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Family Counseling to Improve Attachment between Parents and Children

Nur Mawakhira Yusuf^{1*}, Subekti Masri², Kasmi³, Salmiati Ali⁴, Muh. Saldin⁵, Nurul Ahwat Rantekata⁶, Ummul Chaer⁷, Gunther Dress⁸

State Islamic Institute Of Palopo^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7}

Senior Experten Service⁸

Email: nurmawakhira@iainpalopo.ac.id^{1*}

Abstract

This community service is motivated by the significance of family counseling to improve attachment between parents and children. The purpose of this community service is that parents can establish attachment with their children through family counseling that has been programmed. The approach used in this community service activity is community education in the form of counseling and consultation activities with the door to door method which is carried out by interviewing family members and observing the interaction of family members while at the service location. The results of community service show that the attachment between parents and children is closely related to the ability of parents to provide attention, free time and support to meet the needs of children's physical and psychological needs. Family counseling is expected so that each member is able to carry out their duties and responsibilities properly, carry out the obligations of roles and functions as family members and create harmonious family relationships.

Keywords: *Counseling, family, attachment, parents, children*

INTRODUCTION

Parents have a very central role in the cognitive, affective and motor development of children. A well-functioning family can be seen from the parents' ability to maintain children's psychological stability. Unfortunately, there are still many parents who are unable to provide proper care for their children. Data revealed by the Central Statistics Agency, the 2021 National Socio-Economic Survey (Susenas) (Nirwan, Yunus, & Raf, 2021) explains that around 3.69 percent of parents provide inappropriate care to toddlers. The percentage of inadequate care for female toddlers is greater than for male toddlers, and rural areas tend to be greater than urban areas. Whereas parental involvement in parenting determines children's behavior as adults, because children first learn morals by looking at the behavior of their parents.

Indonesia is a country located in the Asian region and strongly holds cultural values in its life practices, especially parenting patterns. Research results from (Yim, 2022) show that Asian cultural values such as humility and collectivism can contribute to authoritative parenting patterns. Santrock in the research explained that authoritative parenting is parenting that prioritizes two-way communication so as to form children's independence, self-confidence, self-control, and ability to build social relationships in their peer environment (Sumargi & Kristi, 2017). However, not all Indonesian people use authoritative parenting patterns, there are still many families in Indonesia who use authoritarian parenting patterns. It is evidenced from the results of

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research conducted by (Kiling-Bunga, Margiani, & Kiling, 2020) that parents still apply quite harsh discipline methods that tend to use physical aggression such as punching and pinching, and there are still many parents who compare their children and are overprotective in raising their children. If the child interprets the parenting pattern as a painful event, it will have a serious impact on his mental state and personality in the present until adulthood.

The role of the family provides a sense of security and comfort to children so that children's needs can be met starting from biological, sociological to psychological needs (Rahmatunnisa, 2019). The emotional relationship fostered by parents with their children will form an attachment between parents and children so that a positive relationship is formed and has an influence on the formation of children's relationships in their social environment. Attachment between parents and children is basically built starting from infancy which is characterized by the mother's sensitivity in responding to signs given by the baby such as crying. Attachment between parents and adolescents based on a sense of security can foster good cognitive and social competence because adolescents are able to establish good relationships with their parents. But if adolescents get insecure and negative attachment, it will have an impact on character formation that tends to be negative (Sari1, Devianti, & Safitri, 2018). Research conducted by Hasann and Shaever proves that the attachment built by parents when the child is young also contributes to the intimacy relationship with their partner when the child is an adult (Utami & Murti, 2017).

Research conducted by Izzah (2017) in the Yogyakarta City area revealed that the attachment style used by parents has a significant relationship to self-esteem in children. The more secure the attachment style chosen by parents in their parenting patterns, the higher the self-esteem possessed by the child, otherwise the lower the attachment style chosen by parents in their parenting patterns, the lower the self-esteem possessed by the child (Izzah, 2017). Parenting patterns in urban areas greatly adjust the times that change the lifestyle and behavior of children born in the millennial generation. As stated by (Nirwan, Yunus, & Raf, 2021) that parenting in urban areas, especially in Makassar City, no longer adopts authoritarian parenting but the parenting used by urban families is democratic parenting. In the past, parents often prohibited, punished and severely limited children in socializing. But in this era, parents are more open and prioritize discussion in making a decision. All this is done so that children can comfortably talk to their parents and be able to open up to what they feel. Parenting patterns that have changed cannot be separated from the development of globalization which requires humans to adapt and be able to accept foreign cultures that embrace open values. Meanwhile, Indonesia is a country that adheres to Eastern cultural values that emphasize polite behavior, closed, respect for parents and have restrictions in socializing. So that inevitably parents must modify the parenting patterns they apply so that they can be accepted by children but still maintain the cultural values adopted.

Different from families living in urban areas, families living in villages prefer to use authoritarian parenting patterns, this is because families living in villages have an economy that is in the lower middle class and still adhere strongly to local cultural values. The results of research that have been conducted state that families living in villages use authoritarian parenting patterns because they still adhere to strong cultural values that prioritize manners and instill religious values (Wahyuddin, 2014). This family model provides limits to children by providing rules that must be obeyed and when children violate these rules, parents do not hesitate to punish children. In line with the results of research conducted by Husada that families living in Goyudan Village apply more authoritarian and permissive parenting patterns because parents are busy earning money so they have less time with children and parents have a low level of education so they do not understand how to educate children properly (Husada, 2017). The same statement was also expressed by Salam that before the government relocated in the tourist village, the majority of people worked as fishermen so that parents put great pressure on their children to be able to work to help their parents at sea, parents

adhered to authoritarian parenting patterns due to economic limitations (Salam, 2016).

The parenting style chosen by parents determines a child's future life. In addition, economic factors, culture and religious doctrine also contribute to shaping children's personalities (Fan & Chen, 2020). Bahmani revealed in his research that abusive parents will raise children who will have abusive personalities and will also become abusive parents in the future (Bahmani, Naseri, & Fariborzi, 2023). Children who get attachment from their parents are able to become parents who care for their children with warm and loving authoritative parenting. Conversely, attachment that is not well established between children and parents has an impact on children's emotional growth so that children grow up to be parents who are unable to establish a good relationship with their children and adopt authoritarian parenting.

Families that do not have good attachment will form children who do not have good emotional intelligence and inherit authoritarian parenting that has been passed down by the family. To break the chain of authoritarian parenting, family counseling is conducted as a solution to increase attachment to parents and children. According to Brammer and Shostrom, the purpose of family counseling is to help children to adapt well to their environment by improving their family environment (Sumarwiyah, Zamroni, & Hidayati, 2015). So that children learn to build their social relationships from the family. Often the problems that occur in the family are caused by personal problems that are not resolved properly, disrupting harmony in the family and causing psychological distress in family members (D'onofrio & Emery, 2019). Family counseling is a solution to the problems experienced by family members and the treatment provided by the counselor is expected to restore the psychological well-being of each family member. Family counseling views that individuals who are members of a family are an inseparable unit so that the problems experienced by family members are interconnected (Nurhastuti, 2016). Family counseling can run effectively if all family members agree to form a new family system and help their family members who have problems (Sumarwiyah et al., 2015).

Based on this description, in this service activity it is hoped that parents can rebuild attachment with their children through family counseling that has been programmed.

METHODS

The method used in completing the implementation of community service is the community education method in the form of counseling activities aimed at increasing community understanding and awareness of appropriate parenting according to their needs so that the attachment between parents and children is well maintained (Sawerah, Muljono, & Tjitropranoto, 2016).

This service activity is carried out by going door to door to provide family counseling services to families in need. Service activities are carried out by focusing on increasing the cohesiveness between parents and children. To measure the success of the service, it is carried out by interviewing family members and observing the interaction of family members while at the service location. Service activities with family counseling programs are carried out by 3 counselors and 3 assistant counselors, each of whom has educational qualifications that are in accordance with this program, namely counseling guidance and psychology.

This program is a comparison and collaboration program conducted with experts from Senior Expert Service Germany. This activity lasted for 2 full days which was maximized in collaboration with the local government who helped in the service process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The family is the place where children develop and first get to know the world (Pertiw, Pohan, Hutahaean, Thamrin, & Perdini, 2021). Through the family, a child learns to grow into a mature person, which is one of the obligations of parents (Ngewa, 2021). In Rinding Allo Village, Rongkong District, North Luwu Regency, South Sulawesi Province, a community service was held with the theme "family counseling to increase attachment between parents and children". The purpose of this community service is to determine the level of attachment of parents and children after family counseling. Parents have an important role to know their developmental tasks, if each aspect can develop well, the child can carry out developmental tasks well too (Khaulani, Neviyarni, & Irdamurni, 2020). Several ways for parents to know permanent parenting, namely by caring and observing (Nooraeni, 2017). Parents in caring for children must be based on caring (Dhin, 2020).

Implementation Of Activities

The result of this community service activity is the assistance of children through group guidance activities carried out in Rongkong District, North Luwu Regency. This community service activity is one of the community service programs for lecturers as an effort to implement the tri dharma of higher education. This community service activity provides many benefits, insights and knowledge to children in Rongkong District, especially in increasing attachment to parents. Meanwhile, the results of service activities to parents through family counseling include several components (Utomo, Prayogi, & Pahlevi, 2022) as follows:

1. Providing Information

At this stage, the counselor provides information and introduces positive parenting strategies to parents. The goal is that they can understand these principles and avoid mistakes in educating their children. The counselor also provides reinforcement so that parents understand the three main types of parenting, namely authoritarian, permissive and democratic. This information is expected to be an evaluation material for parents in parenting their children.

2. Communication Skills Development

Developing communication skills in the context of maintaining attachment between parents and children aims to strengthen interpersonal relationships and support the formation of healthy bonds. Through developing communication skills to maintain attachment between parents and children, the aim is to provide parents with effective communication skills so that they can interact with their children in a positive way, better understand their children's feelings and needs, and build strong emotional bonds. The communication skills emphasized include listening attentively, expressing emotions clearly, and using supportive language. Through good communication skills, parents can open a positive dialogue with their children. This allows them to better understand what the child is feeling, and helps the child to feel heard and understood.

3. Conflict resolution strategies

Conflict resolution strategies in building attachment relationships between parents and children aim to create a positive family environment, strengthen emotional bonds, and teach healthy problem-solving skills. The strategies that can be used are open communication, empathetic understanding and involving children in the solution so that they are given responsibility and can feel heard. By adopting these strategies, parents can build strong attachment relationships with their children, teach healthy conflict resolution skills, and create a family environment that supports positive growth.

Based on some of these components, it is expected that communication between parents and children has the characteristics of openness, empathy, support, positive feelings and similarity.

Picture 2. Group Guidance Activities for Parents

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Furthermore, through these characteristics, the implementation of group guidance activities uses several stages, namely (1) motivation, (2) lectures, (3) games, and (4) giving rewards.

1) Giving Motivation

One of the ways to provide motivation to children is by giving or telling an inspirational story. One of the motivational materials is "The Story of Uwais Al-Qarni". To provide motivation, children will gather in groups and listen to motivational material about being a child who is devoted to both parents and rewards for children who are devoted to both parents. The purpose of providing this motivational material is to make the children closer to their parents.

2) Lecture Stage

The lecture stage is carried out in a group formed by conveying the content of the material about an inspirational story with the aim of how a child can take lessons and examples from the inspirational story that is conveyed, namely the story of "Uwais Al-Qarni".

3) Game Stages

One of the stages of the game is to give quizzes, or questions, which are intended to improve children's ability to learn the material. The next stage of the game is to make questions related to the material that has been presented. For example, the presenter asks a question and gives a prize to participants who raise their hands and answer it.

4) The Reward Stage

In this stage, giving gifts, which can be in the form of verbal praise or appreciation or material, such as snacks or candy, is intended to increase the liveliness and enthusiasm of a child and encourage them to participate in group guidance activities. giving gifts to a child is able to provide a positive spirit and provide an enthusiastic effect in participating in an activity as a result of a study conducted (Yuliana, Agustin, & Zamzam, 2023) that giving gifts makes a good contribution in increasing student learning motivation.

Picture 2. Group Guidance Activities for Children in Rongkong



The character values that parents instill in guiding their children are the values of honesty, religious, democratic, communicative, discipline, hard work, fairness,

responsibility, humility, independence and empathy. Planting character values in children is an effort to shape children's attitudes and behavior in establishing relationships with God, themselves, peers, the environment and nationality, all of which are manifested in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words, and actions based on norms that apply in the family and community environment. Thus, character values are inherent and often associated with distinctive traits, moral strength and are manifested in attitudes and behavior in everyday life.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this community service activity, it shows that the attachment between parents and children is closely related to the ability of parents to provide attention, free time and support to meet the needs of children's physical and psychological needs. Family counseling is expected so that each family member is able to carry out their duties and responsibilities properly, carry out the obligations of their respective roles and functions so as to create a harmonious family relationship. Some of the results of the components of service activities for parents through family counseling are providing information, developing communication skills, and providing conflict resolution strategies between parents and children. Furthermore, some stages of the implementation of this group guidance activity are motivation, lectures, games, and giving rewards. The character values instilled by parents in guiding their children are honesty, religious, democratic, communicative, discipline, hard work, fairness, responsibility, humility, independence and empathy.

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