

Poetry Therapy Uses Traditional Foods to Improve The Expression of Men With Mental Disabilities

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Abstract: Mental disability is a global problem that requires fast and precise treatment. The high number of people with mental disabilities in Indonesia, especially in Central Java province, shows how vulnerable society is to mental health disorders. This research was carried out at the RPSDM "Muria Jaya" Kudus and aims to improve the mental expression of people with mental disabilities through traditional eating-assisted poetry therapy. The method used is descriptive-qualitative, and the data collection techniques are observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of this research show that the use of traditional food is effective in generating imagination, social sensitivity, and critical thinking, especially in the poetry therapy process. Poetry therapy for mental disabilities is effective and appropriate through the use of contextually related traditional foods.

Keywords: Mental, Disabilities, Poetry, Ekspresion, Theraphy

1. Introduction

The government found that 2.9 million people aged 10 years and over suffer from mental health disorders in Indonesia, more precisely behavioral and attitude disorders (Directorate of Social Care for Persons with Disabilities, 2015). Central Java itself recorded approximately 6,097 children, 37,517 adults and 3,179 people with multiple disabilities (physical and mental), according to data from the Central Java Provincial Statistics Agency. More than that, WHO, through its website, stated that there were 970 million people with mental health disorders in the world in 2019 and this has continued to increase since the pandemic hit. This shows that mental problems are not only experienced in Indonesia but also in the world.

According to Law number 18 of 2014 concerning mental health, mental health is when someone can develop physically, mentally, spiritually and socially so that they can realize their own strengths, overcome stress, work productively and contribute to their community, Ardianti, et. al (2017); Kanzunudin, (2017); Ristiyani et. al (2017); Ristiyani, et. al (2017); Ahsin, et.al (2018); Ahsin, et.al (2017); Rodli, et.al (2019). People with mental health disorders are referred to as people with mental disabilities, which refers to their inability to manage their mental health (thoughts, feelings and behavior), Sofia, et. al (2020); Sulistyowati, et. al (2020); Tamarudin, et. al (2020); Umah, et. al (2020); Widiyanto, et. al (2019); Ahsin, et. al (2019). As explained by Wardaningsing et. al (2021), namely that people with mental disabilities are individuals or groups of individuals who experience serious mental disorders. Meanwhile, Darmuki, et.al (2019); Darmuki, et.al (2019); Darmuki, et.al (2019); Hidayati, et.al (2018); Darmuki, et.al (2017) Rahmanto (2019) categorizes people with mental disabilities as people who experience psychosocial disorders such as schizophrenia, bipolar, depression and other personality disorders, as well as developmental disorders that interfere with interaction and thinking, such as autism and hyperactivity, are called people with mental disabilities.

Oetopo, A., and Al Hazmi, F. (2022) explain that people with mental disabilities who are considered abnormal have no possibility of recovery and can only be overcome and managed in the right way, but people with disabilities must not lose their rights in social life, such as freedom of expression. The expression of the soul is very important to describe the moods experienced by humans, such as sadness, anger, anxiety, fear, restlessness, and other feelings, Kurniasih, et. al (2020); Ristiyani, et. al (2019); Wanabuliandari, et. al (2019); Wanabuliandari, et. al (2019); Fathurohman, (2013); Fathurohman, (2014); Fathurohman, et.al (2014). This mood tends to be stored in the sediment of human thinking as a reflection and evaluation of the events they have experienced in their lives. Human life usually experiences processes directly or indirectly, Ahsin, et. al (2020); Ahsin, et. al (2020); Al Mabruroh, et. al (2020); Angelia, et. al (2020); Arukah, et. al (2020); Arukah, et. al (2020); Devi, et. al (2020); Fathurohman, et. al (2020). Experience is an important component in the life process that influences the level of awareness and understanding resulting from the expression of the soul in accordance with expectations, Fathurohman, et. al (2020); Kara, et. al (2020); Kara, et. al (2020); Lestari, et. al (2020); Nisa, et. al (2020); Nugraheni, et. al (2020); Nugraheni, et. al (2020). One of the media for expressing expression is poetry, Nurhadi, et. al (2020); Prayogo, et. al (2020); Purnaningtyas, et. al (2020); Purnaningtyas, et. al (2020); Rodli, et. al (2019); Roysa, et. al (2020); Satria, et. al (2020). Poetry is part of the expression of the writer's very complex soul and is the oldest human art, and has the ability to increase awareness, compassion and empathy (Mirzaei, et al., 2023; Mijiyanti, et al., 2022; Listiyaningsih, et. al., 2021).

Included in the category of art therapy, poetry therapy uses the technique of writing and reading poetry as the basis of therapy (Yang, X. and Zheng, H., 2024). According to Tjiptodihardjo et. al (2018), poetry can be used as a way for people with mental disabilities to reflect on their traumatic experiences, which results in a cathartic process for those who carry out poetry therapy. This is in line with Damayanti and Pranoto's (2022) statement, namely that poetry can be considered a healing tool, according to and can be used as a human defense tool to face threats.

Writing poetry involves the creative use of language and imagination to express the soul's expression through experiences, emotions, or ideas in a beautiful and memorable way (Kara et. al, 2020); (Mujiwanto et. al, 2021); (Fathurohman, 2021); (Fathurohman 2023); (Nugraheni et. 2023); (Setiawaty and Nugraheni, 2022); Through poetry therapy, people with mental disabilities are directed to manage their thoughts, experiences, emotions and imagination in a more organized manner, Fathurohman, et. al (2015); Fathurohman, et. al (2017); Fathurohman, et. al (2018); Fathurohman, et.al (2019); Fathurohman, et.al (2015); Fathurohman, et.al (2017). Previous studies found that poetry aids emotional healing, helps people with mental disabilities deal with painful emotions, and helps them find themselves and wonder through the art of poetry, Fathurohman, et.al (2018); Fathurohman, et. al. (2019); Hartani, et.al (2018); Hanif, et. al (2018); Ristiyani, et.al (2018); Wibowo, et.al (2018); Ahmedi, (2023); Rolfs, (2023).

Regarding people with mental disabilities, RPSDM "Muria Jaya" is a service home for people with mental disabilities in Kudus Regency. This service house is part of the PPSDN "Pendowo" Kudus which has a capacity of 65 people. This service home has 2 social workers who are responsible for therapy, training and treatment of beneficiaries (PM) at the service home. Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted, the majority of PMs in these service homes suffer from schizophrenia which is triggered by various background problems such as social life, romance, and so on.

This attracted the interest of service providers in carrying out Community Service at RPSDM "Muria Jaya" Kudus which aims to improve the expression of the souls of people with mental disabilities. In this activity, the servants used traditional food as a trigger for PM's thoughts, emotions, imagination and previous experiences.

2. Research Methods

The method used in Community Service uses descriptive qualitative research methods. The results of the analysis are descriptive in the form of words or speech, as well as behavior that can be observed through observation and interviews. Problems and information obtained from interviews and observations are explained using a descriptive approach, Ahsin, et. al (2019); Cahyono, et. al (2020); (Fathurahman, 2023). Observations and interviews were carried out during poetry writing therapy assisted by traditional food media at RPSDM Muria Jaya Kudus.

3. Results and Discussion

The therapy activities began with social workers at RPSDM "Muria Jaya" Kudus introducing the community service as their facilitator. This therapy activity was attended by approximately five to seven PMs who were in the yellow and green zones. The yellow and green zones were chosen because the PM has started to have stability and is able to communicate with him, although not as well and fluently as people in general. The therapy process will then continue with the following steps.

1. As a trigger, PMs were invited to listen to relaxing music and read poetry as a first step for them to know and feel what poetry is like. Then the PM was invited to taste traditional food that had been prepared such as lemper. While tasting the food, the facilitator asks what they feel and see when eating the traditional food. The PM was invited to tell about experiences he had when eating lemper.
2. Writing poetry, after PMs are invited to taste and recall previous tastes and memories, PMs are asked to write a poem about what they felt or remembered through the food. The facilitator helps the PM to write his poetry and the individual is not permitted to force or intimidate the PM in writing the poem.

3. Reading poetry, the PM was invited to read his poetry in front and other participants gave awards in the form of applause. Apart from being read by the PM himself, the facilitator also read several poems by the PM with the right spirit. This aims to help give the PM experience regarding the feelings that must be conveyed when reading poetry.

During the therapy process, relaxation music is always played. This is intended to give the PM a sense of comfort so that their emotions and feelings remain under control. The results showed an increase in the expression of the PM's soul who followed the therapy and a sense of enthusiasm to better know and understand their own emotions.



Image 1 Poetry therapy process



Image 2 PM writes his poetry



Image 3 PM reading his poetry



Image 4 Facilitator reading PM's poem

4. Conclusion

Mental disability is a global problem that requires fast and precise treatment. The high number of people with mental disabilities in Indonesia, especially in Central Java province, shows how vulnerable society is to mental health disorders. Many cases of discrimination against people with mental disabilities are caused by a lack of knowledge about mental disabilities. People with mental disabilities may not be able to recover completely as before experiencing mental disorders and can only be overcome and managed in the right way, but people with disabilities still have their rights in social life, such as freedom of expression.

Through poetry, people with disabilities are able to express their souls. Poetry writing therapy aims to increase self-expression through improving creative skills and the ability to express oneself more freely and fluently. Traditional food as a triggering medium to stimulate PM's memories, experiences, feelings and emotions is able to help PM write his poetry well. This therapy activity also has a positive impact on PMs to interact, communicate and express their feelings positively.

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