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THE EFFECT OF COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING TECHNIQUES TO REDUCE SELF-HARM BEHAVIOR IN STUDENTS

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh teknik restrukturisasi kognitif dalam mereduksi perilaku *self-harm* pada siswa. Latar belakang penelitian didasarkan pada fenomena meningkatnya perilaku *self-harm* di kalangan remaja, yang dipicu oleh faktor afektif dan lingkungan seperti tekanan emosional, penolakan sosial, serta pola pikir negatif. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode single subject design (desain subjek tunggal) dengan subjek satu siswa yang memiliki skor perilaku *self-harm* tinggi. Intervensi dilakukan melalui layanan konseling individu dengan pendekatan restrukturisasi kognitif selama enam sesi. Hasil analisis visual menunjukkan penurunan signifikan pada skor *self-harm* dari kategori tinggi ke rendah. Analisis dalam kondisi dan antar kondisi menunjukkan tren negatif, mengindikasikan efektivitas intervensi. Kesimpulannya, teknik restrukturisasi kognitif efektif dalam mengubah pola pikir negatif siswa menjadi lebih rasional dan adaptif, sehingga mampu mereduksi perilaku *self-harm*. Teknik ini direkomendasikan untuk digunakan dalam layanan konseling individu di sekolah

Kata Kunci: perilaku *self-harm*, Restrukturisasi Kognitif

Abstract

This study aims to determine the effect of cognitive restructuring techniques in reducing self-harm behavior in students. The background of the study is based on the phenomenon of increasing self-harm behavior among adolescents, which is triggered by affective and environmental factors such as emotional stress, social rejection, and negative mindsets. This study used a single subject design method with one student as the subject who had a high self-harm behavior score. The intervention was carried out through individual counseling services with a cognitive restructuring approach for six sessions. The results of the visual analysis showed a significant decrease in self-harm scores from high to low categories. Analysis within conditions and between conditions showed a negative trend, indicating the effectiveness of the intervention. In conclusion, cognitive restructuring techniques are effective in changing students' negative mindsets to be more rational and adaptive, so that they can reduce self-harm behavior. This technique is recommended for use in individual counseling services in schools.

Keywords: self-harm behavior, cognitive restructuring

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a time when a person is in a period full of conflict, this happens due to changes in body shape, behavioral patterns and social roles (Hurlock, 2011). Changes that occur in adolescence are commonly referred to as a transition period or transition period that occurs from childhood to adulthood. During adolescence, individuals are required to be able to adapt to the many changes that occur in adolescence, the changes that occur can increase stress or pressure on individuals (Muthia & Hidayati, 2015). Changes that occur in adolescence can cause problems if adolescents cannot adapt well, and vice versa. The inability of individuals to solve problems and face problems causes stress and pressure that causes negative emotions. This can lead to behavior that is detrimental to adolescents.

Behavior that can harm individuals is self-harm. This behavior is carried out by individuals when facing or overcoming emotional pressure, stress, or difficult feelings by hurting and harming themselves without intending to commit suicide (Klonsky et al., 2011). Self-harm is behavior that leads to suicide even though the individual does not intend to commit suicide. Self-harm behavior includes cutting and burning the skin, banging body parts, both hands, feet, and head to the body against the wall, hitting oneself, and drug abuse (Higgins, 2014). Individuals who self-harm come from feelings of hopelessness, depression due to various pressures, high impulsive attitudes, not being able to accept their physical condition, experiencing bullying or intimidation, being isolated from society.

Self-harm behavior, which is often done by individuals, is a complex and often surprising form of expression, where individuals seek ways to overcome psychological or emotional stress they feel by hurting themselves, such as cutting their hands, banging their heads, or doing other actions that have the potential to harm themselves. This is in line with the results of a study (Primanita & Aviani, 2020) stating that in West Sumatra, self-harm behavior that often appears in individuals is by cutting their hands, chest, stomach, banging their heads, and punching walls and self-harm behavior. This is based on a feeling of not being appreciated by their parents. The results of the study are also in line with the self-harm behavior encountered by researchers through their friend's WhatsApp story, in the post there were scratches on the hands full of blood.

Self-harm behavior is based on the feeling of losing a loved one. In addition, researchers also conducted interviews with Guidance and Counseling teachers. The results of interviews with Guidance and Counseling teachers showed that there were 5 female students in grade X who committed self-harm. There are several things that cause them to commit self-harm, namely being victims of bullying, feeling that they do not get support from the people around them, for example support from family; friends; and also teachers, having past trauma, family problems, and also the inability to express themselves. The results of the interview are also in line with the news quoted through online media, namely the self-harm phenomenon at SMP Negeri 1 Ngariboyo Magetan, as many as 76 students hurt themselves by cutting their arms or hands using sharp objects, such as; razors, needles, broken glass (Abdul Jalil, 2023). This was triggered by bullying, family problems, to love issues. In addition, the self-harm phenomenon was also carried out en masse by

teenagers in Karangasem, as many as 49 teenagers who committed self-harm, it is known that 40 children did one cut while 9 children did it repeatedly (Banjar Chaeruddin, 2023).

Self-harm behavior arises from two factors, namely internal factors and external factors. Internal factors include neurotic or psychotic characteristics, innate traits, and negative emotional intelligence. Meanwhile, external factors are related to trauma caused by the school environment and poor parenting in the family (Wibisono, 2016). Individuals who self-harm are usually triggered by various complex factors, including social pressure, emotional problems, past trauma, mental disorders such as depression or anxiety disorders, feelings of being unappreciated or rejected by the social or family environment, and lack of skills in managing emotions. These factors are in line with the opinion (Insani & Savira, 2023) through the results of the research that the factors causing self-harm behavior are self-harm as emotion focus coping, emotional maturity, feelings of loneliness, low self-esteem, mental disorders, authoritarian parenting, family problems, and also problems in romantic relationships. Several studies have stated that the factors that cause individuals to self-harm are self-defense mechanisms in negative coping strategies due to family problems, friends, school and other psychological problems (Whitlock et al., 2012).

Self-harm behavior is considered a worrying condition because it causes tissue damage to the body so that if left untreated it will have a negative impact on the health of the body, especially physical health (Walsh, 2012). Self-harm behavior causes psychological and physical impacts. The psychological impacts created by self-harm such as emotional dysregulation, shame, depression, anxiety and stress, as well as having suicidal thoughts, isolating oneself, having low self-esteem and hating oneself. While the physical impacts are bruises, wounds, infections, burns, nerve damage, broken bones, hair loss, overdose/poisoning and even loss of life. Veague stated that self-harm behavior occurs as a result of three main factors, namely, psychological factors, many individuals who self-harm seem to have experienced physical abuse or sexual abuse in childhood; biological factors, brain processes or activities, such as decreased serotonin or response to pain related to impulse control associated with self-harm behavior; social factors, social influences such as peer groups or the media can spread information about self-harm behavior and potentially increase the prevalence and frequency of self-harm behavior (Veague, 2008).

Efforts that can be made by counselors or guidance and counseling teachers in dealing with students who have self-harm behavior are by using cognitive restructuring techniques to reduce self-harm behavior. Cognitive restructuring is changing the direction of thoughts and irrational negative behavior into rational positive behavior. Cognitive restructuring techniques focus on efforts to identify and change negative thoughts or self-statements and irrational client beliefs into positive and rational thoughts (Ellis, 2011). The purpose of cognitive restructuring techniques is to reorganize various negative and irrational thoughts as an effort to reduce self-harm behavior in students.

Self-harm behavior can be reduced using cognitive restructuring techniques, this is in line with the results of the study, (Paramitayani, 2022) namely cognitive behavioral therapy with relaxation techniques, cognitive restructuring and self-management is quite effective in reducing self-harm behavior. Used when the subject is in an emotional state that tends to be unstable such as in a state of sadness, anger, despair or facing problems that cannot be expressed to others. This intervention is able to provide quite good results in reducing emotions that cannot be channeled and can change negative thoughts into positive thoughts so that it can reduce self-harm behavior.

This previous study has shown empirically that cognitive behavioral therapy, especially with relaxation techniques, cognitive restructuring, and self-management, is effective in reducing self-harm behavior. This provides strong support for the use of cognitive restructuring techniques as the main intervention in the study.

In addition to the relevant results of Paramitayani's research on the effectiveness of cognitive restructuring techniques to reduce self-harm behavior. Wahyudi's research results are also relevant, namely that cognitive behavior therapy counseling services with cognitive restructuring techniques are effective in reducing self-harm behavior in students, with students being known to be in the high category before being given intervention and being in the low category after being given intervention with cognitive behavior therapy counseling services with cognitive restructuring techniques. (Wahyudi et al., 2022) The results of this study indicate that cognitive behavior therapy with cognitive restructuring techniques can effectively reduce self-harm behavior in students. This shows that this technique can be a very useful intervention for students who experience similar problems.

The results of the study (Paramitayani, 2022) have (Wahyudi et al., 2022) revealed the significant influence of cognitive and environmental aspects on self-harm behavior, there are several gaps that need to be explored further to provide a deeper contribution to understanding this phenomenon. Paramitayani emphasizes more on the influence of a toxic environment, such as unsupportive parenting and family conflict, but does not explore how environmental-based interventions can prevent such behavior. On the other hand, Wahyudi identified the interaction between cognitive distortion and environmental pressure as triggers for self-harm, but this study has not fully explained other aspects underlying self-harm behavior. This gap also highlights the importance of understanding the causes of self-harm beyond cognitive and environmental aspects. Self-harm is not only based on environmental and cognitive aspects, but there are several other aspects that underlie self-harm behavior.

Based on the background, the author intends to provide individual counseling services with cognitive restructuring techniques to reduce self-harm behavior in students. Therefore, to answer the above phenomenon with the formulation of the research problem, namely whether cognitive restructuring techniques have an effect on reducing self-harm behavior in students. While the purpose of the study is to determine the effect of cognitive restructuring techniques to reduce self-harm behavior in students.

METHODS

The research method used is an experiment using a single subject design. The single subject design research method developed by (Sunanto et al., 2005) is a theory of modifying a person's behavior where the measurement of variables is carried out by the same object but with different conditions, namely between baseline conditions and experimental conditions (intervention). Baseline is a condition where the measurement of target behavior is carried out in a natural state before any intervention is given. Experimental conditions are conditions where an intervention has been given and the target behavior is measured in that condition.

The sample in this study were students with the highest questionnaire scores and had high self-harm behavior intensity. In this study, the researcher used a purposive sampling technique, namely sampling using several specific considerations according to the desired criteria to be able to determine the number of samples to be studied.

Data collection techniques using a measurement scale in the form of a questionnaire. The instrument used by researchers is a measurement scale to collect research data, a self-harm behavior scale will be used to measure self-harm behavior variables in students. The measurement scale is designed using an adaptation of the Likert scale in the form of a checklist with four answer choices, namely strongly agree (SS), agree (S), disagree (TS), and strongly disagree (STS), which researchers developed through content validity procedures and conducted trials (try out).

Validity and reliability tests were conducted as a measure of the validity of the instruments used. In the *self-harm behavior scale instrument*, 31 items were declared valid because the results of $R_{hitung} > R_{tabel}$, namely R_{hitung} more than 0.325. The reliability coefficient of the trial (try out) was 0.923. The reliability of a variable construct is said to be good if it has a value of more than 0.60, so it can be interpreted that the measurement scale of the research related to self-harm behavior is reliable.

Data analysis in single-subject experimental research uses 2 techniques, namely descriptive statistics and visual analysis techniques consisting of analysis in conditions and also analysis between conditions. Analysis in conditions is an activity of analyzing data to determine changes in data in a condition, both baseline conditions and intervention conditions. The components analyzed include (Sunanto et al., 2005). Analysis between conditions is carried out to see changes in data between conditions, researchers will analyze changes between baseline conditions (A) and intervention conditions (B).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study conducted at Al-Islam Krian High School. This study was conducted based on the intervention design that had been made, starting with the distribution of questionnaires to 60 students, then 1 subject was taken by purposive sampling from students with a questionnaire score of 101 who were included in the high self-harm behavior category. Then the research subjects were given intervention in the form of cognitive restructuring strategies in individual counseling services. After being given treatment, an overall evaluation was carried out on the treatment process given.

This study used a single-subject AB design, in the baseline phase, 3 meetings were conducted and showed that the questionnaire score results tended to be stable in the high category, which can be described in the following table.

Table 1. Baseline Scores

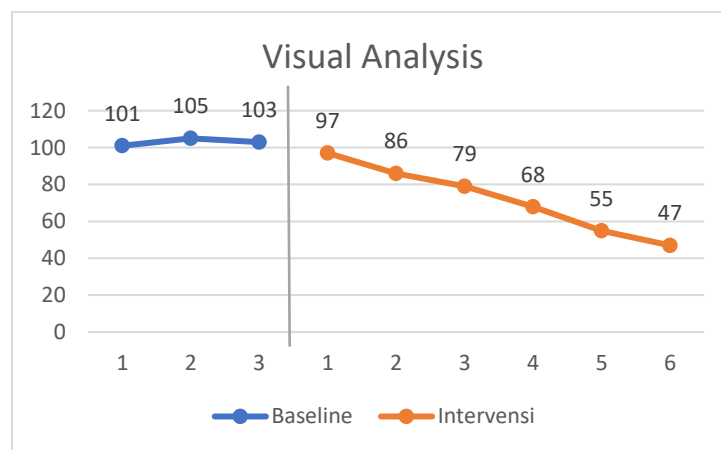
Baseline	Score	Percentage	Category
1	101	81.45%	High
2	105	84.67%	High
3	103	83.06%	High

Based on Table 1, the baseline results show consistently high self-harm behavior scores at each measurement phase. At baseline 1, a score of 101 is in the high category. This figure increased at baseline 2 with a score of 105 which is also in the high category. Although there was a slight decrease at baseline 3 with a score of 103, the level of self-harm behavior was still in the high category. This high consistency of scores indicates a consistent pattern of behavior, so intervention is needed. Intervention or treatment was carried out in 6 sessions using individual counseling with cognitive restructuring strategies.

Table 2. Intervention Scores

Intervention	Score	Percentage	Category
1	97	78.22%	High
2	86	69.35%	High
3	79	63.70%	Currently
4	68	54.83%	Currently
5	55	44.35%	Low
6	47	37.90%	Low

Based on Table 2, the results of the intervention show a significant decrease in self-harm behavior scores over time. In the first intervention, the score was at 97 with a high category. In the second intervention, there was a decrease in the score to 86 but remained in the high category. After the intervention was continued, the score continued to decrease and entered the moderate category in the third intervention with a score of 79 and 68. The most significant decrease was seen in the fifth and sixth interventions, where the scores dropped to 55 and 47 respectively, which were in the low category. This decrease in score indicates that the intervention given succeeded in gradually reducing self-harm behavior in the subjects, from the high category to the low category, which shows the effect of the approach applied.



Graph 1. Visual Analysis

Graph 1 shows a visual analysis of the data changes between the initial condition and the intervention. At the beginning, marked with the blue line, the values were relatively stable with a

range of 101 to 103. After the intervention, marked with the red line, there was a gradual decrease from 97 to 47. This graph illustrates the impact of the intervention which caused a consistent downward trend in the observed values. Visual analysis within conditions and between conditions, as follows:

Table 3. Analysis in Conditions


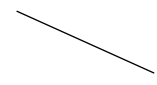

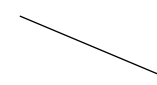
Condition	Baseline	Intervention
Condition Length	3	6
Directional Tendency Estimation	(+) 	(-) 
Stability Data Trends	66.66%	58.3%
Data Trace	(+) 	(-) 
Level and Range Stability	Variables 101-105	Variables 47-97
Level Change	103-101=2 (Up)	47-97= -50 (Down)

Table 3 shows the analysis of changes from baseline to intervention. The duration of the condition increased from 3 to 6, with the predicted trend direction changing from positive (+) to negative (-). Data stability decreased from 66.6% at baseline to 58.3% at intervention. The range of the data also changed, from 101–105 at baseline to 47–97 at intervention, with the change in level showing an increase of 2 at baseline and a decrease of -50 at intervention. This shows a significant difference between the two conditions.

Table 4. Inter-Condition Analysis


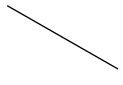
Condition Comparison	B/A
1. Number of variables changed	1
2. Changes in directional tendencies and their effects	(+) (-)  
3. Changes in trends and stability	Variable to Variable
4. Level Change	103-97 = +6
5. Overlapping presentation	16.6%

Table 4 shows the comparative analysis between B/A conditions. Only one variable was changed in this analysis. The change in trend direction shows a shift from positive (+) with a horizontal line in the initial condition to negative (-) with a downward line. The change in trend and stability move from one variable to another. The change in level shows an increase of +6 (103–97), while the percentage overlap between the two conditions is 16.6%. This analysis reflects a clear difference between the intervention and baseline conditions.

Based on the four aspects that underlie self-harm behavior. The aspects that play the most important role in encouraging self-harm behavior in clients are the affective aspect and also the environmental aspect. From the affective side, intense and difficult to control emotions are often the main triggers. Feelings such as deep sadness, pent-up anger, frustration, or emptiness encourage clients to hurt themselves as a way to vent these emotions. The inability of clients to express or channel their emotions in a more adaptive way makes self-harm a choice that is felt to be able to provide temporary relief from the emotional pressure they feel. The results of the study stated that in the affective factor, self-harm occurs because of problems and feeling the power of negative emotions or negative affection such as feeling disappointed, useless, feeling unwanted, angry at oneself or at others (Malumbot et al., 2022). According to (Patra et al., 2023) self-harm, actions are an effort to reduce negative emotions that are felt by oneself and overflow and to show anger within the individual.

Environmental aspects also play an important role in the emergence of self-harm behavior. Factors such as problems in the family, relationships with friends peers, and social pressure can increase a person's risk of self-harm. Zakaria stated that external factors such as problems in the family environment and relationships with peers can trigger self-harm behavior (Zakaria et al., 2020). When individuals get pressure from both family and peers. The result of getting pressure makes them feel that there is something wrong or lacking in themselves which eventually makes them give themselves and try to hurt themselves. This is in line with the results of research (Hakim & Sukmawati, 2023) on individuals who experience emotional stress tend to do self-harm behavior, although it is still in the moderate self-harm category.

Environmental aspects play a significant role in influencing self-harm behavior, especially in adolescents who face social pressure. Based on research by (Atiyah et al., 2024) an unsupportive social environment, such as rejection from peers, can trigger the emergence of self-harm behavior as a form of emotional release. This rejection creates feelings of isolation, low self-esteem, and being unwanted, which can worsen the individual's mental condition. The results of observations by guidance and counseling teachers and sociometry showing that the subject experienced rejection from his friends are concrete evidence that lack of social acceptance contributes to the development of this behavior. This is in line with the results of research by (Santosa & Sugiarti, 2022) confirming that a social environment full of rejection increases the risk of self-harm behavior as a mechanism to reduce psychological stress. In the case of the observed subject, the results of sociometry showing rejection from friends provide an overview of the importance of the role of interpersonal relationships in building psychological well-being. Subjects who feel a loss of security and social support, so that self-harm behavior becomes a way to divert attention from emotional pain.

The interaction between affective and environmental aspects creates complex conditions for individuals. When individuals experience stress from the school environment and do not have adequate emotional support, they may feel overwhelmed by their negative emotions. Without healthy coping strategies, individuals may see self-harm as the only way to deal with these feelings.

Research by (Izzah & Ariana, 2022) shows that loneliness and emotional distress in adolescents are closely related to self-harm behavior. They found that adolescents who feel lonely and experience emotional distress tend to be more susceptible to self-harm behavior.

Self-harm behavior is based on negative thoughts that lead individuals to hurt themselves in order to relieve negative emotions that arise from the environment, one of the factors that drives individuals to do self-harm behavior is the desire and thoughts that occur automatically when individuals are in a negative emotional state so that cognitive behavior therapy counseling services are needed with cognitive restructuring techniques to reorganize various irrational negative thoughts as an effort to reduce self-harm behavior in students. According to the results of the study, (Mirzaian et al., 2023) it was found that cognitive behavior therapy is effective in reducing rumination in adolescents who do self-harm without suicidal intentions, which shows the important role of cognitive restructuring in overcoming negative thoughts.

Factors causing self-harm as a form of emotional coping or emotion-focused coping. When individuals face strong stress, anxiety, or emotional pain, they may find it difficult to deal with it directly. Self-harm often appears as a way to divert emotional pain into physical pain that is easier to feel and control. In this case, self-harm functions as an escape mechanism, although it only provides temporary relief from the pressing feelings. Based on coping theory, individuals who do not have effective or adaptive coping skills tend to be more susceptible to using this self-destructive behavior (Nock, 2014).

In addition, low self-esteem is a significant factor in self-harming behavior. Individuals with low self-esteem often feel that they are worthless or unworthy of attention or support from others. This sense of unworthiness can exacerbate their emotional state, prompting them to seek ways to express their difficult feelings. put it into words. Self-harm becomes a way to express that pain. This process can also worsen bad feelings about oneself because individuals feel that self-destructive behavior is a form of self-punishment. Self-esteem theory suggests that individuals with low self-esteem are more likely to feel anxious, angry, or depressed, which makes them more likely to engage in self-harm behaviors as a way to cope with these negative feelings (Beck, 2011). Self-harm becomes a way for them to express pent-up emotional pain, and in some cases, a form of self-punishment due to feelings of guilt or dissatisfaction with themselves (Erlangsen, 2022).

In addition to low self-esteem, family problems can also play a big role in triggering self-harm behavior. Family conflict, lack of emotional support, or even domestic violence can cause individuals to feel isolated, unsafe, and misunderstood. Individuals may find it difficult to talk about their feelings with others, including family members who are supposed to provide support. As a result, they vent their feelings of distress through self-harm as a way to cope with the loneliness and hopelessness they feel. Children or adolescents who grow up in a family environment conflicted or violent often feel they do not have a safe place to express their feelings, which can worsen emotional conditions and increase the likelihood of self-harm behavior. Research by (Joiner, 2020) reveals that family problems are one of the main predictors of self-harm behavior in adolescents.

Based on the results of the study, there are differences in self-harm behavior before and after intervention (treatment) with individual counseling services using cognitive restructuring techniques to reduce self-harm behavior. Self-harm is behavior that leads to suicide even though the individual does not intend to commit suicide. In agreement with (Klonsky et al., 2011) Self-

harm behavior is defined as an action taken by individuals when facing or overcoming emotional pressure, stress, or difficult feelings by hurting and harming themselves without intending to commit suicide.

Based on the findings of researchers in the field, the cause of self-harm in clients is due to negative thinking. Clients often overgeneralize themselves, overpersonalize themselves and Poor communication patterns with parents can also trigger self-harm behavior. Self-harm behavior becomes a coping mechanism chosen by clients to release their anxiety and also vent their emotions. This is in line with research conducted by (Zakaria et al., 2020) namely the inability of individuals to express their negative emotions with words triggers individuals to commit self-harm.

Related to the problems experienced by the client, the researcher provides individual counseling services. Individual counseling is a form of assistance provided by a counselor to solve a client's problem, with the aim of resolving the client's problem. In line with the opinion (Pratama et al., 2022) individual counseling is an effort to help students manage intense emotions, such as anxiety and anger, which can interfere with their emotional well-being. To reduce self-harm behavior, individual counseling using cognitive restructuring techniques has been shown to be effective. This technique focuses on helping individuals identify and change negative thought patterns that trigger self-destructive behavior. In counseling, individuals are trained to recognize destructive thoughts that arise when facing stress, and are taught more realistic and adaptive ways of thinking. Recent research suggests that this approach can reduce symptoms of self-harm behavior by providing individuals with tools to manage their feelings in a healthier and more constructive way.

The results of individual counseling with cognitive restructuring techniques show significant behavioral changes in individuals who previously often self-harmed. Within a certain period of time after undergoing counseling, individuals involved in cognitive therapy experienced a decrease in the frequency of self-harm behavior, as well as an improvement in how they deal with stress and negative feelings. They were better able to identify triggers for negative emotions and find healthier ways to deal with them. This is reflected in research by (Brown et al., 2023) which shows that the use of cognitive techniques in counseling can help individuals not only reduce self-destructive behavior, but also improve their emotional management skills and improve their overall self-esteem. This type of intervention provides an opportunity for individuals to change their mindset and achieve better emotional well-being.

SUMMARY

Conclusion

This study shows that cognitive restructuring techniques in individual counseling are effective in reducing self-harm behavior in students. This is evidenced by a decrease in self-harm behavior scores from high to low after intervention, as reflected in the analysis in conditions and between conditions that show a negative trend. In addition, these changes are also supported by field findings that identify that affective and environmental aspects greatly influence the emergence of self-harm behavior, where cognitive restructuring is able to help individuals manage negative emotions and replace irrational thinking patterns with rational ones. Thus, cognitive restructuring techniques can be used as an effective alternative intervention in counseling services to help students overcome self-harm behavior.

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Recommendations

This research shows that there are positive changes, therefore the researcher provides suggestions to several parties. The suggestions are as follows:

1. For guidance and counseling teachers, it is expected to be able to implement cognitive restructuring techniques more widely in individual counseling sessions. As a preventive effort, BK teachers are more active in detecting early symptoms of self-harm behavior in students and providing early intervention.
2. For students, it is expected to be more open in participating in counseling sessions, especially when facing emotional problems that can affect their psychological well-being.
3. For further researchers, they can add other variables and explore other techniques that can be combined with cognitive restructuring techniques to reduce self-harm behavior.

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