

## Implementation of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Counseling in Drug Abuse Prevention Efforts for At-Risk Students at SMPN 8 Tipo, Palu City

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### Abstract

*This community service-based research study aims to analyze the effectiveness of counseling in promoting behavioral change, as well as the potential effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) counseling in preventing drug abuse among students at SMPN 8 Tipo, Palu City. This counseling program was implemented by the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) of Palu City for students identified as being at risk of drug abuse. The study employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental one-group pretest–posttest design. The study sample consisted of 10 students. Data collection was conducted using a Likert scale questionnaire that measured risky drug abuse behavior, attitudes toward drugs, and coping skills. Data analysis was performed using a paired-sample t-test to compare scores before and after the intervention. The results of the study showed positive changes in all measured variables. Risky drug abuse behavior decreased by 43%, while attitudes toward drugs improved by 20% and coping skills increased by 33%. Statistically, the difference between the pretest and posttest was significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). Additionally, observational results indicated improvements in students' social behavior, such as increased discipline, communication, and engagement in positive activities. These findings suggest that the implementation of CBT counseling has potential as a preventive approach to reducing the risk of drug abuse among adolescents in school settings. The success of the program's implementation was also supported by the involvement of the school, families, and counselors.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Narcotics and addictive substances are a global problem with widespread impacts on public health, social well-being, and security. The term "drugs" refers to narcotics, psychotropics, and other addictive substances as regulated in Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics and Law Number 5 of 1997 concerning Psychotropics. These substances act on the central nervous system and can affect an individual's cognitive function, emotions, and behavior, potentially leading to both physical and psychological dependence. The impact of drug abuse is not limited to health aspects, but also includes impaired social function, decreased productivity, and increased risk of crime. It is important to develop a comprehensive prevention strategy involving various sectors, including education and public health, to effectively address the problem of drug abuse (Pamungkas et al., 2024).

Based on the 2024 National Narcotics Abuse Survey released by the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) of the Republic of Indonesia, the prevalence of drug abuse in Indonesia reached 2.12%, an increase compared to 1.95% in 2021. The estimated number of people aged 10–59 who have ever used drugs is more than 5.2 million, with approximately 3.9 million of them being users in the past year (BNN RI, 2024). This data indicates that drug abuse remains a serious problem with an increasing trend that requires continued attention.

At the regional level, Central Sulawesi Province is among those with relatively high rates of drug abuse. A 2024 report from the National Narcotics Agency of Central Sulawesi Province showed a significant number of individuals who had been exposed to narcotics, with cases concentrated in several areas, such as Palu City, Parigi Moutong Regency, and Sigi Regency (Arawan et al., 2023). However, this data should be understood as an estimate of prevalence and not solely a count of legal cases, so its interpretation should be approached with caution.

More specifically, data from the Palu City National Narcotics Agency (BNN) in 2024 shows that productive age groups, including school and college students, dominate rehabilitation program participants. This indicates that adolescents are a vulnerable group to drug abuse, influenced by internal factors such as psychological conditions and external factors such as the social environment (Panyiwani et al., 2025). Therefore, interventions that are not only repressive but also preventive and rehabilitative are crucial.

In this context, psychologically based approaches such as counseling are a relevant strategy for preventing and addressing drug abuse in adolescents. Counseling helps individuals understand the problems they face, increase self-awareness, and develop more adaptive decision-making skills in the face of social and environmental pressures (Ratu et al., 2024).

One psychotherapy approach widely used in drug abuse rehabilitation programs is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). This approach emphasizes the relationship between an individual's thought patterns, emotions, and behavior, where addictive behavior is seen as arising from cognitive distortions or faulty thinking. In practice, CBT helps individuals identify negative thoughts and irrational beliefs that drive substance use, such as the belief that drugs can be a solution to reduce stress, life pressures, or emotional problems. Once these thought patterns are identified, the therapist will help the client undergo cognitive restructuring by replacing maladaptive thoughts with more realistic and healthy perspectives.

In addition to focusing on changing mindsets, CBT also develops coping skills so individuals can face triggering situations without returning to drug use. Techniques used include self-control, stress management, problem-solving, social skills training, and relapse prevention strategies. Through this process, individuals are expected to increase self-awareness, control substance use urges, and develop more adaptive behaviors in their daily lives. Empirically, CBT is effective in reducing addictive behaviors, reducing the risk of relapse, and improving psychosocial functioning in various drug abuse populations (Ramadhani S., 2022). However, most research still focuses on clinical contexts or adult populations, so empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of CBT in school-age adolescents, particularly in the high-risk areas of Palu City, remains limited.

The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Latifah Nur Ahyani and Dwi Astuti (2013) in a study entitled "The Effect of Cognitive Behavior Therapy in Strengthening Empathy in Adolescents with Aggressive Behavior". The study showed that adolescents' levels of aggression after receiving CBT intervention were lower than before. Furthermore, based on the partial eta-squared value, CBT contributed 23.7% to reducing aggressive behavior in adolescents. These findings indicate that the CBT approach is effective in promoting behavioral change in adolescents.

However, these studies differ in the focus of the intervention and the subjects. While previous studies focused more on reducing aggressive behavior and strengthening empathy in adolescents, this study focuses on preventing drug abuse in at-risk students in the school environment through changes in mindset, risky behavior, and improved coping skills after participating in CBT counseling.

In Palu City, the National Narcotics Agency has implemented a CBT-based counseling program in several schools, including SMPN 8 Tippo. This program is intended as an early intervention to reduce drug abuse among students. However, to date, there has been no empirical evaluation examining the program's effectiveness in reducing drug use or sustainably changing student behavior.

Based on this description, there is a research gap, this is in the form of limitations of studies that specifically evaluate the effectiveness of school-based CBT interventions in the local context, especially in Palu City, after the release of national data in 2024. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the success of the counseling program. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) was implemented by the Palu City National Narcotics Agency (BNN) at SMPN 8 Tippo. Evaluation was conducted through analysis of changes in student behavior, comparison of conditions before and after the intervention, and identification of supporting and inhibiting factors in program implementation.

This research is expected to provide empirical contributions in the development of rehabilitation strategies and prevention of drug abuse among adolescents, as well as become the basis for policy recommendations for stakeholders, particularly in optimizing school-based intervention programs.

## **2. METHOD**

This activity uses a descriptive approach to describe the application of problem-based counseling. CBT for students at SMPN 8 Tippo, Palu City. The activity was conducted with students participating in a counseling program organized by the Palu City National Narcotics Agency. Participants were students identified as being at risk for drug abuse and willing to participate in the entire program.

The implementation of activities is carried out in several stages, namely:

1. Initial assessment to identify students' conditions and risk levels
2. Implementation of CBT counseling sessions in stages
3. Assistance and monitoring during the counseling process
4. Evaluation through final assessment and observation of behavioral changes

Data collection was conducted using a Likert-scale questionnaire measuring students' risk behavior, attitudes toward drugs, and coping skills. Measurements were taken before and after counseling.

Data analysis was carried out descriptively by comparing the results of the initial and final assessments and interpreting the changes that occurred during the activity.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of this activity illustrate the implementation of CBT-based counseling for students at risk of drug abuse at SMPN 8 Tippo, Palu City. Evaluation was conducted by comparing conditions before and after the counseling program, supported by observations from parents and school officials throughout the activity.

This activity involved 10 students identified as being at risk for drug abuse based on initial screening by the Palu City National Narcotics Agency. The intervention was implemented through several structured CBT counseling sessions over approximately three months, focusing on restructuring mindsets, improving coping skills, and preventing risky behaviors.

The evaluation of this activity was conducted using pretest and posttest methods to assess changes in students' conditions before and after CBT counseling. The pretest was administered at the initial stage before the intervention was administered, while the posttest was administered after the entire counseling session was completed. This measurement aimed to determine the effectiveness of CBT counseling on changing risky behaviors related to drug abuse, attitudes toward narcotics, and students' coping skills.

The instrument used was a Likert-scale questionnaire designed based on indicators of risky drug abuse behavior, attitudes toward drugs, and adolescent coping skills. Each student was

asked to complete the questionnaire independently, with guidance from the implementation team to ensure understanding of each question. In addition to the questionnaire, the evaluation was also supported by observations during the activity and reports from the school and parents.



**Figure 1.** Students provide guidance on filling out the questionnaire by students

The results showed changes in all variables measured after CBT counseling. For risky drug abuse behavior, students' scores decreased from 72 in the pretest to 41 in the posttest, a 43% decrease. This decrease indicates a reduction in students' risky behavior tendencies after participating in the counseling intervention.

In terms of attitudes toward drugs, the score increased from 69 to 83, a 20% increase. These results indicate that students have a stronger rejection of drug abuse and a better understanding of the negative impacts of drugs after participating in CBT counseling.

Meanwhile, students' coping skills also improved, from a score of 60 on the pretest to 80 on the posttest, a 33% increase. This improvement indicates that students are better able to cope with social pressure, exercise self-control, and make more adaptive decisions in situations that could potentially lead to risky behavior.

Overall, the results of the pretest and posttest showed that the implementation of CBT counseling had a positive impact on changing students' mindsets, attitudes, and behavior in efforts to prevent drug abuse in the school environment.

Variables	Pretest	Posttest	Change
Drug Abuse Risk Behavior	72	41	↓ 43%
Attitudes towards Drugs	69	83	↑ 20%
Coping Skills	60	80	↑ 33%

**Table 1.**Initial - Final Assessment Results (n=10)

Based on the evaluation results, changes were observed in all measured aspects after the implementation of CBT counseling. Risk behaviors for drug abuse decreased compared to the baseline before the intervention. This indicates a trend toward improvement in students' behavioral control in risky situations.

In terms of attitudes toward drugs, there was a positive shift, with students demonstrating a stronger rejection of drug abuse after participating in a series of counseling sessions. This change indicates an increased understanding of the negative impacts of drugs. Students' coping skills also improved, as evidenced by their improved ability to deal with peer pressure, such as invitations to try cigarettes, alcohol, or drugs, encouragement to engage in negative behaviors to gain acceptance within a group, and verbal pressure such as teasing or stigma if they refuse such invitations. Furthermore, students were better able to navigate risky social situations, such as being in unhealthy social environments, gathering without supervision that can encourage deviant behavior, and social interactions that require adjustment to inappropriate group norms. This

ability is important in the context of adolescence because it serves as a protective factor against substance abuse behavior.

The dynamics of the changes that occurred demonstrated improvements in student behavior and mindset during the activities, which were further reinforced through observations by parents and school staff. These findings demonstrate that changes are not only visible in the measurement results but also in the students' daily activities.

### **Discussion of CBT Implementation**

*Cognitive Behavioral Therapy* (CBT) is an approach that focuses on the relationship between thoughts, feelings, and behavior. (Noorfathah et al., 2024). The CBT approach explains that thought patterns can influence emotions, thus giving rise to actions or behaviors that align with one's thought patterns. In this activity, students are guided to recognize inappropriate thought patterns related to narcotics and then assisted in developing healthier and more realistic ways of thinking. Through counseling sessions, students begin to show changes in how they perceive the risks of drug abuse, including the negative impacts on their health, social environment, and future. Initially, students assumed that consuming drugs on a small scale would not have many negative impacts on them or that it was just a trial. However, after receiving counseling, students began to realize that drug abuse can have negative impacts on their social and personal lives, even if it only starts on a small scale. This process demonstrates a gradual cognitive restructuring throughout the intervention.

This shift in mindset then impacts daily behavior, as evidenced by increased discipline, involvement in positive activities, and improved social interactions within the school and family environment. This aligns with the CBT principle that cognitive changes will influence behavioral changes.

### **Changes in Students' Social Life**

In addition to individual changes, this activity also demonstrated changes in students' social lives. Based on parent reports and observations during the activity, students demonstrated improved family communication, adherence to house rules, and increased positive activities such as studying and religious activities.

These changes demonstrate that CBT counseling not only impacts cognitive aspects but also helps students better adjust to their social environment. A more communicative family environment also supports this change process.

However, these changes still need to be supported by ongoing mentoring to ensure long-term sustainability and prevent the recurrence of risky behaviors. Consistent environmental support is crucial for maintaining the sustainability of intervention results.

### **Rehabilitation and Prevention Context**

This activity aligns with the rehabilitation principles outlined in Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics, which emphasizes a coaching and recovery approach for drug abusers, particularly adolescents. In this context, CBT is used as an intervention approach aimed at strengthening students' psychological and social aspects so they can stay away from drug abuse and improve their ability to adapt to everyday life. This approach also supports early prevention efforts in the school environment.

### **The Role of Student Interns in Assisting in the Implementation of Counseling**

During this internship, students are actively involved in two divisions, the Eradication Division and the Rehabilitation Division, at the Palu City National Narcotics Agency (BNN). Their involvement in both divisions aims to provide practical field experience and support the implementation of drug abuse prevention and treatment programs for adolescents.

The Prevention Division of the National Narcotics Agency (BNN), which is under the Deputy for Prevention, is responsible for implementing preventive efforts to reduce drug abuse in Indonesia. The division's main focus is to create a society that is aware, resilient, and immune to the dangers of narcotics through various educational and outreach activities. According to the BNN, "The Deputy for Prevention is tasked with implementing P4GN in the field of prevention" (BNN, 2026). In addition, the BNN also explains that "Prevention of drug abuse is all efforts

aimed at reducing the demand and illicit need for drugs" (BNN, 2026). In its implementation, this division runs various programs such as counseling on the dangers of drugs in schools, campuses, and workplaces, as well as establishing collaborations with the community and government agencies to raise public awareness of the dangers of narcotics. In line with this task, students are also involved in field observations and counseling activities regarding the dangers of drug abuse, focused on groups of teenagers and minors, as a preventive effort to increase understanding and awareness of the risks of drug use.

In the Eradication Division, students are directly involved in field observations and outreach activities regarding the dangers of drug abuse. Outreach activities focus on adolescents and minors as a preventative measure to increase understanding and awareness of the risks of drug use. In these activities, students help deliver basic material on the types, impacts, and dangers of drug abuse on health, the social environment, and the future of adolescents.

In addition to outreach activities, students also assisted in the inspection of students' belongings as part of efforts to prevent the entry of narcotics into the school environment. These activities were conducted in a focused manner, maintaining procedures and an educational approach for students.



**Figure 2.** Students participate in hazard awareness activities drug abuse in schools.

The Rehabilitation Division of the National Narcotics Agency (BNN), which is under the Deputy for Rehabilitation, is tasked with managing the recovery process for drug abusers and addicts so they can return to healthy lives and function normally in society. The division's primary focus is on providing medical rehabilitation, social rehabilitation, and post-rehabilitation support for victims of drug abuse. According to the BNN, one of the functions of rehabilitation is "Implementing therapeutic community-based rehabilitation or other methods that have been proven successful" (BNN, 2026). Furthermore, rehabilitation also aims to "reintegrate into society and provide follow-up care for drug abusers and/or addicts" (BNN, 2026). In its implementation, the Rehabilitation Division runs various programs such as medical rehabilitation, psychological counseling, social therapy, mental health coaching, and post-rehabilitation support so that victims of drug abuse can recover physically and psychologically.

In the Rehabilitation Division, students are tasked with assisting with counseling sessions for students participating in the intervention program. They assist with the preparation of administrative documents, the preparation of counseling rooms, and ensuring that sessions run smoothly and smoothly. In addition to supporting the technical aspects of the program, students also observe the counseling process and student responses during the intervention.



**Figure 3.** Students assist in counseling activities

Student involvement in both divisions provides a practical learning tool for understanding how to handle drug abuse cases among adolescents, particularly minors. Furthermore, the students utilize this field experience as part of their research to assess the effectiveness of counseling methods applied in drug abuse rehabilitation and prevention programs.

#### **Supporting Factors for Activities**

The success of this activity is supported by several factors, including the active involvement of parents in accompanying students, school support in implementing the program, and good communication between counselors, students, and families. Additionally, using daily activity logs as a monitoring tool helps us see the gradual development of student behavior throughout the activity. This provides a more comprehensive picture of the changes that occur.

Synergy between schools, families, and counselors is an important factor in supporting changes in student behavior during the intervention process, while strengthening the effectiveness of drug abuse prevention programs in adolescent environments.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Implementation of counseling, *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy*, and the Community-Based Therapy (CBT) program conducted by the National Narcotics Agency of Palu City on students at SMPN 8 Tipo showed positive changes in participants. These changes were evident in a decrease in risky drug abuse behavior, an increase in negative attitudes toward drugs, and improved coping skills after participating in a series of counseling sessions. Furthermore, observations also showed improvements in students' social behavior, such as increased discipline, better communication, and involvement in positive activities at school and within their families.

In general, the application of CBT counseling can be an approach that supports efforts to prevent drug abuse among adolescents in the school environment through changes in students' mindsets and behavior.

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