
Therapeutic Communication of Sexual Violence Against Women Victims

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ABSTRACT

Sexual violence is one of the acts of direct violence, the act involves other people in the desired sexual activity. Sexual violence that occurs in the community is a particular concern, especially for women. The general public often blames victims who dress openly, this is usually said to be victim blaming or victim blaming, which means that victims of crime are held accountable for what happened to them. The psychological impact experienced by the victims is mostly mental trauma, fear, shame, anxiety, and even suicide attempts. This form of literature research aims to find out the application of therapeutic communication in an effort to recover victims of sexual violence against women and children. In this study, the researcher uses qualitative methods, data collection with interview methods and descriptive observations strengthened by using literature studies with literature searches using therapeutic communication keywords in an effort to recover victims of female sexual violence. Based on the cases faced by providing assistance and counseling to victims, counselors must master the stages in the therapy process, this is aimed at the smooth healing process for victims who experience sexual violence. The stages that must be mastered are; pre-interaction stage; orientation stage; stages of work; and termination stage. Of course, the Friendly People in this case are considered to be quite competent in dealing with victims of sexual violence.

INTRODUCTION

With the development of the times, women are in a disadvantageous position in establishing relationships with men. Often women become the subject of ridicule by men, even to the point of becoming victims of sexual violence. Sexual violence is an act either verbally or an act done by a person to control by involving others in unwanted sexual activities (Raineka Faturani, 2022).

Cases of sexual harassment in Indonesia are increasing every year, in this study women from the age range of 12-24 years who can be categorized as teenagers often become victims of sexual violence. Based on records in 2019, the Women's Command recorded 431,471 cases of sexual violence, while in 2020 the number of case reports received by Komnas Perempuan decreased significantly to a 31% decrease, namely 299,911 cases. Then in 2021 there was an increase of 459,094 cases and decreased again in 2022 by 457,895 and in 2023 by 339,782 (CATAHU Komnas Perempuan, 2021).

The results of (Ivony, 2017) research revealed that adolescents are the most vulnerable victims of sexual harassment because of their limitations in protecting themselves. From several cases of sexual violence, the community only often blames the victim's open way of dressing, thus causing dirty thoughts towards the perpetrator and giving the perpetrator the opportunity to commit sexual violence that can occur and invite lust from the opposite sex (perpetrator). This is commonly called *victim blaming* which means blaming the victim or *victim blaming* which means a phenomenon where victims of crime are held accountable for what happened to them (Husna et al., 2023). The psychological impact of sexual violence includes mental trauma, fear, shame, anxiety, and even suicidal thoughts. Not only that, the social impact that is certainly caused by the victim is being treated badly by others and doubting his ability to communicate (Hidayat, 2021).

Referring to data from the Cirebon City DP3APPKB, there are 66 cases of sexual violence that occurred in Cirebon City. Where the case created unrest in the community.

Table 1. Number of Victims of Sexual Violence Against Women and Children in Cirebon City

No.	Year	number of cases
1	2019	42
2	2020	54
3	2021	66
4	2022	12
5	2023	10
Amount		291

Source : Cirebon City dp3appkb data recap

With The result of the number of unspeakable cases is a reduction in cases of violence existing sexually. If this phenomenon is left unchecked, crimes against women will become more rampant. This has certainly become a common task to deal with the phenomenon that occurs in our environment. Handling this case can be supported or assisted by an organization engaged in its field, namely Umah Ramah as a volunteer who is a savior for victims of sexual violence. Umah Ramah is an organization in Cirebon City, this organization focuses on handling with clients to help them psychologically. With this organization, victims have a safe space to more openly disclose the cases they experienced.

The formulation of the research problem that will be discussed is to find out the problem of sexual violence that occurs in Cirebon City, because it is often associated with the concept of morality which becomes more difficult to reveal and handle than other violence against women. This includes the question of how therapeutic communication can facilitate the expression of emotions, build a sense of security and help the victim in terms of mental health for their recovery process.

Literature Review

Based on the results obtained in the search for articles that are appropriate and linear with the handling of cases of sexual violence using therapeutic communication methods and are considered in accordance with the objectives of the research: According to Dulwahab Encep, "Therapeutic communication strategies in the treatment of victims of sexual violence" *Journal of Communication Studies* (Dulwahab et al., 2020) In working on communication to victims of sexual violence, the volunteer group that handles the victims conducts therapeutic communication gradually and variously, but even so, the stages will remain continuous. The results of this study outline the need for open communication between the family and the surrounding environment. In addition, volunteer groups or supporters of victims of sexual violence must have a way to communicate in a therapeutic way.

The research was also carried out by Putri Zahra Putriana. With the title "Therapeutic communication in adolescents who experience sexual violence " (Zahra et al., 2023) provides a narrative understanding that sexual violence can be a big problem for adolescents, knowing

that in handling cases of sexual violence it can be overcome using therapeutic communication strategies and how to understand the effectiveness of therapeutic communication on victims of sexual violence. From the assistance focused on victims of violence must be able to master good therapeutic communication, this is emphasized to counselors who handle sexual violence cases are expected to be a safe space for victims of sexual violence in overcoming trauma.

Regarding the theme of mentoring, refer to, Tiara Soib "The mentoring process through therapeutic communication as an effort to recover the psychological of rape victims" (Tiara & Pratiwi, 2018) in an effort to psychologically recover rape victims is to carry out 5 stages of therapeutic communication including the Pre-Interaction Stage, Orientation Stage, Orientation Stage, Work Stage and Termination Stage. Because of the large number of rape victims that lead to pregnancy and the decision to maintain and raise a child of rape victims, it is certainly difficult and requires individual support. Similar to what Lembanga is doing, *the "Legal Resource Center for Gender Justice and Human Rights"*. If the victim experiences a bad psychological impact such as depression, sadness or anger, then the companion always provides positive encouragement with the aim of restoring the victim's confidence and ability to continue living. The success of therapeutic communication implemented by the companions makes a commitment to the companions to help without being bound by the time needed.

Meanwhile, a similar research on the theme of mentoring was conducted by, Rosyana Ana "Psychologists' Thematic Communication Planning in Dealing with Victims of Sexual Violence" Bandung Conference Series (Rosyana & Yuningsih, 2023) the results of the research show that there are three motives that underlie psychologists in handling sexual violence cases, including humanity, social conditions, and professional responsibility. Mental health diseases experienced by victims of sexual violence are an interesting thing to handle. With the aim of how to plan therapeutic communication held by psychologists using a phenomenological approach and interpretive paradigm.

This research introduces a unique perspective by focusing on therapeutic communication as a specific intervention for sexual violence victims in Cirebon City, Indonesia. Unlike previous studies that have broadly discussed sexual violence, this study examines how localized organizations such as Umah Ramah use therapeutic communication strategies to support victims. By highlighting the specific methods and stages of therapeutic communication, this study contributes new insights into how emotional expression, security, and psychological recovery can be fostered in the context of sexual violence cases. Additionally, the research emphasizes the cultural and moral challenges unique to sexual violence cases in the Cirebon region, adding depth to the global discourse on therapeutic communication practices.

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of therapeutic communication on the psychological recovery of victims of sexual violence in Cirebon City. Specifically, the research aims to: (1) understand the psychological and social effects of sexual violence on victims, particularly young women aged 12-24, (2) examine the role of the Umah Ramah organization and its therapeutic communication methods in providing psychological support to victims, and (3) analyze how therapeutic communication can facilitate the expression of emotions, build a sense of security, and aid in mental health recovery for victims of sexual violence.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute both to academic knowledge and practical interventions. Academically, the research expands the understanding of therapeutic communication in the context of sexual violence, specifically within an Indonesian cultural framework. Practically, it provides actionable insights for organizations, counselors, and volunteers working with sexual violence victims. The research also offers valuable recommendations for improving therapeutic communication practices, thereby supporting the psychological recovery process for victims and contributing to broader efforts to combat sexual violence in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method, which as explained by Moeloeng that qualitative research is a method carried out by collecting field data that will be used as data for an object. Qualitative stated in the form of words and grammar (Moleong, 2019). In this study, the qualitative method is considered efficient to explain the context of the case description that can be handled by the Friendly Ummah.

The researcher also conducted interview techniques and data collection as a way to validate the deepening of materials, concepts and conduct literature studies with Umah Ramah. This was done to validate the therapeutic communication used by Umah Ramah in handling cases of sexual violence. The theories used in this study are Therapeutic Communication Theory. The nurse's ability to communicate therapeutically is Ability to support clients in dealing with stress, coping with psychological problems and learning to relate to others (Priyanto, 2009).

This method certainly gives a glimmer of hope for the Friendly Ummah in realizing the Vision and Mission which has been a reference to continue to move and prioritize the therapeutic communication theory model to understand the psychological side or feelings of the victim. Support for understanding from a psychological perspective is felt to be able to handle the victim's emotional problems and the goal is to find out whether the victim needs further psychological assistance or not (Susilo et al., 2024)s.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sexual violence against women is a serious problem involving various forms of violations against women's sexual and physical integrity. The definition of sexual violence is very broad and includes sexual harassment of women in the form of name-calling or ridicule (Salamor & Salamor, 2022).

According to Asih Widiowati as the founder of Umah Ramah (Umah Ramah, 2020), One of the goals of our organization is to create a society that is aditive, free from violence and respects human values. Umah Ruga listens to and prioritizes the opinions of people who have experienced sexual violence when making analyses, work plans and building safe spaces for the community. In the mission of the Friendly Ummah, they focus on three main principles, namely justice, humanity and Rahmatan lil'Alamin.



Figure 1. Researcher Documentation

Source : personal document

Umah Ramah approaches victims using therapeutic communication by creating discussion rooms in collaboration with campus organizations, agencies and institutions, being a speaker at various events, organizing and delivering training courses, publishing books, campaigning on social media, and helping community members who are victims of sexual violence. Which in an effort to implement it is not only in the educational environment but also in public environments such as coffee shops, halls and malls and other public places.

Based on the findings of the results in the field, the number of cases that have been handled by Umah Ramah is 23 cases from 2022 to 2024. Of course, the relationship between the case report data in Cirebon City and the case data that has been handled by Umah Ramah helps the victims from a psychological perspective to restore confidence and build a spirit of life.

Table 2 Number of cases handled by Umah Ramah

No	Year	Number of casses
1	2022	12
2	2023	10
3	2024	3
Amount		23

Source : Ummah Friendly Organization Data

As for victims who want to take the legal route, the party from the Umah Ramah organization will provide a referral letter to the victim, then it will be followed up by the relevant agencies and institutions that have authority in this field.

The process and efforts to recover victims who experience cases of sexual violence are by using four stages of therapeutic communication methods. These steps include:

Pre-Interaction Stage

In this stage, it is the counselor's preparation stage before meeting, communicating and making direct eye contact with the victim. At this stage, it includes preparing for the first meeting of the victims. (Varcarolis & Halter, 2002) The counselor team needs to evaluate themselves regarding their abilities and capacities before dealing with victims of violence, with the aim of analyzing their weaknesses. Because in the implementation of therapists, of course, the volunteer team must be willing and in optimal conditions.

The collection process is carried out on the victim with the aim that the counselor can explore the feelings experienced by the victim in order to obtain information such as the case experienced, family, fear and anxiety of the victim (Al-A'raj and Al-Omari, 2014). In the initial stage of this information extraction, it is necessary when arranging a meeting with the victim, the counselor can find out the victim's background, the cause of the trauma and what impact occurs on the victim after experiencing sexual violence.

After the counselor gets data or information related to the case experienced, the counselor team determines how to communicate what will be done. Because in the pre-interaction stage, the counselor will be clinically responsible for victims who experience cases of sexual violence. The counselor also prepares a plan for what kind of interaction when meeting directly with the victim, how to build good communication to build a relationship of mutual trust by positioning yourself as a friend and giving empathy to the victim. In this pre-interaction stage, the element of knowledge is the key for counselors in dealing with victims of sexual violence and useful information as a provision for counselors in interacting.

Orientation Stage

At this stage, it is the initial introduction stage where the counselor introduces himself as a close friend of the person concerned and understands the data about the counselor. In this stage, the counselor explained the principles regarding the basis for handling sexual violence cases. With the information obtained at the pre-interaction stage, of course, the counselor must

be able to provide and adjust to the background of the victim, this is sought to foster a sense of trust from the victim and give a good impression from the victim's eyes.

Based on the data obtained at the pre-interaction stage, the counselor must be able to master the communication process that occurs, this is intended so that in the communication process between the victim and the counselor can be open to express the content of their feelings and thoughts so that the counselor team can make the victim feel comfortable and foster a sense of enthusiasm by having a conducive environment. One of the therapeutic communication techniques used in counselors is to receive and listen to stories from the victim, reflect, make observations and sequence the events experienced by the victim (Salima, 2024).

Work Stage

This stage is a stage whose duration cannot be ascertained, because in this process the counselor and the victim meet each other in solving the problems experienced by the victim. By discussing and providing the assistance needed by the victims, the volunteer team seeks to form a mutually beneficial relationship between the victim and the volunteer professionally with the aim of finding the root of the problem faced.

Starting with sitting together between the victim and the counselor to carry out healing twice a week face-to-face which has been agreed upon by both parties. For the duration of each meeting can last for approximately 60 minutes, the implementation is carried out at the Umah Ramah office so that the victim feels calm when telling the story. In addition, it prevents information leakage if it is carried out in public places.

The researcher caught that the method used by the Umah Ramah counselor led to creating a comfortable atmosphere and feeling calm in the hope that the victim would feel more relaxed when telling the problems that had been faced. Furthermore, during the meeting, the counselor builds an intrapersonal relationship which the counselor sees based on what has started in the initial stage, namely the pre-interaction stage. The reason why counselors build intrapersonal relationships is that counselors want victims to tell their feelings openly so that victims feel relieved. The statement of relief is included in the concept of acceptance of grief, which means that the victim must acknowledge and accept what they can regain having a spirit of life, confidence and hope for the future (Sanderson et al., 2013).

In providing healing, the counselor uses non-verbal language by sitting side by side, making eye contact, giving touch such as holding the victim's hand aims to give strength to the victim, give hugs or hugs when the victim tells stories to remind of the events that have occurred.

Termination Stage

This stage is the last stage carried out with therapeutic communication activities between the counselor and the client will end at this stage the counselor and the victim are expected to be able to evaluate the results that have been passed. This is done to find out whether the results of the therapy that have been carried out are successful or not, because in the termination stage there are two parts, including temporary termination and final termination.

At the temporary termination stage, the counselor team makes a contract with the victim such as determining the place, time and topic of conversation that will be used as evaluation material for the therapy that has been undergone. This is done with the aim of ensuring that the victim is well addressed about the things that cause the victim to experience trauma such as the place, time that can show the atmosphere of the incident, and topics of conversation that can offend or remind the victim of the incident experienced.

The criteria for the success or not of assistance by a counselor can be seen from the conditions experienced by the victim from before the treatment and afterwards. Success criteria are closely related to the victim's condition and symptoms such as relief, social functioning,

high self-confidence, growth of more adaptable behavior, and achievement of the victim's goals.

The stages of therapeutic communication are considered very effective, because therapeutic communication aims for the purpose of traumatic therapy that befalls a person. The relationship between the victim and the nurse who handles each case also aims to be able to adapt to the sense of trauma or stress that causes the victim to experience a deep disturbance in worry, so that it can relieve and make the victim feel comfortable which ultimately accelerates the victim's healing process (Siti Fatimah & Muhammad Hoesin, 2022).



Figure 2. Interview with Umah Ramah

Source : personal document

The root of the problem of sexual violence is not morality but sexual desire, because most humans cannot control their desires so that they get out of control. Sexual violence is part of gender-based violence or patriarchal violence, this is a form of discrimination against women's sexuality that stems from procreative sexuality ideology . To avoid and minimize this occurrence, good attention and communication between victims through organizations are needed that are expected to understand and embrace victims who have experienced traumatic effects of sexual violence.

Referring to the theory of therapeutic communication, it is an interpersonal relationship between the counselor and the client who gain a learning experience together in order to improve the client's emotional experience. According to (Bainus & Rachman, 2021) there are four stages in the healing of a patient who has been traumatized by an event that happened to him, namely the pre-interaction stage, the orientation stage, the work stage and the termination stage. In the results of findings in the field and discussions, it creates a deep emotional connection. The difference between Umah Ramah and other agencies that handle victims of sexual violence is that Umah Ramah understands that sexual violence is not something that cannot be talked about (taboo), where sexual violence is a gender-based violence that is rooted in power. Sexual violence itself has characteristics that cannot be equated with other violence, therefore the victim feels free and comfortable to express what she is experiencing to the counselor.

CONCLUSION

Based on research, it can be concluded that building a relationship of mutual trust is the first step in the interaction between counselors and patients. Through the pre-interaction stage, the counselor conducts the first meeting with the victim and evaluates himself about his or her abilities and capacities before dealing with victims of sexual violence. Next is the orientation stage, at this stage, the counselor introduces himself and asks the patient's identity, which helps to form therapeutic communication. Then enter the work stage where the counselor and the victim meet each other in solving the problems experienced by the victim by discussing and

providing the help needed by the victim. Then at the termination stage where at this stage the counselor and the victim evaluate the results of the therapist that has been passed. Sexual violence often causes trauma that disturbs the psychological condition of the victim. Therefore, therapeutic communication is considered effective in dealing with victims of sexual violence from the therapist's point of view.

Sexual violence is more common in women and is not an ordinary crime, but an act that degrades the victim by imposing the will of the perpetrator. However, there are some cases of sexual violence that go undisclosed because victims feel embarrassed to talk about their experiences and have to bear the burden alone. Other factors that make victims reluctant to seek help are the fear of talking to strangers, cost, and distance and time constraints.

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