

## STRENGTHENING MENTAL HEALTH OF PARENTS THROUGH VIOLENCE PREVENTION EDUCATION PROGRAM

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**Abstract:**

This educational program related to mental health aims to improve parents' mental health so that they have good psychological well-being and increase parents' understanding regarding the impact of violence on children's development. Parents who have good mental health will be happy individuals, have no symptoms of depression, have life satisfaction and are able to develop themselves well and also educate their children optimally so that children do not experience violence from their own parents. This educational program uses an educational and practical seminar approach to improve parents' mental health. The sample in this educational program was 25 parents in Cihanjawar Village, Bojong Purwakarta District. The research results showed that around 85% of parents participated in this educational program, parents felt calmer, more comfortable and relieved because in this mental health practice there was a release of negative emotions in the form of anger, annoyance, disappointment either due to conflicts with other people or while caring for their children. With educational programs related to mental health to prevent violence against children, this will positively improve parents' mental health so that parents can increase their self-awareness and control themselves in educating, caring for and guiding their children.

**Keywords:** *mental health, parents, violence*

**Abstrak:**

Program edukasi terkait kesehatan mental ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kesehatan mental orangtua agar memiliki kesejahteraan psikologis yang baik dan meningkatkan pemahaman orangtua terkait dampak kekerasan terhadap perkembangan anak. Orangtua yang memiliki kesehatan mental yang baik akan menjadi individu yang bahagia, tidak memiliki gejala depresi, memiliki kepuasan hidup serta mampu mengembangkan diri dengan baik dan juga mendidik anak dengan optimal sehingga anak tidak mengalami kekerasan dari orangtuanya sendiri. Program edukasi ini menggunakan pendekatan seminar edukasi dan praktik untuk meningkatkan Kesehatan mental orangtua. Sample dalam program edukasi ini adalah orangtua yang berada di Desa Cihanjawar, Kecamatan Bojong Purwakarta sebanyak 25 orang. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan sekitar 85% setelah orangtua mengikuti program edukasi ini, orangtua merasa lebih tenang, nyaman dan lega karena dalam praktik kesehatan mental ini terdapat pelepasan emosi negatif berupa marah, kesal, kecewa baik karena konflik dengan orang lain ataupun selama mengasuh anak-anaknya. Dengan program edukasi terkait Kesehatan mental untuk mencegah kekerasan kepada anak ini positif meningkatkan Kesehatan mental orangtua sehingga para orangtua dapat meningkatkan kesadaran diri dan mengontrol dirinya dalam mendidik, mengasuh dan membimbing anak-anaknya.

**Kata Kunci:** *kesehatan mental, orang tua, kekerasan*

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, parents have been consistently more likely to report experiencing high levels of stress compared to other adults.<sup>15</sup> In 2023, 33% of parents reported high levels of stress in the past month compared to 20% of other adults (American Psychological Association, 2024).

Common mental health problems can undermine people's self-worth and lead to the erosion of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and resilience (Stem, 2023). The pathway from parental mental health problems to child maltreatment has been attributed to a low sense of personal mastery (Slack, Kristen Shoo, 2011) and to feelings of despair, a sense of hopelessness, and poor self-esteem (David, 2021). Individuals with depression may have less self-efficacy (Bentley, Gabriella, 2022) and attention biased towards more negative information (Beevers, Christopher G, 2015) which has been shown to contribute to high levels of parenting stress and increase the risk of child maltreatment (Chen, Chen, 2023) Mothers' poor mental health has been associated with low perceived parental self-efficacy (Aylward, Paul, and Anne Sved Williams. 2023) and low maternal confidence (Arante, Flavia, 2019) Alternatively, building perceived parental self-efficacy can positively influence healthy parenting practices (Jones, Tracy L., and Ronald J. Prinz. 2005).

A lack of social support (both emotional and practical) and social isolation for parents and caregivers has been shown to negatively influence their mental health (Office of the Surgeon General 2024). For instance, low levels of practical support during pregnancy and the first year after childbirth can be a risk factor for poor maternal mental health (Fisher et al. 2012). Single parents are particularly vulnerable to chronic stress and depression due to sole caregiving responsibilities and a lack of support, which can negatively impact their mental health and well-being (Slack, Kristen Shook, 2011). Additionally, mothers migrating to higher-income countries are at increased risk of poor maternal mental health, including postpartum depression, due to social isolation and loneliness, particularly where there are language difficulties (Wittkowski, Anja, Sonia Patel, and John R, 2017).

Parental mental health conditions can have far-reaching and profound implications for children, families as a whole, and for society, including increased health care costs and reduced economic productivity (Brown, 2021). Parental mental health can influence the emotional climate, responsiveness, and consistency of caregiving at home, all of which are crucial for a child's emotional and cognitive development. Living with a household member, such as a parent or caregiver, with a mental health condition or substance misuse are among the originally studied adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) (Felitti, 1998). ACEs are linked to worse mental, physical, and behavioral health outcomes across the lifespan of a child (Merrick, 2019). Importantly, how a parent's or caregiver's mental health affects their behavior and functioning (e.g., does it change the amount or frequency of caregiving provided) is a critical factor in determining how it impacts a child (Godman, 1999). On the other hand, an adult's mental health challenges may not have a negative impact on a child if they do not disrupt the child's sense of safety, stability, support, and bonding with parents or caregivers.

The evidence suggests that the relationship between common mental health problems among parents and caregivers and child maltreatment is complex, and it needs to be considered in the context of the wider environment and other risk factors, especially IPV (Sim and England 2009). The potential pathways between the

poor mental health of parents and caregivers and their use of child maltreatment also suggest that efforts to improve the mental health and well-being of parents and caregivers should be considered as part of a comprehensive violence prevention strategy. In this section, we consider how VAC prevention programmes, and programmes targeting parents at risk of poor mental health, influence parents' and caregivers' mental health, as well as opportunities to strengthen these programmes' ability to address risk factors and meet the mental health needs of parents and caregivers.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This community service activity involved cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of the participants, consisting of 20 parents and their children in Cihanjawar villages. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on the activity's goal of optimizing the mental health of parents and early childhood children. Therefore, this activity invited parents of young children, other caregivers such as grandparents or relatives, as well as early childhood educators. The event was presented interactively in the form of psychoeducation using the joyful learning method. Psychoeducation is a form of intervention that can be provided to anyone, including individuals, families, and groups, and aims to identify challenges faced, develop existing support resources, and develop subject skills or coping skills in facing challenges (Lukens & Mcfarlane, 2004).

Psychoeducation is delivered using the joyful learning method, a learning model that creates enjoyable and relaxed teaching and learning activities, interspersed with humor, cheerleading, icebreakers, and other interactive activities to minimize tension during the teaching and learning process (Waterworth, 2020). The hope is that the joyful learning method can motivate participants to learn without feeling tense.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This psychoeducation session featured two expert lecturers who provided lectures, discussions, and training to the participants. The first session was opened by Dr. Nur Aisah Jamil, MPd, who presented on the Impact of Parenting and Violence on Children. The second session was continued by Nadya Yulianty S, S.Psi., M.Pd., a Psychology lecturer, who taught and practiced psychotherapy to improve parental mental health. These two sessions provided parents with an understanding and practice in regulating their emotions while caring for and supporting their children.

Despite the less-than-ideal social situation, inadequate education, and several other challenges, the participants showed enthusiasm throughout the activity, especially during the presentation of materials and the practical experience of creating play-and-learn facilities. Participants expressed that they gained new knowledge and experience. Each participant understood the application of good parenting practices, such as how to communicate with children appropriately for their age, how to encourage children to play while learning, always striving to fulfill children's rights, and protecting children from violence.

It is hoped that the psychoeducation provided will continue to have a positive and sustainable impact in optimizing the mental health of parents and young children in Cihanjawar Village. Hopefully, this activity can continue to be developed to become even better and inspire others to optimize the mental health of parents and young children throughout Indonesia.

Increased motivation and positive attitudes were found through observations and interviews, indicating a positive impact of the joyful learning-based psychoeducational approach. The active involvement of participants, particularly in parenting practices, was a key factor in the success of this program. However, this study also identified several limitations, including the low level of education of participants, which affected their understanding of the material, and limitations in measuring long-term impacts.

These findings emphasize the importance of interactive approaches such as joyful learning-based psychoeducation in supporting family empowerment efforts in parenting. This program has the potential to improve the quality of parenting and the mental health of both parents and children.

## CONCLUSION

The psychoeducation provided will continue to have a positive and sustainable impact in optimizing the mental health of parents and young children in Cihanjawar Village. Hopefully, this activity can continue to be developed to become even better and inspire others to To improve the effectiveness of future programs, it is recommended that psychoeducational activities be tailored to the educational level of participants and that more fathers be involved in the parenting process. Further research is needed to evaluate the long-term impact of this program and to develop more appropriate evaluation methods to measure outcomes more accurately.

One limitation of this study is the low educational level of the participants, which may have affected their understanding of the material presented. The limited sample size also limits the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Further research with more comprehensive methods and a larger sample size is needed to confirm the results of this study.

Overall, this study contributes to the understanding of the importance of nonviolent parenting in rural communities, particularly in the context of parent and child mental health. This program can serve as a model for broader interventions to improve parental mental health in areas with challenging social and geographic conditions.

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