

# Interpersonal Communication Approach in Providing Social Support to Survivors of The Palu City Earthquake

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## ABSTRACT

### Keywords

Traumatized  
Interpersonal Communication  
Social Support  
Play Therapy  
Psychosocial Volunteers

The earthquake that hit Palu City, Central Sulawesi Province on September 28, 2018, resulted in a lot of physical and non-physical losses. The losses that occurred were in the form of damage to infrastructure. The economy and other impacts that also became the concern were traumatic experiences which had an impact on the emergence of post-traumatic stress disorder (Post-traumatic stress), especially in children and adolescents (Syamsuddin, 2019). Post-disaster traumatic experiences like this can have an impact on the most vulnerable group, namely children. Trauma like this cannot be allowed to drag on for a long time because it will have an impact on the child's psychology. Therefore, the aim of this research was to analyze the interpersonal communication approach in the process of social support after the Palu City earthquake. The method employed Play Therapy (play method). This research used a qualitative descriptive research type. Informants in this study were 5 Psychosocial Volunteers who were directly involved after the earthquake and tsunami in Palu City. Data collection techniques used observation and interviews. The results of this study show that social support was provided by psychosocial volunteers using the Play Therapy method in which survivors were invited to play, sing and tell stories. This stage became a way to divert the focus of the survivors' children so they did not remember the disaster they experienced. As a result, the children looked more cheerful and slowly opened up by inviting the volunteers to interact.

## 1. Introduction

Indonesia, in recent years has been shocked by natural disasters such as floods, landslides, earthquakes and tsunamis. According to the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) Natural disasters are events or series of events that threaten and disrupt people's lives and livelihoods caused by either natural or non-natural factors as well as human factors resulting in human casualties, environmental damage, loss of property and psychological impact. Conditions like this are a reality that cannot be denied anymore, so that community preparedness is needed in facing the threat of disaster because disasters can occur at any time, for this reason preparations are needed as early as possible. The framework for thinking about disaster risk must require all levels of society to understand natural disaster mitigation and preparedness.

Based on earthquake data from the National Earthquake Center of the Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency (BMKG), it was revealed that there were 11,577 earthquakes in Indonesia during 2018 with a record of 13 damaging earthquakes causing damage. Meanwhile, other data states that there were 23 damaging earthquakes in 2018 with the highest earthquake strength in two provinces, namely Papua on 25 February 2018 at 17.44.55 WIT with a magnitude of 7.6 Mw but did not cause a tsunami and 7.7 Mw occurred in Donggala, Sigi and Palu city, Central Sulawesi on September 28 2018 at 17:02:44 WITA.

Palu City is a municipality in Central Sulawesi Province consisting of 8 sub-districts and 46 sub-districts with an area of 395.06 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 363,867 people/km<sup>2</sup>. Being the area where the highest earthquake occurred, namely 7.7 MW. This 7.7 Mw earthquake occurred on September

28 2018 at 17:02:44 WITA hitting the cities of Palu, Donggala and Sigi. The epicenter of the earthquake in Donggala is 26 km from the north with a depth of 10 km (BMKG, 2018) This 7.7 magnitude earthquake caused many impacts including physical and psychological impacts. As well as storing deep traumatic experiences for the affected communities as well as very severe damage in the form of liquefaction or moving soil, according to the data recorded by the Government of Central Sulawesi, at least 22,820 houses were slightly damaged, 18,892 were moderately damaged and the number was heavily damaged 24,739 which was divided into 3 districts and 1 city. medium, also caused a lot of casualties at least 2,227 who were killed. Another impact is a health problem. From data from the Ministry of Health, Directorate of Health Promotion and Community Empowerment, they found health problems such as diarrhea, respiratory infections, hypertension and skin diseases. Damaged schools and health problems above are part of the impact caused by earthquake natural disasters like this. Another impact that is also a concern is traumatic experiences which can have an impact on the emergence of post-traumatic stress disorder (Post-traumatic stress), especially in children and adolescents (Syamsuddin, 2019).

Trauma is an emotional response within yourself when bad or unpleasant things happen, such as crime, accidents or natural disasters. So that people need help for the recovery of their mental health. This risk also affects the most vulnerable group, namely children because children directly experience, feel, and witness the impact caused by the age factor that is still psychologically immature. Therefore, this is the center of attention that is very intense, because it has an impact on children's mental health.

Based on previous research showing that children are at risk for Post-traumatic Stress (Doherty in Pynoos, 2001). Mulyadi (2004) also argues that disasters that come one after another can be risky to give birth to generations that are emotional in solving problems with shortcuts and are prone to frustration. In the midst of this feeling of anxiety and fear, it is of course very important that communities and vulnerable groups such as children immediately receive services in post-disaster traumatic recovery which is called social support (trauma healing) to reduce the trauma of disasters that befall survivors. Trauma Healing in the Psychology Dictionary it is explained that trauma is any wound, pain, or shock which is often physical or structural as well as mental in the form of emotional shock which results in disruption of more or less the resilience of mental functions. (James Drever, Psychology Dictionary, (Jakarta: Bina Aksara 1988), p. 498.) Healing literally means healing.

Social support (Trauma Healing) in it offers activities as a form of therapy for children, namely Play Therapy to divert the thoughts and feelings of children who are tense or worried. This method certainly requires a more intimate role of interpersonal communication. According to Alo Liliweri, (2015), Interpersonal Communication can be said to be the most important main characteristic of human life and greatest achievement, because it is through this process that humans show their ability to say, hear and change/process intentions, desires, ideas ideas, feelings orally then changed in writing. This intense communication is of course carried out by people who are experts in building Interpersonal Communication as well as those who are experts in dealing with trauma. They are referred to as Psychosocial volunteers. The concept of psychosocial consists of two things, namely psycho and social. The word psycho refers to the soul, thoughts, emotions or feelings, behavior, things that are believed, attitudes, perceptions and understanding of self. The word social refers to other people, social order, norms, values, rules, economic system, kinship system, religion or religion and beliefs that apply in a society. Psychosocial is defined as a dynamic relationship in interactions between humans, where the behavior, thoughts and emotions of individuals will affect and be influenced by other people or social experiences (Buleleng Social Agency, 2019).

## 2. Method

This research method is a qualitative descriptive approach. The use of this approach aims to describe people's behavior, field events, and certain activities in detail and depth. As for what is meant by descriptive research, namely a research just to describe a variable related to the problem under study without questioning the relationship between variable.

This research approach is a qualitative descriptive approach based on phenomenology. Phenomenology is the phenomena that occur or the reality that exists in the research field, which is related to the Interpersonal Communication Approach in the Post-Earthquake Trauma Healing Process in Palu City. Subjects and Research Objects. Research subjects are sources that make it possible to obtain research information, information or data to find as much information as possible,

the authors take data from various sources with the aim of obtaining sufficient information related to the purpose of this study, namely taking a purposive sample. Very likely, a novelty from a study is in the method section, even though the topic is the same as previous studies. New methods that are simpler but have the same ability to answer research questions are superior so that they can be replicated or applied by subsequent researchers. In addition, if the equipment has accuracy tolerance in reading data such as thermocouple, transducer, air flow meter, etc., it must also be stated clearly and honestly in the method section.

The data collection method in this study is intended to answer predetermined questions and objectives. For this reason, the data collection techniques used were observation, interviews, and recording. In-depth Interview Techniques is a data collection technique carried out by researchers by distributing questionnaires online to respondents using a list of questions that have been prepared in advance. Recording Techniques is a data collection technique by recording all data from related agencies or the results of important interviews related to this research.

### 3. Result and Discussion

#### 3.1. Results

Trauma is an emotional response within yourself when bad or unpleasant things happen, such as crime, accidents or natural disasters. So that people need help for the recovery of their mental health, Therefore Trauma Healing by Psychosocial Volunteers Trauma healing for children who were victims of the tsunami earthquake is very much needed and the treatment provided by Psychosocial volunteers is through group trauma healing where the trauma experienced by children is removed by interacting with children who have experienced the same trauma. Group trauma healing activities are carried out in stages.

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The first stage is carried out with play therapy, the first stage is with the play therapy method trying to restore the child's trauma, where children who are in a state of shock are invited to play starting with a clap of protection with the slogan "Protection" so that in this way the children are invited to shouting cheerfully in order to get rid of the trauma that is felt this way is the solution to expressing anger even though this activity is only a fantasy. The second stage is self-introduction, children are invited to tell about who they are and their hobbies according to their interests and talents. This method was carried out in order to dispel the shadows of the trauma they felt after the disaster. The third stage is drawing and coloring where the children are instructed to draw about themselves or in foreign terms "Who I am" after drawing the children who are victims of the disaster will present in front of their friends explaining what they are drawing and why they chose the picture. This method is used to explore feelings whether there are still shadows of the trauma they feel, from here it can be seen how children express joy, anxiety and fear. by channeling imagination in the form of pictures so that it is hoped that children can slowly change their lives so that they are not only struggling with the sadness due to the loss of loved ones or the fear of the tsunami earthquake that is still in their minds. The fourth stage invites children to go to the edge beach the purpose of this search is to get rid of their fear of the beach in this way children are invited to be closer to nature so that their thoughts about the earthquake and tsunami disaster are not firmly entrenched so that children will get used to and not be afraid of water on the beach. The Fifth Stage invites children to sing and dance together by singing and doing dance moves.

Children gain experience in expressing positive thoughts and feelings. Dancing is recreational, so it can help children express their emotions so that they can balance their body and soul. Because basically, not all children can verbally express post-disaster feelings, so by doing dance movements children can express their problems and feelings non-verbally. After singing and dancing, the children are invited to play tug-of-war games to form a sense of empathy and cooperation, that children are not alone in dealing with the disasters they feel, but there are many relatives, friends and the community who will be ready to help with the problems faced by children in the area. Palu City.

After the social support activities (Trauma Healing) were carried out starting from self-introduction, drawing and coloring, singing and dancing, visiting the beach and playing tug of war games, of course the results are needed. Based on field data found after the activities the children were much happier and slowly started to build communication with the volunteers on duty.

The Role of Interpersonal Communication in providing social support for earthquake and tsunami survivors in Palu City. Baker as quoted by Ratna Dewi (2005) in her book *The Relationship Between Self-Acceptance and Interpersonal Communication in Adolescents*, states that interpersonal communication is communication that is centered on sending messages that involve feelings and emotions so that it involves the process of translating thoughts into verbal form. and non-verbal which increase the communicator's awareness of self-concept and the feelings he has. This application is in line with that carried out by volunteers in the implementation of providing social support for disaster survivors, several forms of interpersonal communication carried out by volunteers include:

- Social Support

House (1981) in the same source (Yusuf, 2004) suggests that social support has four functions, namely: (1) Emotional support, which includes giving affection, attention, and care, (2) Appraisal support, which includes helping others to assess and develop awareness of the problems encountered, including efforts to clarify the nature of the problem, and provide feedback on the wisdom behind the problem, (3) Informational support, which includes advice and discussion on how to overcome and solve problems, (4) Instrumental support, which includes material assistance, such as providing housing, lending money, and accompanying visits to social service bureaus.

With the theoretical basis above, psychosocial volunteers for earthquake and tsunami survivors in Palu City did many things, such as: counseling related to earthquake mitigation, social visits to several damaged schools, and psychosocial activities such as: playing games, drawing, singing and dancing together. This method is a form of interpersonal communication carried out by volunteers so that children who are survivors of the Palu City earthquake and tsunami want to open themselves up to tell stories about themselves.

- Growing supportive attitude

A supportive attitude is an attitude that reduces defensiveness in communication. People get defensive when they are not receptive, dishonest, or empathetic. With a defensive attitude interpersonal communication will fail; because defensive people will protect themselves more from the threats, they respond to in communication situations rather than understanding other people's messages, (Rachmat, 2018). Based on the findings from interviews with the psychosocial volunteers involved, they revealed how the children who were victims of the Palu City earthquake and tsunami slowly recovered, as evidenced by their cheerfulness from before they arrived, and slowly these children opened themselves up by interacting with psychosocial volunteers.

From the explanation of the stages, it is a method of preventing trauma to divert the focus of children so that their memories are slowly diverted from activities carried out with psychosocial volunteers, although this method does not fully provide fast recovery because it takes time for intense assistance. This is in line with previous research, namely according to psychologists. children and families, Ratih Zulhaqqi, trauma healing aims to anticipate Post-Traumatic Syndrome Disorder (PTSD). PTSD is post-traumatic stress disorder. Trauma healing for children, said Ratih, tends to be rather difficult because children often find it difficult to talk about their worries like adults. He said, playing is the right trauma healing method for children "(When playing), they don't feel they are being treated, they don't feel a tense situation. And those who accompany them should not always bring up stories (about the earthquake)," he said when contacted by CNNIndonesia.com.

### 3.2. Discussion

In this research, it can be seen how the handling of trauma for victims of the Palu City earthquake can slowly recover because handling this trauma requires stages that are not for a moment it takes step by step to slowly eliminate the trauma of children who are survivors of the Palu City earthquake and tsunami by using a suitable method in the form of Play Therapy with In this way, children are invited to play a lot, exercise and tell stories, so it is hoped that this method can help survivors of the earthquake and tsunami victims in Palu City slowly recover from the trauma they experienced. Interpersonal communication is a complementary method in dealing with trauma healing where

survivors provide feedback in the form of feeling happy and confident. This play therapy method will show how children get rid of their fears by playing, this method will also answer our questions regarding children's difficulties in opening up.

Based on previous research, play activities are an important means for children so that they are able to show themselves, their views on the environment and other people. Communication intensity is the key to gaining interpersonal trust and understanding the problems faced by children (Rasyid, et.al). To express the natural expression of a child, Play Therapy is an effective method and is a counseling technique given by adults to children which is based on the concept of play as a form of communication between children and adults so that it aims to intervene and dialogue with children so as to create a condition of feeling comfortable and being able to recognize its potential to overcome its problems (Masputatun, 2017).

#### 4. Conclusion

Trauma healing and post-earthquake child protection education really need special handling to eliminate trauma and fear as a psychological effect after a disaster, especially for children. Healing trauma in children after a disaster that has been experienced requires a long and continuous process. Even though this activity was carried out for a limited time, the message conveyed was able to be well received by the children so that they could return their smiles in facing an ideal life in the future. This trauma healing requires stages that don't take a moment, it takes step by step to slowly eliminate the trauma of children who are survivors of the earthquake and tsunami in Palu City. This can help survivors of the earthquake and tsunami victims in Palu City slowly recover from the trauma they have experienced. Interpersonal communication is a medium for conveying messages in trauma healing handlers where survivors provide feedback in the form of feeling happy and confident. Trauma healing assistance provided by volunteers has a positive impact on traumatized children. The positive impact it has in general is that children are cheerful again and their trauma can be minimized.

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