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**“COUNSELING RESONANCES ON**  
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**THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN GROUP**  
**COUNSELING**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Group counseling is a way to help a group of people achieve a common goal. In the midst of a diverse cultural society, it is important for counselors to pay attention and appreciate the diversity so that the counseling is effective. Cultural diversity includes a variety of values, beliefs, norms, and behaviors from various groups. Counselors need to understand these cultural values to be able to understand the perspective and experience of individuals in their culture. The relationship between counseling and culture is very close. Culture affects the way people see problems, find solutions, and communicate. Culturally sensitive counselors can understand the influence of this culture and tailor the way they help to suit the needs of people from different backgrounds. Cultural sensitivity is very important in group counseling. By paying attention to cultural diversity, counselors can create a counseling environment that is friendly and responsive to all group members.*

Keywords: Group Counseling, Cultural Diversity, Cultural Values, Cultural Sensitivity

## **The Importance of Cultural Sensitivity in Group Counseling**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Group counseling is one of the methods that can be used in overcoming individual problems. This counseling method is considered effective and more efficient if done. In the counseling process, a counselor will meet many individuals from different tribes and cultures. Where it makes the counselor have to work more extra, because the counselor must understand very well about the background of the counselor and not distinguish between one counselor, from the other. Multicultural sensitivity for counselors must exist and be trained as early as possible.

To become a forum and benchmark when counseling, it is necessary to have an understanding of cultural sensitivity which is an important aspect of a counselor in facilitating group counseling to run smoothly. With cultural sensitivity, counselors will better understand how to understand, appreciate, and respond to cultural differences in the group counseling that is being carried out. The discussion about the culture or background of each individual is felt to be very sensitive and has an influence on the way each individual sees the world, behaves, and how to communicate. Cultural sensitivity is very important, because without the role of cultural sensitivity, a counselor will make more mistakes, such as offending one of the cultures, harming, or perhaps worsening the problems being faced by the counselor. Cultural sensitivity should be developed thoroughly and further by the counselor. Not only that, counselors also need to continue to learn about various cultures and develop interactions that are in accordance with the counselor, so that the counselor feels comfortable and gets maximum benefits from the counseling process.

### **METHOD**

This research adopts a qualitative method with a focus on the analysis of books and articles as the main source of information. The qualitative approach allows researchers to delve into the deep meaning, interpretation, and context of the text presented in the literature. Data is collected through selective and in-depth reading of various books and articles relevant to research topics. The information found is analyzed thematically, where the main themes, concepts, and arguments are identified and explored further. Researchers interpret and synthesize the information collected to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena or issues being studied. Through qualitative methods, researchers can understand the context and nuances that may be hidden in the text, enabling a more in-depth and information-rich interpretation. In addition to thematic analysis, narrative approaches are also used to explore stories or narratives contained in books and articles, understanding plots, characters, and conflicts that may be relevant to research topics. Although the data source comes from the literature, efforts are made to ensure the validity and validity of the information used in the research, by examining the credibility and reputation of the author and the publication of the source. Researchers also reflect critically on the information found, identifying potential biases, alternative perspectives, and the implications of the literature's findings on research. With a combination of a qualitative approach and literature analysis, this research aims to provide an in-depth, rich, and nuanced perspective on the topic under study, even though the data comes from written sources.

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### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Definition of Group Counseling**

Group counseling literally means a process of providing counselor assistance to a group of individuals through a group situation, where counselors and counselees interact with each other to discuss and solve problems together, as well as exchange opinions to find a common solution to reach the right decision. Group counseling is effective and efficient counseling, as well as providing individuals with new insights such as rewarding shared decisions, and fostering a sense of tolerance and empathy. In addition, group counseling is useful in solving human behavior problems, this is a social problem that will determine an individual's career in the future. In the implementation of group counseling, BK teachers are required to understand group counseling skills because BK teachers are leaders in group counseling. So it is better, counselors need to improve their quality and competence so that the implementation of group counseling can run optimally as expected.

#### **Cultural Diversity**

Cultural diversity forms individual viewpoints, mindsets, and behaviors. This becomes a challenge for counselors when carrying out guidance and counseling services. Counseling guidance carried out with a multicultural approach is very appropriate to be applied in an environment with plural culture in Indonesia, with the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. Therefore, it is important for counselors to be able to understand and learn the culture adopted by the counselee, such as in terms of culture, ethnicity, race, religion, and customs adopted by the counselor, so that there are no misunderstandings in communicating. So this is closely related to the level of success and effectiveness when implementing counseling guidance services, according to the Jumarini figure (in Suwarni, 2016:125-129) explained that culture is very influential in the implementation of counseling, including:

- 1) culture will influence the basic concepts that include philosophical, principles, and purpose of counseling as well as the counseling code of ethics.
- 2) culture greatly affects the individual's point of view as well as methods and techniques in counseling services. Visible differences between urban and rural communities. Generally, rural communities have a very close understanding of the calculation of the date of birth, even astrology. It is different with urban communities, who tend to trust observations, tests, and interviews as a tool to measure themselves.

#### **Cross-Cultural Counselor Skills and Attitudes**

Cross-cultural counselor skills and attitudes refer to the abilities and dispositions that a counselor must have to be able to provide effective and sensitive counseling services to client cultural differences.

1. Cross Cultural Counselor Skills
  - Cultural Awareness: The ability to understand and appreciate the client's cultural differences, values, and beliefs.
  - Cross-Cultural Communication Competence: Ability to communicate effectively with clients from different cultural backgrounds, including understanding differences in communication styles, verbal language, and non-verbal.

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- Empathy and Cultural Sensitivity: The ability to understand and feel the client's experience from his cultural point of view, as well as showing respect, concern, and acceptance of the client's uniqueness.
  - Flexibility and Adaptability: Ability to adjust the counseling approach according to the client's cultural background and willing to modify counseling techniques and interventions to suit the client's needs.
  - Cultural Knowledge and Social Issues: Have a broad understanding of various cultures, traditions, and relevant social issues, and are able to integrate cultural knowledge into counseling practice.
2. Cross Cultural Counselor Attitude
- Open and Unjudgmental: Be open, accept differences, and do not judge clients from different cultural backgrounds.
  - Respect and Care: Shows respect, care, and acceptance of the client's uniqueness.
  - Desire to Learn: Willing to learn and open to different cultural perspectives.
  - Awareness of Bias and Stereotypes: Realizing the biases, assumptions, and stereotypes that may have in relation to culture.

By having appropriate skills and attitudes, cross-cultural counselors can provide counseling services that are more effective, sensitive, and in accordance with the needs of clients from diverse cultural backgrounds.

### **The relationship between counseling and culture**

According to Jumarín (2002), the relationship between the cultural system and the counseling system has several aspects that are interrelated and influence:

- 1) Culture provides nuances and directions to the main aspects of counseling such as philosophical foundations, goals, principles, and codes of ethics. The philosophical foundation usually reflects cultural values, so the purpose of counseling must be in line with those values. For example, Javanese society may prioritize harmony, while scientific society focuses on enlightenment.
- 2) Culture affects the qualifications, education, and placement of counselors. The qualifications of counselors in Javanese society are certainly different from those in Europe or America, as well as education and training that is tailored to the culture where counselors practice.
- 3) Culture also influences the perspective of counseling subjects. The concept of problematic individuals can vary between cultures. For example, individualism is considered positive by European society but may be considered a problem by Javanese society.
- 4) Culture determines individual understanding methods and counseling techniques used. Observation methods, tests, and interviews may be more common in the scientific community, while astrological or meditation methods may be more popular in other cultures. Counseling techniques are also adapted to culture, such as mystical techniques for animistic societies or religious methods for religious societies.

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- 5) Culture provides guidance in the development of counseling programs. Counseling programs such as meditation or comparative studies will be more in line with cultures that have similar backgrounds.

Thus, culture is very influential on the success of the guidance and counseling process. Counselors must be able to adapt to different cultures and client backgrounds to provide effective services. Clients of diverse origin, ideology, and customs will influence their attitudes and behavior, so counselors need to have deep adaptability and understanding.

### **The importance of cultural sensitivity in group counseling**

Society has a variety of diverse cultures. In this case, cultural sensitivity is an important aspect that needs to be considered by counselors, because it will be a provision in facilitating group counseling. Here are the reasons underlying the importance of cultural sensitivity:

1. Build trust and a sense of security

Group counseling consists of various people with different cultural points of view. With the creation of a sense of trust and a sense of security, it will make each individual feel more comfortable and appreciated. So that it will make the counselor able to tell the problem without hesitation.

2. Promote understanding and tolerance

By applying cultural sensitivity to group counseling will make each individual learn and know how the culture of his other friends is. Individuals will have a high tolerance attitude and can respect each other.

3. Prevent misunderstandings and conflicts

Significant cultural differences will be difficult to understand. So by applying cultural sensitivity can help counselors avoid disputes or misunderstandings that may exist due to cultural differences and the point of view of each individual.

### **CONCLUSION**

Counselors need to understand and appreciate the diversity of counseling culture to facilitate counseling effectively. Cultural diversity forms the point of view and behavior of individuals, so understanding counseling culture is the key to avoiding misunderstandings and increasing the success of counseling. The skills and attitudes of essential cross-cultural counselors in effective counseling services. Counselors need to have cultural awareness, communication competence, empathy, and cultural knowledge. An attitude of openness, respect, and awareness of bias is also important to create a supportive and respectful counseling environment. Culture affects various aspects of counseling, from philosophy to methods of individual understanding. Therefore, counselors must be able to adapt to various cultures to provide effective services. Cultural sensitivity is important for building trust, promoting understanding, and preventing misunderstandings in group counseling.

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