

Gestalt Therapy: The Use of Language to Increase Self-Openness in Ex-Prostitute's Children at Dolly Surabaya

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ABSTRACT

Children of ex-prostitutes at ex-localization Dolly tend to be closed-off because of the shame they hold over the past of their parent. The purpose of this research is to identify the effectiveness of Gestalt counseling based on word choices to improve self-disclosure with said children. This research is a qualitative, and a case studies approach was chosen. Case studies were selected with descriptive models. The data analysis technique used was time series analysis, and the instruments were interview, observation, and checklist. This research was conducted on two participants of different genders. The result is that self-disclosure can be improved by using Gestalt therapy based on word choice. There were good levels of development with self-disclosure during each session. It could be considered a result of using encouraging language, not cornering or pressuring the child and maintaining a focus on how to resolve the issue. The caring attitudes from the counselor is also an important factor in improving their self-disclosure.

Keywords: *Gestalt therapy, word choice, self-disclosure, child, ex-prostitute*

1. INTRODUCTION

UNICEF (2015) research show that children begin to determine their future in their teen years. Tirtonegoro (2013) said that in this phase, children need love and care from their parents so that their basic needs are fulfilled and they can make beneficial decisions. Children should grow in healthy, smart and happy, environments, and be taught to have good morality in order to benefit society (Tirtonegoro, 2013).

Because of the importance of children in sustaining the future, many believe that a child is a gift from God, and parents must therefore always be good role-models. Family is generally the first interaction for a child, and their development essentially starts from the mother's womb. Parents play a big role in forming a child's personality (Sudjana, 2009). Sudarsono (2004), believes that most couples dream of having a happy family unit, and each member should work together to achieve that cohesiveness. Love, care, and respect, are all considered factors in creating a model child. Pujosuwarno (2004:20) stated that education starts in the home through both parents, specifically as imitations are how children learn best.

The relationship between parent and child should be overwhelmed with a sense of love and respect in order to teach that child how to interact with the wider society as they get older, and develop their maturity (Djamil, 2013).

However, no child can choose which family they are born into, rather, it is disputed as a source of luck if both parents are good role models who provide a stable and supportive environment (Sugiyono, 2017). A phenomenon in relation to family influence emerged in 2014 with the closure of the largest prostitution localization in Southeast Asia called Dolly. Former commercial sex workers were given guidance and fostered under the care of the Ministry of Industry. Each family was given Rp 5.000.000 from the mayor of Surabaya to help with business ventures so that they were less inclined to revert back to sex work (Sukmana, 2014). Although the localization was closed, many of the former sex workers still lived there with their families. It should be noted that this suggests many of the children would have still been living with their mothers at the time of sex work.

Children around localization are exposed to various vulnerabilities, such as social pressures, low levels of health, acts of violence, human trafficking and child prostitution itself, especially for the children of former sex workers. Carolina (2013) suggests that children of ex-sex workers tend to be mores shy or lack direction due to seeing their role model acquire easy money through selling themselves. They may also face social judgment and public scorn because of the behavior from their parent. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem and introversion.

There are two big factors that affect the development of personality: heredity and environment (Horton et. al, 1993). The environment can be a contributing factor in whether a child will grow up as an extrovert or introvert. C. G. Jung first developed the idea of 'extroversion' and 'introversion' personality types and Eysenck (Eysenck & Sybil, 1975) developed this, describing an introverted person as someone with a calm and careful nature, tending to be more thoughtful, moody, passive and self-controlled (Pervin & John, 2001). In short, an introvert tends to be affected by their own subjective judgement rather than seeing things objectively.

In psychology, there are some interventions that can encourage children to be more courageous in expressing their opinions and being more open to others, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, play therapy, psychoanalytic therapy, and gestalt therapy. Gestalt therapy was first introduced by Frederick Perls on the basis that individuals have the ability to assume personal responsibility and live fully as an integrated person. It presents the interventions and challenges that are needed, which can help individuals gain knowledge and awareness while moving towards guidance and growth. This therapy chooses to focus on 'what' and 'how' rather than 'why'. According to Perls, the 'why' questions will only lead to rationalization and 'self-deception', as well as point towards endless thinking about the past, generate rejection of the present moment.

In this research, Gestalt therapy is also used as language therapy to increase self-openness in ex-prostitutes' children at Dolly, Surabaya. Through accepting who they are, these children could have more of a chance to find direction and be the best version of themselves.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Child

In the constitution of the Republic of Indonesia No. 23, year 2002 about child protection, a child is explained as a blessing from God. In them, there is a dignity that makes them a whole human being. They need to get the largest possible opportunity to grow and develop, both physically, mentally and socially, so that they will be able to bear the responsibilities of becoming a healthy adult (Djamil, 2013).

Piaget (in Sudarna, 2014 :12-15) divided cognitive development into four stages: a) sensorimotor, b) pre-operational, c) concrete operational, and d) formal operational. Formal operational stages are characterized by a shift from concrete thinking to the abstract. The ability to think in the abstract form is rooted in the power of announcing ideas, predicting events that will occur, and carrying out the process of scientific thinking - expressing hypothesis and determining ways to prove they are true.

2.2 Commercial Sex Workers

Commercial sex workers are people who use their bodies for sexual favours in exchange for money (Kartono, 2015). They usually work in night clubs, and because of their late working hours, most of smoke as a way of dealing with the cold as well as relieving stress. It is also believed to increase the passion in doing their job (Gunawan, 2016).

Some driving factors that ensure someone starts and stays in sex work are: a) Economic problems, the conditions isially forcing them to sell themselves in order to provide. Many lack a background in education or skills, and so turn to prostitution as a desperate attempt to feed their families. b) Following the current, being a commercial sex worker is considered an easy choice to earn a living because their colleagues in the village have already done so, prostitution is therefore seen as an alternative source of income. c) Frustration, some who crave a happy household life will be frustrated if they experience otherwise, usually a divorce, failed relationship or career, and a lack of direction. This situation can cause feelings of disappointment and heartache and prostitution can be seen as a way of getting revenge. (Sedyaningsih, 2010)

2.3 Personality Theory

Jung conceptualized several personality types that are determined by social and non-social environments. Based on Jung's theory (Eysenck & Keane, 2001), there are several characteristics of introverted people. This characteristic is more clearly noticed in emotional situations or conflict. People with this personality tend to withdraw and be alone, preferring their own thinking rather than talking to others. Someone who has tendency to be introverted will usually: be interested in his own thoughts and feelings, quiet and looking thoughtful, not having a big social life, have difficulty making new relationships, prefer concentration and silence, and prefer working independently rather than in group. When facing issues, people with introvert personalities prefer dealing with it alone, making it more difficult to be understood. It seems like a struggle to have to constantly deal with issues alone while maintaining a normal routine and trying to fit in. They could become their most authentic self when they feel comfortable with their environment.

2.4 Gestalt Therapy

Gestalt therapy is an existential/experiential form of psychotherapy that emphasizes personal responsibility. It focuses on the individual's experience in the present moment, the environmental and social contexts of a person's life, and the self-regulating adjustments they make as a result of their overall situation. The goal of Gestalt therapy is to raise clients' awareness regarding how they function in their environment (with family, work, school and friends). The therapy is focused of the

on the present, what is happening moment to moment, rather than what is being discussed (the content). Awareness is being alert to what the most important events in clients' lives are and their environment with full sensorimotor, emotional, cognitive, and energy support. Support is defined as anything that makes contact with or withdrawal from with the environment possible, including energy, body support, breathing, information, concern for others, and language. The Gestalt therapist is active, and sessions are lively, characterized by warmth, acceptance, care, and self-responsibility while promoting present experiences of a situation or event rather than passively talking about it. Events recalled from the past are explored and felt in the here and now of the therapy session. Clients can see, hear, and be told how and what is seen, how the therapist feels and what they are like as a person, and how client awareness is limited by how they interact with the therapist— that is, make contact (Corey,2009).

The Gestalt counselor experts believe that language has an important role in development. By choosing the right words, counselors can create an environmental climate that drives changes in their client's mentality. These are some of the recommended language used in Gestalt therapy:

1. Using the statement 'what' and 'how', not 'why'.
2. Using the 'me' statement. Counselors encourage clients to concentrate on their own feelings and experiences instead of talking about other people or events.
3. Focus on statements. Although questions are an important part, it is more recommended to focus on using statements.
4. Stressing on the 'here and now' experience. If the client speaks about the past, the counselor must immediately direct them to return to the present and how they overcame it. This will encourage awareness of the current condition while maintaining correct contact with the experiences.
5. Encourage responsibility. The counselor is recommended to use phrase or language forms that encourage personal responsibility about a condition rather than blaming others for it.

3. METHOD

Method in this research is qualitative with a case study approach, a type of research conducted intensively, in depth, with detail, and comprehensive. This study does not use samples or contributions, rather, it is based on the client's individual experiences.

This research was conducted using two participants of different genders. The first participant, X, is a 19-year-old male, who has been living with his mother for his entire life. He knew about his mother's prostitution activities since he was in child. X is now a college student at a university at Surabaya. When in junior high,

X usually got bullied and avoided his friends because they knew that he was the son of a prostitute. It often led to X thinking about suicide due to feelings of low self-worth and lack of confidence.

The second participant, Y, is an 18-year-old female. For more than 10 years, she pulled herself away from people around her because she felt insignificant due to her background as the daughter of a prostitute. People mocked her and did not want to initiate a relationship because of her family history.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Data analysis in qualitative research is carried out as soon as possible - at the time of this interview, the researcher had conducted an analysis of the answers gathered. If the answers reviewed were not considered satisfactory, the researcher will continue the question again.

Based on previous research by Urrea (2019) using gestalt therapy for those who are depressed and desperate, he suggests that in most cases, clients begin to understand the source of their feelings within 4 to 6 months, and begin to take the necessary steps to heal. This research also shows that after attending counseling sessions using Gestalt therapy for six months, a significant development was seen in the self-disclosure of children of former commercial sex workers.

Before doing dialogue with the participants, researchers have taken several steps and prepared the theme of the story with a dialogue that clients participate in. As part of the first stage, the counselor approaches the clients in order to get to know them. By developing collaborative relationships and dialogue, clients are more comfortable in expressing their feelings. The counselor prepares a plan to deal with conditions specifically from the client, like self-harm, the excessive anger, etc. The second stage continues with more specific strategies, inviting the client to express their feelings, They explore various introjection, contact modifications done and unfinished business with feelings of hatred towards their mother due to the nature of prostitution. The condition of the client was challenging for the counselor to approach, while still trying to establish a dialogical relationship. The next stage includes activities carried out by the counselee to explore the problem on a deeper level to make significant changes. The process starts off slow as the counsellor tries to motivate the client to open up, usually using similar personal experiences to show that they can relate and empathize. The fourth stage, is usually when the client begins to overcome the crises explored and integrate themselves with their experiences and emotions, but with a new perspective. Little by little, the application of dialogue techniques encourage them to explore their current condition, so their motivation to learn become resurgent. It can improve relations with family and friends. At the last stage, the counselee is

ready to start life independently without counselor supervision. They begin to make small changes, including planning for their future, and have a stronger determination to learn by eliminating attitudes that hinder growth.

Both participants X and Y admit the hardships faced with being the child of a sex worker, ranging from personal lack of confidence to the hatred faced by others.

During the counseling, X and Y also said that they feel immense relief in knowing that their mother is not a commercial sex worker anymore. They see that their mothers can still be able to earn money through other, healthier means.

While providing therapy for both X and Y, the counselor enlightened them with the notion that they do not need to live with other people's expectations of who they should be, nor should they expect others to live up

to theirs. The therapy is also aimed to help the participants explore who they really are and understand that they are humans after all, they have a chance at having a better life and future just like any other person. The counselor emphasized the idea that their choices will affect their health and relationship with others, and so it was a matter of taking responsibility for their own thoughts.

With that knowledge and the right choice of words, participants begin to understand how their physical and emotional conditions can increase their confidence to start living fuller lives and deal with their issues more effectively. They encourage the participants to be more open in sharing what their hopes are for the future. The following is a table of time-series of counseling processes that have been done.

Topic	Month																							
	Feb				March				April				May				June				July			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Daily routine	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Family	√	√							√	√							√	√					√	√
Self-Acceptance					√		√	√	√					√	√						√			
Self-Openness									√	√				√		√					√	√		√
Hopes and dreams				√																			√	√

Table 1: Weekly Appointment Schedule and Topics.

In the last counselling session, both of the participants already showed signs of being more open with the people around them. They also told the counselor that they feel more optimistic with facing their future. Y told the counselor that she is ready to make some new friends and no longer felt afraid to reveal her background if they asked. On the other hand, X has now become braver in facing his days, and uses his past as motivation to create a brighter future.

From the results, it is shown that Gestalt therapy, even for 6 months, already allows the participant to engage and become more open. This suggests that Gestalt therapy is effective enough to improve openness and acceptance. It is even able to make participants' feel more motivated to make a fulfilling future.

5. CONCLUSION

Not having a good family background traumatizes children no matter how small. This issue is more pertinent when a child is introverted, as they cannot freely talk about it to their surrounding people. Introverts

need to feel comfortable in order to speak about what is hurting them.

This research concludes that Gestalt therapy can be used as an intervention for children of ex-commercial sex workers who have trauma relating to their parent's previous work. The success of this therapy however, is inseparable from the counselor's ability to choose the right language and wording during each session. Through time series analysis, a prediction can be made; the children can have a better life and job than their mother as long as they focus on building it in the present. Both participants of this research do not have to follow their mother's path of being a sex worker to earn a living in the future.

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