

Counselling Methods for Drug Users and Father Absence as Triggering Factors for Drug Abuse

Andea Muhammad Abhista Andikaputra¹, Siti Jaro'ah²

¹*Department of Psychology, Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Lidah Wetan, Surabaya, Indonesia*

²*Department of Psychology, Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Lidah Wetan, Surabaya, Indonesia*
andea.22263@mhs.unesa.ac.id; sitijaroah@unesa.ac.id

Abstract: The issue of drug abuse in Indonesia continues to be an important concern, with data from the Ministry of Health in 2025 and the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) showing that 2.2 million adolescents in Indonesia are drug users. Related to this, the efforts made by BNN are to provide rehabilitation facilities in the form of counselling. In this study, the author will use a literature review method with more than 10 scientific articles to broaden the author's understanding. The author will then compare this with observational data and interviews obtained by the author while participating in the counselling process (between the BNN counsellor in City X and the counselee). Through this research, the author found that the most appropriate method for treating individuals, especially in cases of drug abuse, is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. In addition, the author also found that the main cause of drug abuse among children is the lack of a father's role, both physically and psychologically, a condition known as "fatherless."

Keywords: Counselling, CBT, Fatherless, Adolescents, Drug Abuser

1 INTRODUCTION

The issue of drug abuse in Indonesia continues to be a critical concern, given its devastating impact on social order, health, and the future of the younger generation. Data from the Ministry of Health in 2025 and the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) indicate that 2.2 million teenagers in Indonesia are drug users. This situation arises because teenagers are easy targets for drug dealers (Rusdiyanto, D., et al., 2024). This is due to the characteristics of teenagers, who are prone to trying new things and defying rules, making them susceptible to drug abuse (Fitri, K., & Asra, Y., K., 2023). Therefore, the efforts undertaken by the National Narcotics Agency include providing counselling and rehabilitation facilities to help drug abusers develop healthy behaviours and somatic responses (Septiyani & Rahmi, 2020). Counselling, as defined by Gibson & Mitchell (2003) in an article by Vitriani, B., & Sari, O., N. (2021), is a supportive relationship between a counsellor and a client, focusing on personal growth and adaptation, problem-solving, and decision-making. One method frequently used in counselling for drug users is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). According to Asfia, D., A., et al. (2023), CBT is used to help individuals counteract incorrect thoughts and emotions by presenting evidence that contradicts their beliefs or the issues they face.

In this article, the author aims to examine the appropriateness of counselling practices conducted at the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) in City X by linking them to a literature review and the results of observations and interviews conducted by the author with one of the relevant institutions. Based on the author's observations and those of counsellors there, particularly among clients aged 14–15 years, the absence of a father was identified as one of the triggering factors for substance abuse in individuals. In this context, the author also aims to test this finding by linking it to previous research through a literature review.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a therapeutic method that focuses on thought processes related to behavioral, emotional, and psychological conditions (Widha, L., et al., 2021). According to Juniarni, et al. (2021), CBT itself is a therapeutic method that combines thinking and behavioral strategies based on an individual's thoughts, feelings,

and behaviors. In this method, clients are guided to change their thinking, feeling, and acting functions with a focus on the role of the brain in analyzing individual thought patterns (Kuswatun, E., et al., 2021).

The main goal of CBT is to help individuals evaluate their thoughts and influence their behavior (Fitria, L., 2020). Asfia, D., A. (2023) also expressed her opinion regarding the purpose of the CBT method, which is to counteract inappropriate emotions and thoughts in individuals by presenting evidence that contradicts their beliefs and the problems they face.

CBT itself is a fairly effective method for drug users. Based on research conducted by Lestari et al. (2023), which states that Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Counselling is effective in reducing conduct disorders, as evidenced by significant t-test results. This is in line with the condition of drug users, especially adolescents, one of whose problems is conduct disorders. In addition, based on research conducted by Qalbi, N., et al. (2022), it shows that CBT counselling techniques have a significant effect in increasing self-esteem in drug users, with a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), as evidenced by the difference between the pre-test results of 1.61 and the post-test results of 2.67 with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This condition is also in line with the condition of drug abusers, most of whom feel inferior due to discrimination from their social environment.

Fatherless

Fatherless is a condition in which a child has a father, but the father is not fully present, especially in a psychological sense, during the child's development (Nabila, P., A., et al., 2025). Hidayati, L., N., & Sugiarto, F. (2025) also state that the term "fatherless" does not only refer to the physical absence of the father, but also includes his emotional absence. Based on this, it can be interpreted that the complete sense of a father, especially psychologically, is important in the growth and development of children/adolescents. Fatherless can also be caused by the patriarchal culture originating from the father (Sasono, D., A., P., et al., 2025).

In fact, the role of parents, especially fathers, is very important, particularly for the growth and development of children and adolescents. Putri, D. D. M. (2018) stated that family dysfunction is one of the external factors that cause adolescents to abuse drugs. In addition, the role of parents in strengthening the mental and personality development of adolescents protects them from drug abuse (Bunsaman, S., M., & Krisnani, H., 2020).

The role of a father is very important, especially as a role model and mentor for children, as well as playing an active role in providing moral support and instilling values such as discipline and responsibility in their children (Sayyidina, R., Z., et al., 2024). Based on this, it can be interpreted that a father plays an important role in protecting children from drug abuse or other criminal acts. Conversely, children who experience "fatherless" will be more vulnerable to drug abuse or other criminal acts.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this case, the author will use a literature review method by using more than 10 scientific articles to deepen the author's understanding of the CBT method and the "Fatherless" phenomenon, especially in adolescents. According to O'leary (2021) and Muhanum (2021), a literature review refers to activities to gain a broader understanding of meaning through the study and written summary of articles.

Then, after expanding the author's understanding through a literature review related to the CBT method and the "Fatherless" phenomenon, the author will compare the results with field data through observation and interviews. Observations were made of counselor F, a BNN counselor in City X who uses the CBT method, and a client who is an adolescent receiving the CBT approach and suspected of experiencing "Fatherless".

Observation itself is a data collection method carried out through direct observation of phenomena or behavior in the field (Romdona, S., 2025). Meanwhile, interviews are a data collection technique that involves direct interaction between the researcher and the respondent, through questions to explore in-depth information about the topic being studied (Huberman & Miles, 1992). The observations and interviews conducted by the author were direct observations of the counselor and the client during counseling sessions.

3 RESULTS

Drug cases in Indonesia have become increasingly critical, forcing the government, through the National Narcotics Agency, to shift its focus away from arrests that serve as a deterrent. Currently, the government has agreed to focus on

recovery and behavioural reinforcement through rehabilitation in the form of counselling. However, in reality, changing this situation is not easy, as society has already developed defence mechanisms, such as anxiety and worry, which make it difficult for counsellors to conduct counselling. This challenging situation is caused by the fact that individuals with high levels of anxiety typically exhibit resistance and barriers in the self-disclosure process (Stiles, W., B., 1987). In such conditions, the individual's defence mechanisms transform the perception of counselling from a recovery method into an interrogation session for the individual.

Based on the literature review conducted, it was found that Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, which is a counselling method focused on the thinking process and the role of the brain in analysing thought patterns, is suitable for addressing anxiety challenges in individuals. This can be done because, through the CBT approach, counselors can counteract inappropriate emotions and thoughts in clients by presenting evidence that contradicts their beliefs and the problems they face (Asfia, D., A., 2023). In addition, CBT is also an effective method for drug abusers because Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Counseling is effective in reducing conduct disorders. This is in line with the condition of drug abusers, especially teenagers who generally experience conduct disorders. That's not all, Qalbi, N., et al. (2022), showed that CBT counseling techniques have a significant effect in increasing self-esteem in drug abusers.

Based on field observations using the CBT approach, clients were able to be more open and cooperative in the counseling recovery process. Additionally, Counselor F, one of the counselors at the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) in City X, also mentioned that at BNN City X, in addition to Motivational Interviewing, the method commonly used is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. This is also done with the same goal, which is to make individuals more open during the counseling process.

Then there is the phenomenon of fatherless, which, according to previous literature reviews, occurs as a result of the father's physical and psychological role not being maximised during the child's growth and development process, triggering drug abuse in children. This aligns with the explanation provided by Putri, D., D., M. (2018), who stated that family dysfunction, social dysfunction, and legal protection dysfunction also serve as external factors contributing to a teenager's drug abuse. Patmawanti (2020) narrows it down by stating that there are at least five factors that trigger drug abuse among young people in Indonesia, one of which is family conditions (family integrity, parental busyness, and strained parent-child relationships).

Based on research conducted by Susilowati, D., W., (2023), children who engage in drug abuse typically have conflicts with their fathers and minimal involvement of their fathers in their lives. Furthermore, based on the author's observations while handling this case alongside a counsellor, the same conditions were found, where the majority of teenagers involved in drug abuse experienced conflicts with their families, particularly with their fathers.

4 DISCUSSIONS

This study highlights two important dimensions that are actually interrelated in understanding drug abuse, namely the use of CBT counseling methods applied to drug users and the absence of a father figure. Although these two aspects are often studied separately, in this study, the author attempts to explain them simultaneously. Individuals who grow up without a father figure—whether due to divorce, death, involvement in the justice system, or other social conditions—experience a deep emotional void. This absence is not merely the absence of a male figure in the household, but the loss of an important role in the formation of self-identity, a sense of security, and the ability to manage emotions. Many individuals express feelings of unwantedness, loss of direction, and a tendency to seek escape, which in many cases leads to drug abuse.

On the other hand, the counseling approach applied in supporting drug users shows that healing is not only a process of stopping deviant behavior, but a journey back to finding meaning, acceptance, and self-esteem. Methods such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) show varying degrees of effectiveness, depending on the individual's readiness to change and the counselor's ability to build a trusting relationship.

In addition, society and policymakers need to view drug abuse prevention not only from an educational or supervisory perspective, but also through efforts to strengthen family resilience, especially in supporting children growing up in dysfunctional families. Support for mental health, alternative fatherhood programs, and safe spaces for expressing emotions are crucial components of long-term prevention. Therefore, drug abuse cannot be viewed solely as a behavioral problem, but as a response to deep psychological wounds. In this context, counseling is not merely an intervention but a healing process that restores humanity and hope for those who are lost on a lonely path without a father and without direction.

The strength of this study is that it provides a detailed explanation of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and counseling methods for fatherless children and their impact based on various previous studies. However, this study also has limitations, as the supporting data can be further developed using quantitative or qualitative methods.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion that can be drawn is that the most appropriate method for treating individuals, especially in cases of drug abuse, is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. This is because this method can change an individual's thought processes by providing evidence of the dangers of drug abuse and the temporary pleasure gained from consuming drugs. Furthermore, drug abuse can also occur among children as a result of family dysfunction, social dysfunction, and legal protection dysfunction. In this study, the primary cause of drug abuse among children was found to be the inadequate role of a father, both physically and psychologically, a condition known as 'fatherless.'

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to express his deepest gratitude to all staff and supervisors at the National Narcotics Agency in City X, especially the Rehabilitation Team and the Community Prevention and Empowerment Team. Through the internship program undertaken by the author, he was provided with invaluable support and knowledge. Furthermore, the author would also like to thank Mrs. Siti Jaro'ah, S.Psi, M.A., as the Field Supervisor (DPL), who has guided and consistently monitored every progress until this research could be completed. In addition, the author would also like to thank Mrs. Yohana Wuri Satwika, S.Psi., M.Psi., as the Coordinator of the Psychology Study Program, who always supported the author in this program. Of course, thanks also go to the Faculty of Psychology, Unesa, and the organizers of the International Conference on Psychology and Education (ICPE) for accommodating the author in writing this research.

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