

Jurnal Konseling Religi

ISSN : 1907-7238

E-ISSN : 2477-2100

DOI : <http://dx.doi.org/10.21043/kr.v14i1.20419>

Vol. 14 No. 1, Juni 2023 | 163-178

<http://journal.iainkudus.ac.id/index.php/konseling>



Traumatic Counseling with Play Therapy Techniques to Handle Children Victims of Domestic Violence

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Abstract

Traumatic counseling with play therapy techniques can be a solution for children victims of domestic violence. This study aims to describe the application of traumatic counseling with play therapy techniques to treat children victims of domestic violence. This research is qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. Primary data sources were the head of UPTD PPA (Regional Technical Service Unit for the Protection of Women and Children) Samarinda, child psychologists, and case handling staff. Secondary data sources were documents of UPTD PPA. Data collection techniques were observation, interviews, and documentation. Data were analyzed by employing Miles, et al. model covering data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. The data validity testing included increasing persistence, using reference materials, and triangulating sources and techniques. The study results show that the counseling place is representative of all the facilities. The counselors are certified psychologists who have licenses from relevant ministries and are experienced. The counseling phase begins with the assessment. The counseling session is carried out systematically with play therapy techniques in the form of rapport first, then doing an active and fun approach to children, getting to know children better, then trying to direct children to talk while playing.

Keywords: Traumatic Counseling, Play Therapy, Domestic Violence

Introduction

Marriage life does not always run smoothly. Various problems adorn everyone's household journey, including those that can lead to disputes between the parties in it. Disputes in the household sometimes have a big impact and even lead to violence. Acts of violence can be assessed as a form of domestic violence (KDRT) if it occurs in marriage (Mubarok, 2016). Domestic Violence as stated in Chapter I Article 1 paragraph 1 of Law Number 23 of 2004 Concerning the Elimination of Domestic Violence is “any act against anyone particularly woman, bringing about physical, sexual, psychological misery or suffering, and/or negligence of household including threat to commit act, forcing, or seizure of freedom in a manner against the law within the scope of household.”

Women are indeed the most victims of domestic violence, but it does not mean only women experience it. Domestic violence can be experienced by husbands, wives, and children. Children as the next generation of the nation, have a strategic role and special characteristics that ensure the sustainability of the nation and state in the future. Therefore, for each child to be able to carry out their responsibilities in the future, children need to get the widest possible opportunity to grow and develop optimally physically, mentally, socially, and with noble character. As a step to realize this, it is necessary to make efforts to protect and realize the welfare of children by providing guarantees for the fulfillment of their rights and treatment without discrimination (Ilham and Noviyanti, 2020). Chapter I Article 1 paragraph 1 of Law Number 23 of 2002 Concerning Child Protection states that what is referred to as a "child" is someone who is not yet 18 (eighteen) years old, which also includes children who are still in their mother's womb. In addition, "child protection" is mentioned in the same article in paragraph 2, namely all activities to guarantee and protect children and their rights so that they can live, grow, develop, and participate optimally by human dignity, and receive protection from violence and discrimination. The rights of the child referred to in paragraph 12 are part of human rights that must be guaranteed, protected, and fulfilled by parents, family, society, government, and the state. However, the fact is that not every child gets this right, especially children who are victims of domestic violence.

According to data from the PPA SYMPHONY (Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children), the number of cases of domestic violence in

Indonesia in early 2023 counted as 2,571 cases. Cases in East Kalimantan Province recorded as many as 100 cases with 64 cases occurring in the Provincial Capital, Samarinda City. 68 victims of violence in East Kalimantan Province were in the category of children (SIMFONI-PPA, 2023). Given the increasing cases of violence experienced by women and children according to the data, based on the Regulation of the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia No. 4 of 2018 concerning Guidelines for the Establishment of the Regional Technical Service Unit for the Protection of Women and Children (UPTD PPA), the Samarinda City Government formed the UPTD PPA Samarinda City on February 7, 2020. This UPTD PPA is a unit under the auspices of the Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DP2PA). When there was a directive from the government for the formation of the UPTD PPA by the Minister of PPA Regulation Number 4 of 2018, on February 18, 2019, the Governor of East Kalimantan Province gave a letter of recommendation for the formation of UPTD PPA. Then the Regulation of the Mayor of Samarinda Number 58 of 2019 was stipulated concerning the Formation and Organizational Structure and Work Procedure of the Implementing Unit Region at the Child Empowerment and Protection Service on December 17, 2019, for the basis for the formation of the UPTD PPA Samarinda City. Although the UPTD PPA Samarinda City has only been operating since early 2020, it has domestic violence data since 2019 because it is a continuation of the previous institution, namely the Integrated Service Center for Women and Children Empowerment (P2TP2A) which changed to UPTD PPA Samarinda City.

Based on data on domestic violence at the UPTD PPA Samarinda City from 2019-2022, it appears that there has been an increase in cases of domestic violence from 2019 to 2021 then a decrease in 2022. The total data on domestic violence were 43 cases in 2019, 52 cases in 2020, 60 cases in 2021, and 29 cases in 2022. The total is 184 cases. Many victims of domestic violence that have been handled by psychologists of the UPTD PPA Samarinda City are children. Data on domestic violence cases at the UPTD PPA Samarinda City in 2019-2022 show that children experienced domestic violence more than adults. Data for 2019 show that 29 victims are children consisting of 10 boys and 19 girls. Data for 2020 mention 39 children consisting of 14 boys and 25 girls. Data for 2021 state 39 children consisting of 8 boys and 31 girls. The latest data for 2022 mention 16 children consisting of 10 boys and 6 girls.

Given the large number of these cases, the existence of the UPTD PPA Samarinda City is very much needed by the community. The purpose of establishing the Samarinda City UPTD PPA as stated in the institution's profile is to carry out monitoring and traumatic counseling for women and children victims of violence, including acts of domestic violence. According to the Child Protection Act Article 13 paragraph 1, violence against children is discrimination, both economic and sexual exploitation, neglect, cruelty, violence and abuse, injustice, and other mistreatment. The impact of this violence is the possibility of psychological trauma for children and it ultimately causes them to have the wrong perception about violence and to think that violence is one of the right ways to solve the problem (Cut Mutia, Feby Sahfitri, Khairunnisa, Hotmalina, and Muliawan, 2021).

Providing traumatic counseling services to treat children who experience violence is undoubtedly necessary. Traumatic counseling is a counselor's attempt to help counselees who are traumatized through a process of interpersonal relationships so that counselees can understand the trauma problems they are experiencing and try to overcome them if events occur in the future (Awaliyah, Nihayah, and Muna, 2021). Traumatic counseling focuses on returning the traumatic conditions of society to a healthy psychological state (Rimaati, 2019).

There are various approaches and counseling techniques used by counselors or psychologists in dealing with counselees (clients) who are victims of domestic violence, both adults and children. One of the results of Krisnanda's research, et al shows that CBT counseling can significantly develop self-love trauma survivors after domestic violence. They feel they need to be loved so they want to recover from low self-esteem indicated by confident faces when counseling is about to end (Krisnanda, Ramli, and Hidayah, 2022). Furthermore, the results of research from Asti Haryati, Neti Herawati, Betaria Soneta, and Sukma Wardani describe the various approaches taken by Islamic counselors to deal with the trauma of victims of domestic violence. First, the role of Islamic counselors is to deal with the trauma of victims of domestic violence by approaching them first. This can foster enthusiasm in the victims and the discussion approach can be used as an alternative approach in Islamic guidance and counseling. Second, Islamic counselors provide a view to clients in a better and more constructive direction, so that clients can understand and be aware of the problems they have experienced, and try to be able to get closer to Allah SWT by carrying out worship

according to the guidance of the Qur'an and Prophet's sunnah. Third, Islamic counselors guide victims through assistance in the family environment (Haryati, Herawati, Soneta, and Wardani, 2022). The results of research from Ulayya Wasilah Munasti, Nurhasanah, and Nurbaity show that counseling services used at P2TP2A Merduati, Kuta Raja, Banda Aceh to treat child victims of domestic violence are individual, family, Islamic, advocacy and rehabilitation approaches (Munasti, Nurhasanah, and Nurbaity, 2019). Thus, the counseling approaches and techniques used by counselors in carrying out traumatic counseling may vary in dealing with victims of domestic violence depending on the characteristics and specific problems the counselee is facing.

One of the techniques that can be used to deal with children victims of domestic violence is the technique of play therapy. Playing is the language of children and children will have a very broad imagination with their world of play. Therefore, playing is a fairly good method of dealing with anxiety in children (Widyastuti, et al., 2019). Pratiwi (2017) said that play therapy is a counseling technique given by adults to children based on the concept of play as a way of communication between children and adults to express their natural expressions. Therefore, adults use this approach to intervene or invite dialogue with them to create feelings better and develop the ability to solve problems. The research results of Ulah, et al. (2020) show that play therapy has a significant influence on improving children's social development. Given the traumatic experience caused by domestic violence will cause the child's social development to be disrupted, then play therapy can be used as a technique in counseling to help restore and even improve children's social development as part of post-traumatic recovery. The same thing is also applied in UPTD PPA Samarinda City.

No research specifically addresses the application of traumatic counseling with play therapy techniques by psychologists who act as counselors at UPTD PPA Samarinda City in dealing with children who are victims of domestic violence. However, for early childhood, students in general, and children who are victims of natural disasters, play therapy techniques are widely used such as research by Widyastuti, et al. (2019), research by Hartanto, Nisa, and Agustriyana (2017), and research by Indrawati, Mamesah, and Putri (2018). Likewise, research on counseling for children who are victims of domestic violence in similar institutions explains more about individual, group, and family counseling services as well as other types of approaches or techniques

such as research by Munasti, et al. (2019), Ilham and Noviyanti's research (2020), and Mareta and Kirana's research (2022).

Based on the explanation above, the purpose of this study is to describe more deeply the application of traumatic counseling with play therapy techniques used by professionals at UPTD PPA Samarinda City to treat children victims of domestic violence. The significance of this research is specifically to make people aware of the importance of the existence of the UPTD PPA which has counseling services provided to children victims with techniques adapted to the characteristics of the children. So, when the community knows about a child who has experienced domestic violence, they can seek help from the UPTD PPA and the child can get professional treatment.

Method

This research is qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. Primary data sources were the head of UPTD PPA Samarinda City, child psychologists, and case handling staff. Secondary data sources consisted of reports on domestic violence case data for 2019-2022, assessment sheet forms, reports on counseling implementation, the legality of UPTD PPA Samarinda City, and profile data of UPTD PPA Samarinda City. Data collection techniques used were observation, interviews, and documentation. The data obtained were analyzed using a model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana which covers data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verifications (Miles M.B., Huberman, A.M., 2014). Testing the validity of the data included increasing persistence, using reference materials, and triangulation consisting of source and technique triangulation.

Discussion

This study discusses traumatic counseling with play therapy techniques applied by psychologists at UPTD PPA Samarinda City to treat children victims of domestic violence. The discussion based on the findings of this study consists of the counseling place, the counselor, and the stages of the counseling.

Counseling Place

The environment where counseling is carried out is a factor that influences the course of the counseling session. Thus, counselors need to arrange a comfortable and supportive counseling room for the counseling process (Fathurrahman, 2017). Arrangement of the place or counseling room can affect the comfort and effectiveness of counseling. A counseling setting is a place, location, or space that is used for the counseling process and when the counselor interacts professionally with the counselee. Several factors have been standardized so that the counseling process takes place comfortably and confidentiality is guaranteed. One of the influencing factors is setting a counseling room or place (Hartini and Ariana, 2016).

Based on the results of observations and interviews as well as documentation from the facilities at the research location, it appears that UPTD PPA Samarinda City provides a special room for counseling. The room consists of 3 counseling rooms and 1 assessment room. The condition of the counseling room is very comfortable. The front door of the room is marked with a white nameplate that reads psychologist's room with clearly visible writing. The counseling room is equipped with an individual counseling area with one table, one psychologist chair, two client chairs, a filing cabinet, children's play facilities, and wall hangings with motivational sentences. The counseling room is also equipped with air conditioning and CCTV for the safety of clients and psychologists. Counseling rooms are far enough apart to ensure client comfort and confidentiality. There is also a mediation room which is used as a family counseling room and is equipped with a fairly large table and several chairs. However, the voices inside the mediation room were faintly heard from outside. With regards to the assessment room, the room condition is very good. There is a white nameplate of space assessment with a clear appearance. The assessment room is equipped with tables and chairs, air conditioning, CCTV, and decorations with motivational sentences. The assessment room is set up to be soundproof to ensure client confidentiality. During assessment and counseling sessions, the rooms are closed tightly to ensure client confidentiality.

Counseling rooms for adult and child clients at UPTD PPA Samarinda City are provided differently. In the counseling rooms, in addition to those provided for adults,

play facilities are also provided for children counseling facilities. This was explained by the head of the UPTD PPA Samarinda City as follows:

"We have a therapy counseling room to carry out counseling activities for both adults and children. For children, we provide play facilities."

Meanwhile, a psychologist at UPTD PPA Samarinda City, Rizqi Syafrina, said:

"The UPTD PPA office has counseling room facilities as well as play facilities such as stuffed toys, books, balls, and others to support special counseling for children."

Thus, the condition of the counseling room at UPTD PPA Samarinda City has met the standards for client comfort in carrying out counseling, including for clients who are still children.

Counselors

Counselors are experts who are competent in their respective fields so that the cases handled can be more focused. Thus, the psychologist coordinator manages psychologists' clients based on the cases experienced by victims. UPTD PPA Samarinda City has five psychologists consisting of three child psychologists and two adolescent adult psychologists. However, as a psychologist who handles clients with various cases, personal or non-technical preparation is needed, namely mental preparation, especially for dealing with victims who are still children. If the mental condition is good, meaning that the psychologist is good psychologically and emotionally, it will be easier to deal with clients. Then from a technical point of view, what needs to be prepared are the assessment tools such as test kits, observation sheets, and interview sheets.

Counseling implementation is the domain of the counselor, but psychologists can also carry it out. Therefore, there is a conformity between the existing theory and the results of the research; those who provide counseling to victims of domestic violence at UPTD PPA Samarinda City are professional psychologists who have taken professional education and have received certification and licenses from the ministry. Psychologists must take a bachelor's degree in psychology with a degree (S.Psi), then continue their master's degree with a professional psychology education program at the master's level. In this professional program, they will receive a master's degree in psychology and acknowledgment as a psychologist. A psychologist in practice can use a

counseling approach for clients with normal problems and a psychotherapeutic approach for clients with the identification of psychological symptoms with pathological traits or disorders. This is different from the profession of a counselor who studies undergraduate program majoring in guidance and counseling. Then, to get into the counselor profession, they need to take professional education for one year and are not required to take a Master's degree. In addition, in practice, counselors can handle clients individually and in groups, and counselors have not been equipped with in-depth competence in dealing with clients who have disorders, so the counselor's treatment is in the form of counseling for normal individuals who have problems in their daily lives (Dulay, 2019).

Counseling Process Stages

The stages of providing counseling services carried out by the UPTD PPA manager in Samarinda City are, first, before counseling is carried out, an assessment is done as an initial stage. The purpose of the assessment is to diagnose the problem of the client/counselee. Assessment is one of the measurement activities in a counseling process that must be carried out by the counselor both before and after the counseling or while it is in progress. Assessment is very necessary and the most important part of all activities in counseling, both group and individual counseling. The assessment is used to recognize and assess counselees in depth from various aspects (Wahidah, Cuntini, and Fatimah, 2019).

Furthermore, the clients will choose further assistance for the case which consists of legal or psychological assistance. If the clients require psychological assistance, they will be directed to a psychologist for counseling. Then, case handling staff provide assessment result reports and victim biographical forms for psychologists and UPTD PPA heads for case follow-up handling. The psychologist will explore the client's problems more deeply and then continue the counseling process. The data of clients who consult with psychologists will be collected first, then analyzed and interpreted. Furthermore, if the problems experienced by the client lead to disruption, the psychologist will provide further treatment in the form of therapy, and perform various kinds of psychological tests such as IQ tests, interest and aptitude tests, and personality tests. This was done to make the handling of the client appropriate to the disorder the client was experiencing (Daulay, 2019)

Based on the research results, the psychological assessment carried out by UPTD PPA psychologists in Samarinda City begins with building rapport to establish relationships with clients, so they feel happy and safe. The psychologist will make physical observations related to the wound and the emotions that can be seen from the expression on the client's face. If there is fear then the psychologist will follow up and return to the source of the fear. After that, the assessment continues by using a test kit assessment in the form of IQ test kits, depression scale test kits, and stress scales. These various test kits are used to diagnose levels through scales related to trauma, stress, or depression experienced by clients as victims of domestic violence. The psychologist will dig into the client's problems to find out who the culprit is, what is the chronology of events, and the impact of the symptoms experienced, then conclude and carry out counseling at the next meeting. From the first meeting with assessment activities, the psychologist can assess which parties can be invited in connection with the client's case. After the assessment, psychologists carry out further treatment interventions, namely counseling.

Handling child clients at UPTD PPA Samarinda City is different from adult clients. Based on the results of an interview with Saidatul Karimah, one of the cases handling staff, there is a difference in conducting assessment in adult women and children as stated below:

"For children, we usually chat and play while we ask questions and they tell us what the problem is. As for adults, we can ask it through face-to-face interviews, if the children are just being taken to play. For adults, we can ask formally. For children, we provide supporting media such as children's games for example books, and toys, and also provide rooms with children's toys. Usually, it is used for counseling children."

This is in line with the following excerpt from an interview with the psychologist, Mrs. Risqi:

"The first thing we do is assess, rapport first, find out about the story first and the chronology assisted by case-handling staff volunteer. If we have received a report on the results from the case handling staff, we will then carry out a psychological test whether they are traumatized or not. If they are traumatized, then we will do counseling or psychotherapy to the intervention relaxation. So it's not only

counseling, it can be psychotherapy, relaxation, and play therapy, we apply many things. So, it depends on the needs and conditions of the client as well."

Regarding the parties involved in the counseling process, the psychologist explained that no other parties were involved in the counseling process except for children. In children clients who have problems with parenting, it is necessary to involve parents to participate in counseling. Counseling is provided individually, so psychologists can find out more about the problems experienced by children. The following is the explanation of the psychologist, Mrs. Risqi, in the results of the interview excerpt:

"Only victims, but for children sometimes we also ask their parents or guardians to accompany them, we gather them in the room so that their parents, aunts, or caregivers are there. So, we involve many people to find out about their condition. For example, how are they at home, and what is their behavior like? Although counseling is more about children, it is not only for children but their parents too because to help children recover at home the parents have to behave. So their parents also take part in counseling. One by one the parents themselves, the children themselves. So it takes turns. The children first then the parents."

Based on the interview results, there are several techniques that psychologists use in individual counseling services for victims of domestic violence, especially in the category of children who need special treatment. Moreover, their condition is in a state of trauma. Therefore traumatic counseling needs the right technique. This is in line with an excerpt from an interview with psychologist, Mrs. Risqi Syafrina, as follows:

"It depends on the cases we face. It can be psychotherapy or play therapy to invite children to play. Of course, we just open up, approach them well, accept clients as they are, and don't say anything negative. We just listen carefully when the client talks. Later, when we have listened, we will look for solutions to the sources of the problems, then we will solve them."

Then, Mrs. Ayunda's explanation is as follows:

"We accept it well, make the client feel comfortable from the rapport, we listen to their complaints, if their emotions are not stable, we give them a drink first, let them calm down, then we continue counseling, they tell the problem again."

Based on the research findings, it appears that the counseling technique used by UPTD PPA Samarinda City for victims or clients who are still children is play therapy. Play therapy is done by using media to play with children, such as inviting children to play first and solving problems while asking questions or exploring cases by playing with toys that have been provided such as dolls, balls, books, drawing media, and others. While the child is playing, the psychologist can explore the cases experienced by children, such as finding the source of their fear and the events that occurred. Children who are given play therapy are children who are fluent to talk to and in the period of playing age. Play therapy is given to children of 10 years old and under. As Ms. Violetta, the head of the UPTD PPA Samarinda City explained as follows:

"The special approach in person is done, but professionally, we mean that victims cannot be forced to speak, so we have to take a direct approach from the psychologist. Secretly or in secret, they will convey it based on the condition, if this is the case for child victims. This child maybe, is 2 years old or 1.5 years old, can't speak fluently or can't yet express their thoughts, so the psychologist can persuade them through pictures or the like. For example, in the picture of a room there is a bed, then what were your feet like at that time, where were your feet at that time, and what was their position? Because there was a rape case of a 2-year-old child. So the technical approach is carried out by psychologists directly. In our outreach approach, we visit the house through a home visit. Home visits are carried out at times like this, even though the case has been exposed and resolved but maybe it still needs to be monitored, even though we don't attach the victim to the UPTD so that they are also independent. Maybe you can see oh it turns out there's something like this. For example, the victim approached us. Monitor until the condition is really good."

There are various approaches or models of play therapy, namely the Adlerian model, the therapy model client-centered, the cognitive behavioral model, the eco-systemic model, the existentialism model, the gestalt model, the Jungian model, and the psychoanalytic model (Sara, 2021). The approach to play therapy for children at the UPTD PPA Samarinda City is more oriented towards a model approach of cognitive Behavioral Play Therapy. In this approach, game-based activities are used to complete behavioral interventions such as positive reinforcement, formation, stimulus fading, and extinction. Adapted cognitive interventions include recording dysfunctional thoughts, opposing irrational beliefs, and using self-assertion to solve problems. This approach

uses modeling, role play, and behavioral possibilities using fun and engaging toys, stuffed animals, and dolls for young children. This method is used to treat children with various emotional and behavioral problems, including selective mutism, phobias, anxiety, trauma, and separation (O'Connor, Schaefer, and Braverman, 2015).

The method used by psychologists in applying traumatic counseling with techniques of play therapy to children clients or victims of domestic violence at UPTD PPA Samarinda City is by doing a rapport first. The approach to children should be more active and fun so that children feel comfortable and safe, then it is getting to know the children better by inviting them to play and trying to direct the children to talk while playing. After that is listening carefully to what the children are telling about or talking about. The results are children do not only tell their problems, but they can also express the events they experienced through the media that have been prepared.

After the counseling phase is complete, of course, the client is not simply ignored. After receiving counseling services, the UPTD PPA supervises the progress of clients or victims of domestic violence. According to psychologists, the form of supervision carried out on children clients or victims of domestic violence is by examining and seeing their developmental conditions in social services, orphanages, and schools.

Conclusion

Traumatic counseling with techniques of play therapy to deal with children victims of domestic violence at UPTD PPA Samarinda City is carried out in a representative place with all the facilities including play facilities for children's counseling. The counselor is a certified psychologist and has a license from the relevant ministry and has experience. The counseling phase begins with the assessment carried out by psychologists assisted by case-handling staff. The counseling session is carried out systematically with techniques of play therapy by forming rapport first, approaching children in an active and fun way, getting to know children better, and then trying to direct children to talk while playing. This study has an implication that UPTD PPA managers throughout Indonesia should be more active in socializing its existence and the services available for more public knowledge so that more victims of domestic violence can receive the professional help they need. It is recommended that further

research can be continued with the development of discussions from different aspects as well as other counseling techniques that can be used to help overcome traumatic and other problems from victims of domestic violence, both children and adults.

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