The Effectiveness of Cognitive Behavior Therapy to Reduce Anxiety in Determining the Future

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ABSTRACT

A teenager has big dreams and hopes for himself in the future. What and who they want to be in the future are thoughts that often arise and make teenagers feel anxious about their future. Cognitive Behavior Therapy is one of the psychotherapies that can be used to reduce this anxiety. This therapy helps adolescents identify negative or useless thought patterns that cause anxiety, and teaches them to change these thought patterns to be more positive and adaptive. The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of Cognitive Behavior Therapy to reduce anxiety in adolescents in determining the future. Based on the phenomenon obtained by researchers that many adolescents experience confusion and even anxiety in determining their future. The type of research used is qualitative research with a descriptive design. Participants in this study amounted to one student who experienced anxiety in determining her future. Data were collected using interview, observation, and documentation. The data were analyzed using the four components proposed by Miles and Hubermen. The results showed that the client experienced anxiety related to the world of work. In addition, there are demands from the client's parents who say that the client must work as a successful civil servant. Clients also feel they do not have the skills and readiness to face the world of work. Cognitive behavioral therapy is able to reduce clients' feelings of anxiety by changing negative thoughts and trying to do more productive activities.

Keywords: Teenager, Anxiety, Therapy

Introduction

When looking to the future, individuals will feel afraid of things and events that will happen. Therefore, the future will become a worry for individuals when thoughts arise about things that should not happen. A study conducted by Susulowka in (Zaleski, 1996) found that concern about the future was highest in the age group 20-29 years, which amounted to 51.4%. When individuals enter their twenties (early adulthood), they usually already have an idea of what they will do in the future. During this stage, individuals adapt to new lifestyles and new social expectations (Hurlock, 2002).

Worrying about not fulfilling demands and desires about the future creates anxiety and stress that makes individuals anxious (Hinkelman and Luzzo, 2007). Social media also sometimes displays the achievements of others related to the individual, causing increased anxiety. The result of this anxiety can lead to low levels of life satisfaction (Saber et al., 2012). High anxiety about the future in each individual can reduce life satisfaction because anxiety is a negative emotion that occurs in each individual.

Students are individuals who are studying at one of the universities both public and private and each student has certain obligations. These obligations are related to daily coursework and final assignments in the form of scientific papers and theses to the selection of jobs after graduating from college. Students are proven to have many demands that can have an impact on their mental health. This impact makes students very vulnerable to stress and anxiety. Anxiety that is often experienced by students is anxiety about their future.

Anxiety is a common emotion among students and is something that everyone experiences at all times and places. Many things can cause anxiety, such as health, social relationships, exams, careers, relationships, and things related to what will happen in the future. Nevid et al. in (Arsy, 2011) explain that anxiety is closely related to the future. Anxiety is a person's emotional state consisting of fear and worry about future conditions or situations. Therefore, when someone feels anxious, the fear is related to a condition or situation that has not been experienced and overcome by that person.

Zaleski et al. in (Siregar et al., 2021) suggest that fear of the future leads to fear of bad possibilities that may occur in the future. Anxiety about the future, for example, is related to the career that must be started after completing studies. Anxiety experienced in adolescents who are about to enter adulthood is related to technological advances that narrow job opportunities. They feel unable to compete with others. As explained by Darajad in (Arsy, 2011), when adolescents face the future, they fear and worry about the narrowness of their career field and their future prospects for starting a business at home in the face of intense competition.

Anxiety can also arise and be felt when an individual is faced with greater realities and responsibilities in life. As they get older, individuals reach the job search process, think about and arrange career opportunities and compete with people who are looking for work too. This causes many feelings of confusion and anxiety that are less pleasant so that changes occur both physically and behaviorally (Nugroho, 2010) in (Rizki & Pasaribu, 2021).

Supriyantini (2010) found that individuals with anxiety in fact tend to avoid situations that cause unpleasant feelings in themselves in the form of feelings of anxiety, fear or feelings of guilt because they think that not all problems can be resolved properly. Mortensen (2014) explains that anxious individuals are often dissatisfied with what they have done. Individuals with high anxiety tend to be less confident that they have effective skills, they feel more pessimistic about what they are doing, whether it is right, good, or whether what they are doing will make a difference or even a mistake.

One way to overcome future anxiety in individuals is through Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT). Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) is the first approach that focuses on thought processes and their relationship with emotional, behavioral, and psychological states. CBT is based on the idea that certain people can change the impact of their thinking on their cognition and mental well-being. The use of CBT approaches has been shown to be effective in addressing psychological problems in a variety of individuals. According to another opinion, Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) is a psychotherapy that combines behavioral and cognitive therapy, where human behavior is jointly influenced by thoughts, emotions, physiological processes and their influence on behavior (Sa'adah and Rahman, in Rizky, et al, 2022).

Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) is a psychological intervention that involves interacting with how a person thinks, feels and behaves (Somers and Queree, 2007). CBT techniques help people understand their cognitive patterns, or thoughts and feelings related to their behavior. Based on cognitive theory, thoughts determine how a person feels and behaves (Corsini & Wedding, 1989).

According to Antony and Swinson (2000), the main strategy of Cognitive Behavior Therapy is to replace irrational thoughts and beliefs with healthier and more positive rational thoughts and beliefs. Students' anxious behavior in facing the burden of assignments given by lecturers and thoughts about their future careers can increase due to the influence of irrational thinking in dealing with themselves and their environment. CBT treatment involves developing individual awareness of self and others, developing ways to build interpersonal relationships, solving problems faced, and effective coping strategies (Bedell & Lennox, 1997). Therefore, it is expected that anxiety for students who undergo Cognitive Behavioral Therapy will decrease because Cognitive Behavioral Therapy helps students better recognize and understand their own thought processes, so that they will increase their ability to cope with problems.

According to research conducted previously, the combination of cognitive therapy and behavioral therapy is able to provide high effectiveness to overcome emotional disorders such as anxiety (Carpenter et al., 2016) in (Haikal, 2022). Therefore, researchers are interested in seeing whether Cognitive Behavioral Therapy can help reduce anxiety, especially in students in determining their future.

Method

The type of research used is qualitative research with a descriptive design. The variable in this study is anxiety. The subjects in this study used purposive sampling technique, which is a technique of taking subjects in accordance with certain criteria based on research objectives (Arikunto, 2006). The subject in this study was a female student with the initials J in semester 4 who was 21 years old. The data collection methods used are interviews, observation, and documentation in the form of self-therapy given to the subject. The interview was conducted on May 06, 2024 at the Faculty of Psychology, Raden Fatah State Islamic University Palembang. Self-therapy performed by the subject was carried out for five consecutive days in the form of relaxation and filling out a daily journal. The data analysis technique used in this study is the data analysis proposed by Miles and Hubermen with four analysis components, namely data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusions (Abdul, 2021).

Results

Nevid et al (2005) found that anxiety is closely related to the future. Because anxiety is an emotional state in the form of fear and worry about future circumstances or situations. Therefore, when someone feels afraid, the feeling of fear is related to a situation that has not happened or has not been experienced. Based on interviews conducted, clients experience anxiety in terms of facing the world of work. The client feels anxious about what and where she wants to work in the future.

The client feels that she does not have extensive relationships, which makes her afraid of whether she will be able to work in a company that matches the client's wishes.

The client's anxiety also arises when she sees her friends who have abilities that she does not have. Clients often feel insecure when they see other people with good public speaking skills, because they think that they will find it easier to get a job. In addition, there are demands from the client's parents regarding work, which is contrary to what the client wants. However, the client did not feel burdened by these demands. The client considers that the choice of his parents is the best choice, so the client lives it casually.

As a student, the client is also often given the obligation to complete assignments during lectures, one of which is when given a presentation assignment the client feels anxious when having to speak in public, this is because the client during her school days was not used to making presentations. When feelings of anxiety and negative thoughts arise, clients try to avoid them by diverting these thoughts, motivating themselves, and doing other activities such as sports and playing online games.

In terms of reducing anxiety in clients, researchers provide Cognitive Behavioral Therapy to change clients' negative thoughts to be more positive. The therapy carried out by the client was successful in helping to reduce his feelings of anxiety and make the client have more positive emotions and thoughts.

Discussion

Anxiety in determining the future experienced by clients is anxiety in facing the world of work and the level of difficulty in determining the job to be taken. Sari and Astuti in (Zulfahmi & Andriany, 2021) explain that anxiety in facing the world of work is an individual's subjective assessment of achieving goals related to the world of work that is uncertain, causing internal conflicts such as fear, worry, lack of soft skills possessed, and lack of information about the career to be taken. As in the interviews conducted by researchers, clients feel afraid regarding the work that will be undertaken when graduating from college, clients also often feel insecure with their friends who have good public speaking skills.

The feeling of being left behind by others is actually only a natural feeling experienced by someone at a certain phase of life. But in the client's mind it makes her afraid that she cannot upgrade herself in the future. Like when she saw his friend good at communicating in public, the client felt insecure with herself like this, there was no progress. But after hearing the audio therapy that has been given the client is more relaxed and the client convinces herself that this age is the time to grow and keep trying.

Individuals who do not believe in their own abilities will make them more anxious in facing their future careers. Those who are not ready to face the world of work will usually become less calm, it is because of their thoughts that assume that they are unable to compete and will become unemployed. It is also important for each individual to recognize their interests and talents so that they can choose a job according to their abilities. This will also make her work optimally without any pressure or coercion.

Anxiety in facing the world of work can arise due to cognitive factors such as negative perceptions that are filled with worries about not being able to overcome work-related problems, emotional factors, namely a sense of tension about scary conditions in the future, and social demand factors such as standards of success or expectations of those around them that are too high (Hanifa, 2017) in (Zulfahmi & Andriany, 2021). As experienced by the client, where the client's parents expect their children to be able to work as successful civil servants even though this is contrary to the client's self.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is successfully implemented in reducing negative client thoughts because it is supported by the client's desire to reduce anxiety and provide tasks or self-therapy to clients in the form of relaxation by listening to audio therapy and motivational videos and writing daily journals, and clients also follow directions well. This is in accordance with previous research that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is quite effective for reducing anxiety symptoms (Hirsch et al., 2019). Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is a psychotherapy that seeks to reduce symptoms such as anxiety by modifying wrong maladaptive thoughts and beliefs (Anila et al., 2014) in (Haikal, 2022).

When anxiety comes, clients begin to realize that the anxiety they often feel comes from negative thoughts that have not been proven true. Clients also realize that it is necessary to think about situations that are more efficient than thinking about situations that have not yet happened. After doing therapy, the client began to use techniques to overcome the negative thoughts that appeared. Like when the client is anxious when she wants to make a presentation that makes the client keep thinking about it day and night for fear of making mistakes, but after hearing the audio therapy the client feels that the anxiety is only in the mind which makes the client only focus on the anxiety and the client convinces herself that he only needs to focus on what is done.

During the cognitive therapy process, the client was able to develop more positive thinking skills. The client did this by writing down negative thoughts that made her feel anxious when thinking about the future. In contrast, in the behavioral therapy process, changes in the client's anxiety level can be recognized from the questions asked during the interview. The client explained that when the anxiety comes she will do activities that can reduce the anxiety, such as exercise, playing online games, reading, and traveling.

It can be concluded that there are several factors underlying the success of this therapy. First, the cooperative attitude of the client who is willing to work together during the therapy session. Second, clients can also complete the self-therapy tasks given during therapy sessions in the form of listening to podcasts and audio therapy and writing daily journals. Third, the client has a desire to change, the client also feels happy when attending therapy because it can help clients reduce anxiety and help get rid of negative thoughts. The client also hopes to be able to attend therapy again. Fourth, there is good feedback between researchers and clients which encourages clients to talk openly about the problems they face. The four factors are in accordance with Rector's statement (in Wahidah and Adam, 2019) that the success of therapy is not only determined by the therapist but also by the client. Clients must be open and active in discussing their thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors with the therapist as well as actively participating in the exercises given in each session, including homework. Therefore, the therapist and the client must work together.

In general, there are differences in the client's condition before and after being given Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Before therapy, the client had many negative thoughts that were not useful and unrealistic, plus the client did not know how to control these negative thoughts so she often ignored them. After being given therapy, the client was able to reduce his negative thoughts and feelings of anxiety by focusing on things that could be controlled and trying to do activities that could make her more productive.

This study cannot be separated from its limitations, among others: clients in the study were 4th semester students who should have been final students, interview and observation sessions were only conducted for one day and there was little time in preparing therapy results. Suggestions for further research are expected to find clients who are final students who are preparing a thesis.

Conclusion

Anxiety is familiar to students because it is one of the emotions that is commonly encountered and is an experience that is experienced by everyone at all times and places. The subject in this study is a student with the initials J semester 4 who is 21 years old. Based on interviews conducted, clients experience anxiety in terms of facing the world of work. The client feels anxious about what and where he wants to work in the future. The client feels that she does not have extensive relationships so that she is afraid of whether she is able to work in a company that matches the client's wishes. Feelings of anxiety in the client also arise when she sees her friends who have abilities that he does not have. Clients often feel insecure when they see other people with good public speaking skills, because they think that they will find it easier to get a job. In addition, there are demands from the client's parents regarding work, which is contrary to what the client wants. However, the client did not feel burdened by these demands. The client considers that the choice of his parents is the best choice, so the client lives it casually. In terms of reducing anxiety in clients, researchers provide Cognitive Behavioral Therapy to change clients' negative thoughts to be more positive. The therapy carried out by the client was successful in helping to reduce his feelings of anxiety and make the client have more positive emotions and thoughts. During the cognitive therapy process, the client was able to develop more positive thinking skills.

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