sinking into the abyss
 of silence
 (Excerpt from a poem by AM (Beneficiary))



Figure 3. Training of thoughts and hopes through poetic expression for sensory disabilities Visual at PPSDN Pendowo, Kudus Regency.

Poems about gratitude were written by a Netra sensory disability to convey his thoughts and hopes. Through the process of reflection, thinking, and the results of life experiences.

Sensory disability Netra poems that have been created are poems of hope for a better life in the future. The experiences that have been passed through by sensory disability Netra are an important life process to reflect on.

My special love,
 I am grateful to know you,
 Because you are always there
 for me, taking care of me
 every time. My special love,
 Excerpt from a poem by D (Beneficiary)

During the poetry therapy process, the themes created by the poems by the visually impaired sensory disabled people vary in form, ranging from themes of Gratitude, longing, sadness, struggle, happiness, doubt, love of the homeland, culture, and themes originating from the thoughts and reflections of the visually impaired sensory disabled people based on the problems and hopes they have. Through the poetry therapy process by writing and reading poetry, the visually impaired sensory disabled people experience improvements in terms of emotional expression, self-confidence, creativity, mental well-being, social relationships, and recognition from the community as presented in Fig. 4.

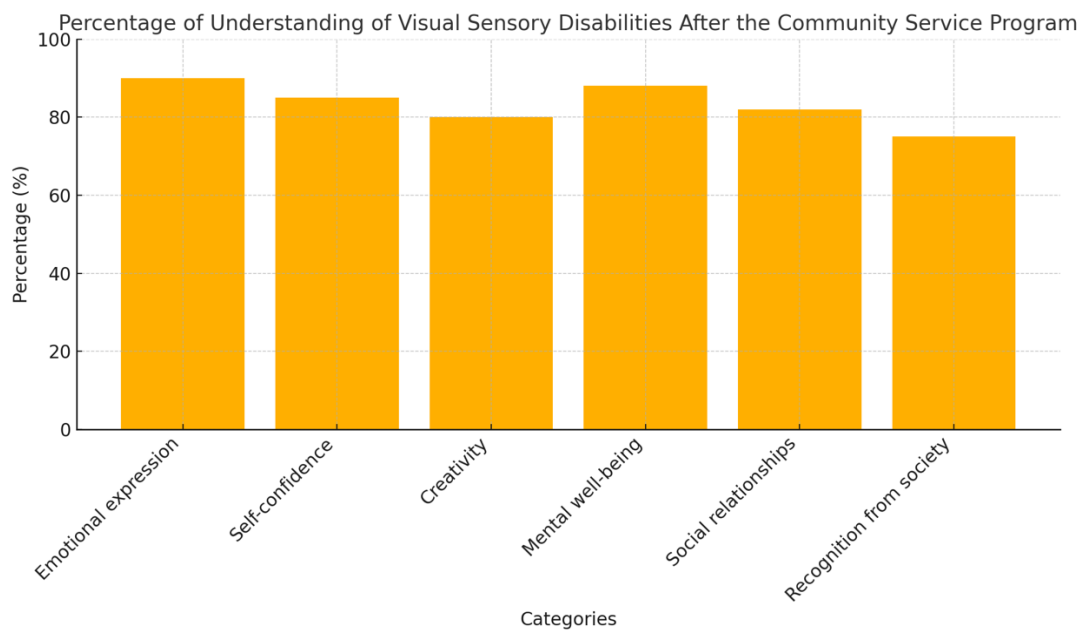


Figure 4. Percentage of Understanding of Visual Sensory Disabilities at PPSDN Pendowo Regency Kudus after Poetry Therapy was held.

Poems produced by visually impaired people have emotional depth reflecting personal experiences such as frustration, social stigma, hope and optimism. Personal experiences in visually impaired people have a deep impression and are one of the important experiences as an action to move forward. The results of poetry created by visually impaired people are read and listened to carefully by the audience to find out the content or meaning in the poem. Through the process of reading and writing poetry, visually impaired people experience a poetry therapy process with the media space of poetry as a channel for the results of sedimentation of thoughts. As a result, visually impaired people feel relieved and have a new way to deal with feelings when experiencing something.

b. Exploring creative potential

Based on the results of community service activities that have been carried out, the sensory disabilities of the visual have increased their ability to explore creative ideas in poetry as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Output Exploring Creative Ideas Activities

Aspect	Condition Before Activity	Condition After Activity
Ability Expressing Ideas	Participants have difficulty expressing creative ideas due to the lack of supporting media. Ideas are often buried.	Participant capable convey idea with Good through poetry, use metaphor, analogy, and diction Which diverse.
Courage Exploring Themes	Participants tend to be afraid to try new or complex themes due to lack of confidence and experience in writing.	Participants began to explore more diverse themes, such as hopes, life experiences, and relationships with the environment.
Selection of Diction and Style of Language	The use of simple words and minimal variation. The resulting poems tend to be monotonous.	Participants demonstrate variation in diction, use of figurative language such as personification, symbols, and alliteration.
Structure and Coherence Poetry	Poetry Which produced not enough structured, with an incoherent plot.	Participants are able to produce more structured poetry, with a logical and flowing flow of ideas.
Self Confidence in Work	Participant feel hesitant to the quality of their work and are reluctant to share it with others.	Participants are more confident with their work, even daring to read poetry in front of an audience.
Award to Creativity	Participants' creativity is often not appreciated due to the lack of media to demonstrate their abilities.	The creativity of the participants received appreciation from the group and the community, increasing motivation to continue working.

Netra's sensory disabilities demonstrate the ability to explore creative ideas in the form of poetry, such as using metaphors, personification, and simple yet effective rhythmic arrangements. The themes raised by Netra's sensory disabilities vary, from everyday life experiences to philosophical reflections on life, demonstrating Netra's sensory disabilities' ability to think critically and creatively.

c. Improved mental wellbeing

Based on the community service activities that have been carried out, it was found that the visually impaired reported an increase in mood after being involved in poetry therapy sessions. The creative process through poetry therapy helps the visually impaired feel more positive and optimistic. Poetry therapy activities help the visually impaired overcome stress and emotional pressure that is often experienced due to sensory limitations and social isolation. The visually impaired feel more appreciated and accepted after their work is appreciated by others via Table 2.

Table 2. Output Mental Wellbeing Activities

Aspect	Condition Before Activity	Condition After Activity
Expression Emotional	Difficulty expressing emotions verbally or in writing. Emotions are often bottled up, causing stress or anxiety.	Capable express emotions through poetry. Participants felt relieved and understood more method express feelings.
Confidence	Tend to be shy and hesitant to appear or speak in front of other people.	Believe self-increase, dare to read poetry in front of groups and audiences, and be proud of their work.
Creativity	Creative potential is not being developed due to the lack of space for creativity.	Participant capable explore idea creative, choose diction, and produce poetry with theme and meaning Which deep.
Welfare Mental	Often feel depressed, lonely, and lack motivation due to physical and social limitations.	More positive mood, reduced stress, and feeling motivated after attending a poetry therapy session.
Social Relations	Social interaction is limited to a small circle, tending to feel isolated.	Social relationships improve through group reflection and appreciation. Fellow participant, as well as interaction with audience.
Confession from Public	Minim confession on ability they often face social stigma.	Get appreciation from public and family after the performance poetry, reducing the stigma against disability.

3.2 Discussion

Visually impaired people often face limitations in expressing emotions due to the lack of appropriate media. Through literary works such as poetry, it can provide space for visually impaired people to express their feelings and experiences verbally or in writing. The process of writing poetry allows visually impaired people to recognize and understand the emotions of visually impaired people well. By articulating feelings in the form of poetry, visually impaired people not only release emotional stress but also gain new ways to face life's challenges.

Poetry therapy opens up space for visual sensory disabilities to explore the imagination and creative abilities of visual sensory disabilities. Poetry therapy activities involve a deep-thinking process, starting from choosing the right words to composing poems that have meaning. The ability of visual sensory disabilities to explore themes everyday life or deep feelings indicate unrealized or unfacilitated creative potential. Creativity honed in poetry therapy provides a sense of personal achievement to increase self-confidence and motivate Netra's sensory disabilities to continue to create.

The process of writing poetry is therapeutic because it gives the visually impaired person a way to deal with negative emotions such as anxiety, loneliness, and frustration. Poetry is a safe medium to express things that are difficult to convey directly. Reading poetry in front of an audience provides a new experience for the visually impaired person to feel appreciated and accepted. Recognition of the work of the visually impaired person helps to increase self-confidence which has a positive impact on their mental balance. In the long term, poetry therapy activities can strengthen the optimism of the visually impaired person to be able to create something meaningful despite physical limitations.

Poems read by visually impaired people in front of an audience including family and the community create an important moment to appreciate their efforts and creativity. Appreciation from the audience provides validation that the work of visually impaired people has value to change the perception society towards themselves and increase motivation to continue working.

Group reflection after the poetry reading provides a space for the visually impaired to support each other and share experiences. This interaction strengthens social relationships, creates a sense of community, and reduces feelings of isolation. Group discussions also help the visually impaired to feel more connected to others for mental well-being.

4. Conclusion

The poetry therapy program has successfully provided an inclusive and supportive space for the visually impaired to channel emotions, explore creative potential, and improve mental well-being. Poetry becomes a medium of self-expression and an empowerment tool that helps the visually impaired to understand and overcome life's challenges. The literary work program was well appreciated in this community service program and had a significant impact on self-confidence, optimism, and quality of life. Poetry therapy proves that the art of literacy can be an effective tool to improve psychological well-being, especially for the visually impaired.

Poetry therapy programs to improve the mental expression of visual sensory disabilities can be developed by adding ongoing training to deepen the ability to write and read poetry and other disability community programs. The results of the work of visual sensory disabilities can be published in the form of poetry anthologies to provide awards and increase public appreciation of the creative potential of visual sensory disabilities. In addition, cooperation with literacy communities, institutions education and social organizations can strengthen the sustainability of the program and expand its impact.

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