

Psychological Assistance for Wives of Victims of Domestic Violence At UPTD PPA Surabaya City As A Form of Empowering Victims

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Abstract: Domestic violence is a recurring social problem that negatively impacts the psychological and emotional well-being of its victims, especially women. This study explores the effectiveness of psychological assistance services provided by UPTD PPA Surabaya in helping women victims, particularly wives, recover and achieve self-empowerment. Employing qualitative methods, including interviews, field observations, and document analysis, this research examines a single client case and draws insights from three counsellors. The results reveal that victims often experience psychological downturns, such as low self-esteem and helplessness, which are exacerbated by emotional and financial dependence. UPTD PPA plays a vital role in providing psychological counselling, legal services, and empowerment programs to help victims rebuild their self-confidence and regain autonomy. However, challenges such as limited human resources, societal stigma, and institutional barriers remain. This study concludes that a trauma-informed and empowerment-based approach is essential in supporting the long-term recovery of domestic violence survivors and must be supported by coordinated efforts across community, institutional, and policy levels.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Empowering, Self-Acceptance

1 INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is a social phenomenon that, in recent years, has been rampant in society. Law No. 23/2004 on the Elimination of Domestic Violence states that domestic violence is any act against a person, especially women, which results in physical, sexual, psychological, or domestic neglect, including threats to commit acts, coercion, or unlawful deprivation of independence within the scope of the household. Based on data from the Ministry of Women and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia, as many as 15,000 cases of domestic violence were recorded throughout Indonesia. At the regional level, the Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) reported that East Java recorded 5,400 divorce cases caused by domestic violence, indicating the high prevalence of domestic violence in the region. In 2023, there were 82 reports of violence against women, with domestic violence being the most dominant form of violence, with 63 reports. The details of these domestic violence cases include 28 reports of physical violence, 21 reports of psychological violence, 13 reports of economic neglect, and one report of sexual violence. The beginning of domestic violence usually begins with arguments or disputes due to family economic factors. Domestic violence can affect an individual's welfare conditions, especially for the victim.

Society often assumes that women are weak and helpless beings. In domestic life, women frequently live with men. Men, as the head of the family and husband, often underestimate the role of women, or in this case, their wives, because the majority of men are the primary breadwinners of the family. As a result, many wives, who are mostly housewives, are demeaned because they are considered incapable of living alone. Although various previous studies have discussed services for the protection of women victims of domestic

violence, there is still limited research focusing on UPTD PPA Surabaya. This unit has unique characteristics, including the high number of cases handled each year, limited human resources, and the cultural complexity of Surabaya's urban society, which remains laden with stigma against victims. These conditions present specific challenges in the implementation of psychological services, legal assistance, and empowerment programs offered by UPTD PPA. To overcome this, a forum is needed to provide education as a form of women's empowerment, so that they can live their lives independently if they later become divorced and need to support themselves. Through a series of observations on cases handled at UPTD PPA Surabaya, this article aims to analyze the effectiveness of the psychological assistance services provided to victims of domestic violence, particularly wives. The evaluation focuses on how these services support emotional recovery and empower victims to rebuild their independence after experiencing abuse. Special attention should be given to how psychological support helps clients make informed decisions, restore self-confidence, and move toward a more stable and autonomous life.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research employs qualitative methods, including documentary studies, interviews, and observations conducted at the Regional Technical Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children in Surabaya City. The documentation study method involves collecting data from secondary sources, such as annual reports written by UPTD PPA Surabaya City. The use of this method will involve a thorough analysis of the existing data to study the phenomenon, identify it, and draw conclusions based on the information obtained. Observations and interviews were conducted in the field by collecting data directly from clients during the assessment process to gain a valid understanding of the phenomenon under study. Observations and interviews were conducted by observing clients as they recounted the chronology of what happened, their gestures, and any changes that emerged during the assessment process. When these two methods are combined, this research can provide more comprehensive and in-depth results related to the topic being studied.

This study employed semi-structured interviews with questions prepared beforehand, aimed at enabling the interviewer to conduct a preliminary analysis of the questions before presenting them during the interview session. The interviews also included open-ended questions to allow participants to provide answers that more thoroughly describe their personal conditions.

The subject of this study is a woman who is nearly 30 years old. She was a former state-owned enterprise (SOE) employee before resigning after two years of marriage without having children. The subject is a victim of psychological domestic violence by her husband, which she has experienced since the beginning of the marriage. She has been a victim of domestic violence for five years. The subject has two children, aged two years and six months.

This research focuses on cases of domestic violence, especially on wives as victims, which are reported or handled by the UPTD PPA of Surabaya city. Observation and interview methods were employed with one client and three counsellors to collect data during the psychological assessment and assistance process. The observation method was carried out directly during the initial evaluation conducted by the counsellor and client to monitor the handling process and services provided by UPTD PPA to clients. The data collected will then be analyzed to determine whether the services offered by UPTD PPA have successfully educated and empowered clients.

3 RESULTS

The problem of domestic violence has various contributing factors, internal factors such as an unstable economy, differences of opinion that become large because they are unable to find a middle point, multiple roles in the household, which do not escape the patriarchy. In a patriarchal society, men are more likely to be placed in the central part than women, who are in a subordinate position (Jayanthi, 2009). Role inequality

can also be said to be domestic violence in psychological form. Because some incidents of domestic violence tend to be motivated by the disparity of positions between husband and wife and the weak family economy, this sometimes makes it more difficult for the wife to escape from her attachment to her husband, because she is too dependent on her husband. Victims often do not dare to report domestic violence committed by their husbands to them due to economic and emotional dependence on the perpetrators of domestic violence.

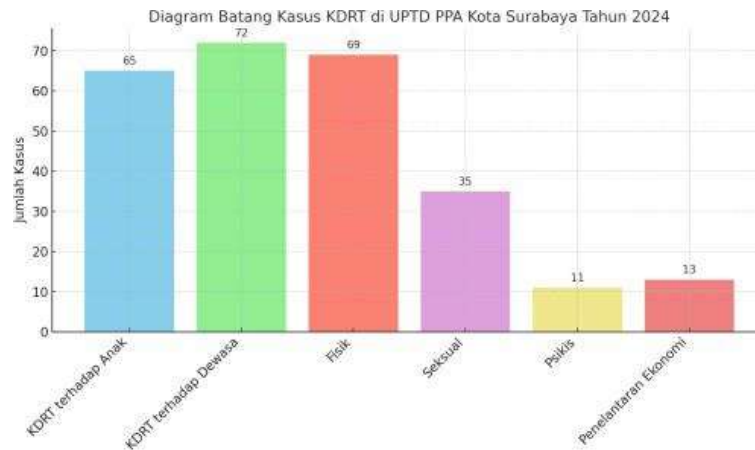


Table 1. Data on Domestic Violence Cases at UPTD PPA Surabaya in 2024

Based on the recapitulation of domestic violence cases recorded by UPTD PPA Surabaya City in 2024, 137 cases of violence were reported. Of these, 72 cases were experienced by adults, while 65 cases affected children. These cases show that violence not only occurs in adult couples, but also has a significant impact on children as parties who are often helpless in situations of domestic conflict. The most dominant form of violence reported was physical violence, with 69 cases, followed by sexual violence with 35 cases. In addition, there were also 13 cases of economic neglect and 11 cases of psychological violence. This data shows that physical and sexual violence are still the most common patterns of violence found in domestic settings.

If examined more, victims of violence often face double pressure, both physically and mentally. In many cases, wives as victims of violence also experience psychological downturns and loss of confidence, especially after experiencing divorce. Therefore, self-empowerment is a crucial step that requires facilitation through both psychological counselling and social support. According to Ningsih & Rahayu (2022), post-domestic violence women's empowerment programs that include skills training, mental recovery, and legal education have proven to be able to increase the independence and empowerment of victims in rebuilding their lives.

The role of institutions such as UPTD PPA is highly strategic in providing comprehensive services to victims, including medical care, legal assistance, psychological support, and facilitation of economic empowerment. Through this approach, it is hoped that victims will not only be protected from violence but also be able to regain control over their lives in a complete and dignified manner. The process of psychological recovery for victims of domestic violence is closely related to the dynamics of self-acceptance. The client is a 34-year-old woman with two children who experienced psychological violence from her husband for approximately five years after deciding to stop working. The violence experienced had a significant impact on the client's psychological condition, such as feelings of helplessness, self-blame, and loss of self-confidence and self-esteem.

The counsellor said that similar cases occur quite often. Still, many victims choose not to report them due to fear, lack of confidence, and dependence on the perpetrator, both emotionally and financially. Unequal relationships in the household are a significant factor in the formation of this dependency, so that the victim feels that she has lost control over her own life. In counselling sessions, clients are helped to manage their

emotions, build self-confidence, and accept their traumatic experiences. The interventions provided are not only psychological, but also educational, which provides an understanding of the impact of violence and the consequences of choosing to return to the perpetrator. This process is built on an empathetic approach from counsellors who create a safe space without judgment, allowing victims to feel heard and valued. The client's self-acceptance is formed gradually through supportive interpersonal relationships, ongoing counselling services, and support from institutions such as UPTD PPA. This approach aligns with Albert Ellis and Michael E. Bernard's Self-Acceptance theory, which emphasizes the importance of unconditional self-acceptance from the social environment. However, this process does not always go smoothly. Social pressures such as the stigma against divorced women, family demands to maintain the household, and limited institutional resources become obstacles that slow down the recovery process.

As an intern involved in the mentoring process, the author observed that the services provided by UPTD PPA, including free counselling, legal services, and referrals to additional services such as PUSPAGA, were invaluable for clients in building emotional and financial independence. However, the limitations of professional staff, the lack of optimal service flow, and the need for program continuity are challenges that need to be addressed immediately so that the domestic violence victim empowerment program can be more optimal. Overall, the findings show that the recovery of victims of domestic violence cannot be left entirely to individuals. Systemic support is needed, both from service institutions, the social environment, and public policy. In this context, the success of recovery depends on how far the community can create a safe space that supports victims in accepting and valuing themselves again.

4 DISCUSSIONS

The psychological recovery process of women victims of domestic violence (DV) is very complex. It requires a multi-layered approach, starting from handling trauma, strengthening self-acceptance, and post-incident empowerment efforts. Based on observations and interviews with UPTD PPA Surabaya City counsellors, the majority of victims show psychological characteristics such as fear, low self-confidence, feelings of helplessness, and a tendency to blame themselves for the violence they experienced. However, some of them, especially those who have decided to divorce and live independently, show significant progress in terms of empowerment, emotionally and economically. This confirms that recovery is not just about ending abusive relationships, but also a long-term process that involves reconstructing self-identity and building independence.

These findings can be more deeply connected to Ellis (2005) and Bernard's Self-Acceptance Theory (2013), which emphasizes the importance of *unconditional self-acceptance* and supportive interpersonal relationships. In counseling sessions, self-acceptance is facilitated when victims are encouraged to acknowledge their worth despite past trauma. The findings regarding the psychological recovery process of women victims of domestic violence (DV) are reinforced by various previous studies.

Suriyati (2024), in her qualitative research, mentioned that victims of domestic violence not only experience emotional trauma such as depression, fear, and low self-esteem, but also face dilemmas due to emotional and economic dependence on the perpetrator. This dependency is one of the main obstacles for victims to decide to leave a dangerous relationship. In the context of recovery, psychological support and a safe environment are needed so that victims can rebuild their independence.

Meanwhile, Kusumawaty, Winta, and Pratiwi (2024) in their literature review explained that women victims of domestic violence tend to use specific coping strategies to survive, such as religious coping, self-acceptance, and seeking social support. These strategies have proven to play a crucial role in strengthening victims' resilience, especially when combined with psychosocial interventions and a non-judgmental environment. Support from family and community is also very influential in accelerating victims' emotional recovery.

Furthermore, research by Noviyanti et.al (2019) emphasizes that traumatic experiences can be a turning point for some women survivors of violence to rebuild life goals and resilience. In the study, women who managed to get out of the circle of violence showed increased self-reliance, strong social support, and a reinterpretation of their experience of violence. This process enables victims not only to recover but also to empower themselves emotionally and economically, becoming agents of change in their surrounding environment.

The advantage of this research is the author's proximity to the field process during the internship period at UPTD PPA Surabaya City. This allowed the author to see the dynamics between victims, assistants, and the entire service system. The data obtained is qualitative and descriptive, allowing it to capture emotional and social nuances that are often overlooked in quantitative approaches. However, limitations remain, particularly in terms of limited subject coverage and ethical constraints that limit in-depth exploration of sensitive cases. Additionally, the relatively short observation time prevented the author from conducting a long-term tracking of the victim's recovery process.

Nevertheless, the results of this study still provide an essential contribution to understanding how the recovery and empowerment of women victims of domestic violence are not only determined by professional interventions, but also by the internal capacity of victims to rebuild the meaning of their lives. Therefore, a comprehensive trauma-based and empowerment approach is needed in domestic violence response programs, both by the government and civil society organizations.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the observations and findings, it can be concluded that the recovery and empowerment of domestic violence victims, particularly wives, require comprehensive and sustainable support systems. Psychological assistance, legal aid, and social services, such as those provided by UPTD PPA Surabaya, have a significant role in helping victims regain self-confidence, self-acceptance, and independence. However, challenges such as limited resources, stigma, and dependence on perpetrators remain substantial obstacles. Therefore, the success of post-violence recovery not only depends on individual efforts but also requires systemic collaboration between institutions, communities, and public policy to create a safe and empowering environment for victims.

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