

Original Article

Support Group Intervention on Self-Awareness and Parental Coping Strategies as an Effort to Prevent Sexual Violence in Children

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ABSTRACT

Background: *The victims, primarily female children, have suffered sexual abuse, often perpetrated by individuals known to them, such as neighbors or acquaintances. In interviews with concerned parents regarding ongoing cases of sexual abuse, they expressed fears about their children falling victim to such incidents.. The research aim was to assess the effectiveness of support group interventions in enhancing self-awareness and parental coping strategies as preventive measures against child sexual abuse.*


Methods: *The study's main objective is to evaluate the impact of Support Groups in improving Self-Awareness and Parental Coping Strategies. It employed a quasi-experimental design using a non-equivalent group pre-test and post-test methodology, with one group as the control and the other as the experimental group. The study included 70 respondents in the intervention group and an equal number in the control group, selected through purposive sampling. Research instruments comprised the Revised Ways of Coping Scale questionnaire for coping strategies and a self-awareness questionnaire. Non-parametric data analysis was conducted using SPSS, specifically the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test.*

Results: *Results of the normality test indicated that both the intervention and control groups had p-values of less than 0.05 for coping strategies (0.002 for the intervention group and 0.003 for the control group) and self-awareness (0.000 for both groups), suggesting non-normal data distribution. Consequently, non-parametric statistical analysis was applied with SPSS, and a significance level was set at $p < 0.05$. The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test results for the intervention group were 0.000 (coping strategies) and 0.000 (self-awareness), signifying a significant difference in average pretest and posttest scores within the intervention group. Conversely, the control group's Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test results were 0.953 (coping strategies) and 0.317 (self-awareness), indicating no significant difference in average pretest and posttest scores within the control group.*

Conclusion: *Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be deduced that support group interventions positively impact the enhancement of parental coping strategies and self-awareness in the endeavor to prevent child sexual abuse.*

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
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Introduction

Sexual violence against children constitutes a grave public health concern within society. Both the United States and England grapple with an estimated annual count of approximately 500,000 children facing the horrors of sexual violence. Officially reported cases stand at 103,000, while around 50,000 children remain at risk of experiencing such abuse ([Kewley & Barlow, 2020](#)) and ([Karsna, 2022](#)). In contrast, developing countries suffer a higher incidence of sexual violence targeting girls compared to their developed counterparts ([Xianguo Qu et al., 2022](#)). Notably, the situation in Indonesia has taken a distressing turn, with the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA) revealing a significant surge in cases. In 2021, reported cases reached 14,517, further escalating to 16,106 in 2022. Shockingly, sexual violence dominates the reported incidents, accounting for 9,588 cases. A staggering 53% of these abuses occur within the confines of the home, with perpetrators often identified as friends or acquaintances (29%) and even parents (21%) ([Astungkoro, R, 2023](#)). In 2022, the provinces registering the highest number of complaints about child victims of sexual violence were DKI Jakarta, with 56 complaints, and East Java Province, with 39 complaints ([Astungkoro, R, 2023](#)).

According to a report from the Integrated Service Center for the Protection of Women and Children (P2TP2A) in the city of Probolinggo, the data indicates an anticipated rise of 25 cases of child abuse for the year 2022. The majority of these victims are female, and they typically suffer from instances of sexual violence. Additionally, the individuals responsible for these acts are often acquaintances or

neighbors known to the victims. ([Muhammad Fahmi, 2023](#)). Sexual violence inflicted upon children can result in profound consequences. The victim may endure severe psychological turmoil, including trauma, difficulties in trusting others, depression, self-harm tendencies, diminished self-esteem and self-confidence, overwhelming guilt, and a penchant for isolation. Furthermore, the enduring effects of sexual abuse extend into adulthood, manifesting as enduring mental health challenges, strained relationships with parents, an elevated risk of perpetrating violence against others, and difficulties in a child's future adaptation ([Rakhmawati et al., 2020](#)) and ([Ratnaningsih, 2019](#)).

The escalating instances of child sexual violence demand concerted attention from various stakeholders, with parents playing a crucial role in child-rearing. Parental engagement is indispensable in safeguarding children against sexual violence. Parents should be motivated to remain vigilant for any behavioral changes in their children. This motivation can be cultivated through firsthand experiences or information from external sources. This information aims to bolster parental self-awareness and equip them with effective coping mechanisms to avert sexual violence against children, particularly among parents living in suburban areas who may lack knowledge about cases of sexual abuse.

Based on interviews with parents, it has become apparent that they harbor genuine concerns about the possibility of their child becoming a victim. Moreover, they have expressed a lack of access to information regarding the prevention of sexual violence and its repercussions. Given this contextual backdrop, it becomes evident that research into support group interventions is a vital endeavor. Such research endeavors can empower parents,

enhancing their self-awareness and furnishing them with the tools to prevent sexual violence against children effectively. It is worth noting that this specific research gap has yet to be addressed.

Methods

The research conducted in this study follows a quantitative approach, employing a quasi-experimental research design with a control group. This design is chosen to explore potential causal relationships within the intervention group. In the intervention group, participants received a specific treatment, followed by pretest and post-test assessments, while the control group underwent pretest and post-test assessments without any intervention (Notoatmodjo S, 2012). The quasi-experimental methodology's primary objective is to assess the effectiveness of support group interventions aimed at enhancing self-awareness and parental

coping strategies as a preventive measure against child sexual violence. The study's respondents were mothers with children aged 3-6 years. Sampling was performed using purposive sampling, ensuring that the selected sample met predetermined criteria to represent the broader population (Dharma, 2011). The study involved 140 participants: 70 in the intervention group and 70 in the control group. Data collection tools included a questionnaire on respondent characteristics, a coping strategy questionnaire utilizing the Revised Ways of Coping Scale, and a self-awareness questionnaire (Arabsarhangi & Noroozi, 2014). Data analysis encompassed both univariate and bivariate analyses, with the latter employing the Wilcoxon test due to non-normal data distribution as indicated by a significance value of $p < 0.05$ during the normality test. Ethical Clearance from STIKes Hafshawaty Zainul Hasan Islamic Boarding School, Probolinggo, Indonesia.

Results

The results of the research that has been carried out are shown in a table, namely a table of frequency distribution data based on age, occupation, education level, marital status, ethnicity, coping strategies, and parental self-awareness.

Table 1 Frequency distribution based on age, occupation, education level, marital status, parent's ethnicity

No	Characteristics	Intervention Group		Control Group	
		N	%	N	%
1	Age				
	19-23 years	13	19	17	24
	24-28 years	26	37	22	31
	29-33 years	21	30	24	34
	34-38 years	10	14	7	10
	Total	70	100	70	100
2	Work				
	Housewife	36	51	33	47
	Self-employed	19	27	20	29
	Private employees	13	19	12	17



No	Characteristics	Intervention Group		Control Group	
		N	%	N	%
	Government employees	2	3	5	7
	Total	70	100	70	100
3	Level of education				
	No school	8	11	11	16
	Elementary school	18	26	22	31
	Junior high school	25	36	23	33
	Senior high school	17	24	13	19
	University	2	3	1	1
	Total	70	100	70	100
4	Marital Status				
	Marry	67	96	61	87
	Divorced	3	4	9	13
	Total	70	100	70	100
5	Ethnic				
	Java	27	39	23	33
	Madurese	43	61	47	67
	Amount	70	100	70	100

As depicted in Table 1 above, it is evident that the average age of respondents falls within the 29-38 years age bracket. Specifically, 26 respondents (37%) in the intervention group and 24 respondents (34%) in the control group within this age range, signifying early adulthood. On average, most respondents were not employed and were primarily homemakers. In the intervention group, 36 respondents (51%) fell into this category, whereas in the control group, 33 respondents (47%) shared a similar employment status. Furthermore, a significant proportion of respondents had completed their education at the junior high school level, with 25 respondents (36%) in the intervention group and 23 (33%) in the control group falling into this educational category. Regarding marital status, most respondents in both groups were married, comprising 67 respondents (96%) in the intervention group and 61 respondents (87%) in the control group. Lastly, the predominant ethnic background among respondents was Madurese, constituting 43 respondents

(61%) in the intervention group and 47 respondents (67%) in the control group.

Table 2 Effect of Support Group on Coping Strategies in the Intervention Group (n=70)

Coping strategy	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	P value
Before	70	31,62	1581,00	0,000
After				

Information : p value : Uji Wilcoxon, signifikan (0,05); Z tabel = 1,96

Derived from the data presented in Table 2 above, it is evident that the average enhancement in coping strategies amounts to 31.62, with a total of 1581.00 positive ratings for coping strategies observed within the intervention group. The statistical analysis employing the Wilcoxon test yielded a p-value of 0.000, which falls below the predetermined significance threshold of 0.05. This outcome signifies a substantial disparity between coping



strategy levels before and after the intervention. Consequently, it can be inferred that the implementation of the support group intervention does indeed have an impact on enhancing parents' coping strategies as part of their efforts to prevent child sexual violence within the intervention group.

Table 3 Effect of Support Group on Coping Strategies in the Control Group (n=70)

Coping strategy	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	P value
Before	70	5,75	23,00	0,953
After				

Information : p value : Uji Wilcoxon, signifikan (0,05); Z tabel = 1,96

The data in Table 3 above shows that the average coping strategy score is 5.75, with a cumulative count of 23.00 positive ratings for coping strategies recorded within the intervention group. Upon subjecting the data to statistical analysis using the Wilcoxon test, the resulting p-value is 0.953, which exceeds the predetermined significance level of 0.05. This outcome signifies a lack of significant discrepancy between coping strategy levels before and after the intervention. Therefore, it can be deduced that the implementation of the support group intervention did not exert any influence on enhancing parents' coping strategies as part of their efforts to prevent child sexual violence within the control group.

Table 4 Effect of Support Group on Self-Awareness in the Intervention Group (n=70)

Self Awareness	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	P value
Before	70	13,50	351,00	0,000
After				

After

Information : p value : Uji Wilcoxon, signifikan (0,05); Z tabel = 1,96

Derived from the data presented in Table 4 above, it is evident that the average augmentation in self-awareness amounts to 13.50, with a total of 351.00 positive ratings for coping strategies observed within the intervention group. The Wilcoxon test statistical analysis yielded a p-value of 0.000, less than the predefined significance level of 0.05. This outcome signifies a significant disparity between self-awareness levels before and after the intervention. Consequently, it can be inferred that the implementation of the support group intervention indeed exerts an influence on enhancing parents' self-awareness as part of their efforts to prevent child sexual violence within the intervention group.

Table 5 Effect of Support Group on Self-Awareness in the Control Group (n=70)

Self Awareness	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	P value
Before	70	2,50	7,50	0,317
After				

Information : p value : Uji Wilcoxon, signifikan (0,05); Z tabel = 1,96

As depicted in the table provided in the preceding section, the average self-awareness score is 2.50, and the count of positive ratings for coping strategies is 7.50 within the control group. Upon conducting statistical tests using the Wilcoxon test, the p-value of 0.317 exceeds the significance threshold of 0.05. This outcome indicates no noteworthy disparity between self-awareness levels before and after the



intervention. Consequently, it can be deduced that the implementation of the support group intervention did not yield a significant impact on enhancing parents' self-awareness as part of their efforts to prevent child sexual violence within the control group.

Discussion

The characterization of respondents in this study encompasses various aspects, including age, occupation, education level, marital status, and ethnicity, as well as their coping strategies and parental self-awareness. The study's findings revealed that most respondents in the intervention and control groups fell within the age bracket of 29-38 years, corresponding to early adulthood. A quest marks this life stage for truth and solutions to challenges. Early adulthood is also a reproductive phase, aligning with research indicating that adults in this stage tend to rely more on coping strategies to address problems. Moreover, coping strategies tend to improve with age. One specific coping strategy employed by parents in their endeavor to prevent child sexual violence is seeking social support, such as acquiring information on preventing child sexual abuse ([Owens, 2022](#)). The age of an individual can also have an impact on their self-awareness. This aligns with research findings indicating that as people mature into adulthood, their self-awareness evolves in tandem with their comprehension of their present circumstances and their recognition of their inner capabilities to fulfill their roles in line with their self-concept. One such role that can be assumed is that of a parent who safeguards their children from sexual violence ([London et al., 2023](#)).

Based on the research findings, it was observed that most respondents in both the intervention and control groups were

primarily homemakers. Consequently, these respondents had limited opportunities to socialize outside their homes, resulting in restricted friendships and minimal interaction. This lack of interaction led to a shortage of crucial information, such as awareness of the prevalence of child sexual violence and the necessary preventive measures. The limited social interaction also had repercussions on the coping strategies employed and the respondents' overall self-awareness in addressing child sexual violence. The research outcomes demonstrate that self-awareness is pivotal in helping individuals clarify their values, thoughts, emotions, behaviors, strengths, and weaknesses. It enables them to acknowledge their impact on others and fosters a sense of contentment and improved interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, individuals with self-awareness exhibit better self-control, empathy towards those with differing perspectives, and a heightened understanding of others' viewpoints ([Helwig et al., 2001](#)). The interactions can impact the coping strategies employed, such as the availability of support from others in dealing with the challenges encountered ([Y. Li et al., 2023](#)).

The participants in this study, on average, had completed junior high school as their highest level of education. Education here pertains to formal learning within various educational institutions, encompassing different educational tiers. It is anticipated that individuals with a higher level of education will exhibit more advanced cognitive development. This, in turn, is expected to enhance their capacity to absorb information effectively, enabling them to identify stressors and address their challenges while fostering greater awareness in handling various situations or issues.

Regarding marital status, the data from this study indicates that most respondents are married. Marital status can be correlated with the level of family support. Evaluating how individuals cope in the context of positive family communication dynamics and overall satisfaction is paramount. Families facing heightened difficulties tend to exhibit suboptimal family functioning, whereas more prosperous families generally demonstrate superior family dynamics ([Allison Crowe and Kevin P. Lyness, 2014](#)). Married respondents tend to receive support from their families, which can positively impact their ability to address issues related to child sexual violence. Enhanced self-awareness is associated with making sound decisions.

Based on the accumulated bivariate tests within the intervention group, significant differences are observed in coping strategies and self-awareness before and after participating in the support group intervention. The p-values of 0.000 (coping strategy) and 0.000 (self-awareness) are both less than the significance level of 0.05, indicating that the support group intervention has a discernible influence on parents' coping strategies and self-awareness. In contrast, the cumulative bivariate test outcomes within the control group revealed no statistically significant differences in coping strategies and self-awareness before and after the support group intervention. The p-values of 0.953 (coping strategy) and 0.317 (self-awareness) exceeded the significance level of 0.05, concluding that the support group intervention did not influence parents' coping strategies and self-awareness in this group.

The research findings underscore the impact of support group intervention on enhancing parents' coping strategies and respondents' self-awareness in their efforts

to prevent child sexual violence. Support group intervention serves as a therapeutic approach that reduces anxiety and depression levels while augmenting an individual's coping skills and self-awareness. This form of supportive therapy is an integral facet of psychotherapy, administered individually or in a group setting. It aids individuals in self-evaluation, gaining fresh perspectives, and autonomously shaping their attitudes toward the future. Within a support group, participants share their experiences to offer mutual support, harness the potential of group members, and boost their self-confidence, enabling them to effectively address stress-related issues by focusing on rectifying dysfunctional thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Support groups have the objective of fostering proficient coping abilities and promoting heightened self-awareness when confronted with various challenges, including instances of child sexual violence. Being part of a group confronting similar issues offers individuals within that group a chance to glean insights from one another and mutually reinforce one another. Supportive group therapy facilitates the exchange of information and experiences among its members, allowing everyone to voice their concerns, whether past or present ([Rahayu & Dinni, 2021](#)). Participation in support groups can enhance an individual's emotional health, foster interactive dynamics, and offer emotional assistance that encourages open and honest expression of feelings ([Y. Li et al., 2023](#)) ([Worrall et al., 2018](#)).

Support group therapy has demonstrated its capacity to transform participants positively. These individuals have reported feeling more at ease and composed after engaging in these sessions, as they were encouraged to express their emotions to one another openly. Respondents were allowed to assess their

strengths and weaknesses, with the researcher employing techniques such as rationalization and reframing. Additionally, researchers provided affirmation to the respondents and guided them in viewing their challenges from different perspectives, urging them to recognize their inherent potential and strengths alongside their weaknesses. Participants were encouraged to nurture their capabilities by recognizing the unique potential of each respondent. The researcher also supplied motivation to the participants, emphasizing that the difficulties or problems they encountered were not unique to them and that others faced similar challenges. Furthermore, participants were encouraged to respond judiciously to their problems, which included embracing openness by not internalizing their issues and actively seeking assistance to obtain more accurate information from others.

Researchers play a pivotal role in executing support group interventions, necessitating the establishment of strong rapport with participants to enhance their comfort and maximize the effectiveness of the interventions. This aligns with research affirming that support group interventions can bolster an individual's self-assurance and diminish deviant behavior. The elevation in self-confidence results from the supportive environment within the group and the process of discussion and guidance, ultimately influencing an individual's behavioral performance and empowering them to tackle problems with greater self-assurance ([Kusumawardani et al., 2020](#)).

Additional research has indicated that interventions conducted through support groups can positively impact managing adverse health conditions. Furthermore, they can enhance an individual's ability to adapt more effectively while also serving as a preventive measure against the detrimental effects of low resilience on

one's mental well-being ([Brunelli et al., 2016](#)) ([F. Li et al., 2021](#)). Support groups offer a valuable chance to boost self-assurance in individuals facing various challenges. They prove beneficial in enhancing an individual's self-esteem, aspirations, and overall sense of well-being. The camaraderie within these groups is a pivotal factor in augmenting the perceived quality of social support, which is instrumental in addressing individuals' issues ([Bjorlykhaug et al., 2022](#)).

Conclusion

Based on the research findings and the subsequent discussion, it can be deduced that support group interventions have a discernible impact on parents' coping strategies and self-awareness, with a significance level represented by a p-value of less than 0.05, specifically $0.000 < 0.05$. The outcomes, documented through observations during these activities, encompassing discussions and follow-up sessions, predominantly reflect positive changes reported by most respondents who participated in support group activities. Given the evident benefits of this approach, it is strongly recommended that its implementation be expanded to reach a broader audience. Educational institutions could collaborate with higher education establishments to establish support programs to assist students with psychological issues. Furthermore, schools can collaborate with parents who are relevant to the students, providing support and guidance to ensure that students feel comfortable expressing their concerns. Additionally, it is anticipated that respondents will harness group interactions as a platform for sharing experiences and mutual support. It is hoped that future researchers considering the utilization of support group therapy can tailor their interventions to students'

parents, both male and female, addressing psychological or other issues and encompassing a larger sample size.

Authors Contributions

Nurul Laili contributed to crafting the background and facilitating the discussion, Yulia Rachmawati Hasanah played a pivotal role in conducting literature research and establishing the research methodology, while Erna Handayani was responsible for data tabulation and analysis.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare that necessitate disclosure. All co-authors have thoroughly reviewed and endorsed the manuscript, and there are no financial conflicts of interest to report. This submission is confirmed as an original work and is not concurrently being assessed by any other publication.

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