

Supportive communication between caregivers and intellectual disabilities student in increasing self-confidence at Bina Siwi orphanage Yogyakarta

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Abstract

This research discusses the lack of self-confidence in children with intellectual disabilities due to obstacles in communicating and expressing themselves. Students with intellectual disabilities need support and motivation from their surroundings. The research aims to explain the application of supportive communication by caregivers in increasing students' self-confidence at Bina Siwi Orphanage Yogyakarta. The method used is descriptive qualitative with in-depth interviews with informants selected by purposive sampling; three pairs consist of caregivers and students with intellectual disabilities. The results showed supportive communication used in six dimensions. In the descriptive dimension, caregivers build relationships through explanation in direction and reprimand. The problem-oriented dimension encourages students to take responsibility by finding solutions together, and the empathy dimension creates comfort for students. The equality dimension makes them feel valued, increasing self-confidence and independence. The Provisionals dimension helps students to dare to give criticism and suggestions. The spontaneity dimension shows caregiver differences in honesty; some are always honest, and others choose to be more discreet in conveying information. Supportive communication creates an inclusive environment and increases learners' confidence. It is recommended that caregivers continue to improve supportive communication skills by integrating them into programs at the orphanage.

Keywords

Supportive communication, Caregivers, Students, Intellectual disabilities, Confident

Introduction

Communication is an essential key in social life; without communication, humans cannot understand other individuals' intentions and goals. As social beings, humans have a social environment that starts with the family. The family is the first and smallest environment in the interactions that occur. Interaction in the family will always require communication as one of the things that maintains its integrity [1]. The communication that is established can be in the form of supportive communication. Families can

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implement supportive communication to support each other and provide motivation between family members. Supportive communication is commonly used to communicate effectively in difficult situations and conditions. This communication seeks to foster good relations between communicators and communicants in dealing with problems by providing feedback or overcoming complex problems [2].

Families need supportive communication to foster good relationships, especially when dealing with problems. The chaos that often occurs in family relationships can come from various things. Starting from financial issues, the absence of the baby, differences in parenting, infidelity, in-laws who interfere in married life, and the lack of communication [3]. However, there are other problems in families, for example, when they have children with disabilities. Some parents or families will feel embarrassed and consider children with disabilities a “disgrace” to the family [4]. This condition will be a challenge in building existing communication. Children who have special needs will need assistance in daily activities. Handayani [5] states that the important point in dealing with children with special needs is that they need love, friends, environmental acceptance, and opportunities to develop and achieve.

People with disabilities fall into various categories, such as physical, mental, developmental, and sensory disabilities. In addition, there are multiple disabilities or multi disabilities. The condition of the intellectual disabilities can be interpreted as children with special needs who experience problems with intelligence and adaptability in meeting basic daily needs [6]. Families have a significant role in maintaining and caring for children with special needs. It is not uncommon for people with disabilities to succeed with their families' encouragement and support, like Luthfi Defri Riski, a intellectual disabilities child who memorized the Koran. Luthfi was trained by his parents and grandmother, proving that support from families can improve the abilities of children with disabilities [7]. People with disabilities without good support can show negative behavior. For example, an elementary school student named ATPS, who has been in second grade for two years, often disrupts friends, breaks the rules, is aggressive, and damages classroom facilities. This was caused by a lack of family support due to broken home conditions, economic problems, and habits of violence in the family, which shaped ATPS' character to be unruly [8].

Supportive family communication can increase self-confidence, create a sense of being valued, understood, and listened to, and support harmony. However, sometimes, when families are unable to care for children with special needs, problems can arise for both parties. In this situation, leaving the child to a special education institution is the right solution. The orphanage will care for and assist the needs of children with disabilities, including increasing self-confidence. Bina Siwi Orphanage, Yogyakarta, is one example of a social institution that is a place for people with disabilities and mental disabilities to live and learn. Bina Siwi Orphanage is an orphanage that takes care of children with disabilities, one of whom is intellectual disabilities. In their daily activities, students are taught various skills to foster self-confidence [9]. Caregivers provide material related to

basic activities in daily life. In addition, they are equipped with various skills such as sewing, weaving, painting, and even playing musical instruments. The orphanage does not impose coercion on students, but students are asked to try various skills and choose the one that suits their abilities.

Method

This research uses a qualitative descriptive research approach, which aims to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects, such as behavior, concepts, perceptions, and related issues about the humans under study [10]. The data collection technique used is in-depth interviews to find hidden reality and meaning to understand a phenomenon [11]. The informant retrieval technique used is purposive sampling, using the criteria of Bina Siwi Orphanage caregivers who have worked for 5 years and live in the orphanage. The following informant is a intellectual disabilities student who has lived at Bina Siwi Orphanage for 5 years.

The data that has been collected can then be analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques carried out interactively and continuously so that the data is saturated. At the same time, the steps in conducting qualitative data analysis are divided into four stages, as explained by Miles and Huberman (1984) in [12]. After the data has been obtained, its validity can then be tested. This study uses source triangulation, which refers to using one data source type (informant). However, several informants or sources can be taken from different groups or levels [13].

Results and Discussion

This research took three pairs of informants from caregivers and students who live at Bina Siwi Orphanage Yogyakarta. The following are the results of in-depth interviews covering the six dimensions of supportive communication as seen in Table 1 and Tabel 2.

Table 1. Supportive Communication through the Dimensions of Descriptive Dimension, Problem Orientation, and Spontaneity

	Descriptive	The Problem Orientation	Spontaneity
Pair S - F	- S, as a caregiver, often reprimands F as a student; the reprimand is in the form of explaining mistakes and giving advice. - As a student, F feels comfortable with S's treatment because she does not feel excessive pressure.	- S always provides solutions to problems that occur. The solutions can be through discussions, words, examples of actions, or short videos. - F feels that he is always involved in problem-solving and feels helped by the solutions.	- S did not hesitate to be honest with F, especially when F made mistakes, but the reprimands were accompanied by advice and solutions. - F does not feel that the reprimand given is pressure for him. Instead, he considers it as motivation to be better.
Pair S – L	- S, as a caregiver, always gives constructive explanations to L as a student,	- S always tries to invite L to find solutions together. - S hopes that these actions will increase the sense of	- S also tries to always tell the truth and what it is, without covering up everything to L.

	Descriptive	The Problem Orientation	Spontaneity
	- S reasoned that doing so creates a good environment.	responsibility because students will be involved in solving problems.	- L accepts feedback because she considers it to be input for her.
Pair A - H	- A, as a caregiver, differentiates the reprimand to be given according to the level of the student's disability. - As a student, H is not discouraged when reprimanded by A; even H feels more motivated to correct his mistakes.	- A, as a caregiver, always invites discussion with H as a student in finding solutions; this action aims to increase independence. - A revealed that not all students can be invited to find solutions together.	- As a caregiver, A sometimes wants to be honest with students, but A prefers to sort out information. - H, as a student, does not feel that there is something that the caregiver covers for the student; he always believes what A says.

Source: Interview results with informants, November 2024.

Table 2. Supportive Communication Through the Dimensions of Empathy, Equality, and Provisionals

	Empathy	Equality	Provisionals
Pair S – F	- S, as a caregiver, always tries to understand F's situation as a student. - Even F, who is married and is experiencing economic problems, was asked to return to the orphanage and become a music teacher.	- S always provides space for students to contribute to daily activities. - As a student, F feels that he is not limited in his creativity; he mentions that he can create songs, train students, and create jargon.	- S stated that she has never received harsh criticism from the students; the caregiver more often receives suggestions regarding the programs at the orphanage. - F stated that he is comfortable giving suggestions and opinions to caregivers.
Pair S – L	- S, as a caregiver, always shows empathy to students; this is intended to be followed among students. - L also applies empathy to her friends.	- S always tries to open space for students' contributions in various fields. - L initiated the morning gymnastics activity to keep the spirit of the orphanage children.	- S revealed that she often received criticism from L, which was not directly conveyed by L but through other parties. - L stated that he felt embarrassed when he had to express criticism directly to S.
Pair A - H	- A, as a caregiver, mentioned that empathy has been applied by all caregivers towards students. - A explained that the empathy given was based on the circumstances experienced by H as a student.	- As a caregiver, A mentioned that she never forbids students to be creative; she revealed that students are given space to contribute to daily activities. - H mentioned that she often gives ideas in sewing activities, which makes her feel comfortable and happy.	- As a caregiver, A stated that students tend not to be too critical of caregivers. - A often receives criticism and input from H when she is not in public.

Source: Interview results with informants, November 2024.

The data obtained in this study was then discussed into six dimensions of supportive communication. The following is a discussion of the findings of this study.

Descriptive

The three couples tend to take the same actions and attitudes in providing understanding and advice to students who make mistakes. The three caregivers do not

give negative responses but provide explanations and encouragement through advice. The factor that makes caregivers give positive responses and advice is their sense of responsibility to educate students [14]. The role of the teacher or caregiver is as an advisor who provides advice and counsel to students. Advice is given personally and classically so that advice or encouragement can be used for student learning [15]. Caregivers who provide positive advice and messages can increase students' self-confidence [16].

The problem orientation

The three couples showed the same tendency to find solutions to each problem. All three caregivers provide solutions and open, collaborative spaces with students to solve problems. The three learners also felt the positive impact of the actions taken by the caregivers. Teachers or caregivers have an important role as facilitators of students in achieving learning goals [17]. One of the goals of Bina Siwi Orphanage Yogyakarta is to create independence. Hopefully, the program will find solutions together to train students' independence. Problem-solving through discussions between caregivers and students can foster a sense of togetherness and rational thinking and encourage motivation in learning [18]. Differences were only seen in the third pair, who mentioned that not all students could be invited to find solutions; only students with low grahita levels could collaborate in problem-solving. Individuals or students trained in problem-solving will have a sense of independence, innovative thinking, and drive to face challenges [19].

Spontaneity

Pair 1 and 2 have the same tendency to always be honest without covering up something to the students. Caregivers take these actions to foster closeness between caregivers and students. Other factors that cause honesty in caregivers are information systems, morale, and coworkers [20]. In pair 3, caregivers are more likely to sort out information that will be conveyed to students. A caregiver has a reason for sorting out information because not all students understand and can receive information provided by the caregiver. Students with low levels of impairment are pretty capable of communicating well and also quite capable of providing explanations [21]. Students tend to feel that they are not brave enough to always tell the truth to caregivers; of course, this must be improved so that honesty can continue to be improved. Honesty will have a good impact on the growth and development of students, such as research that mentions honest character in the learning process to form an honest personality character that will determine future success [22].

Empathy

All caregivers provide empathy to students in different forms. In couple 1, F, as a student, was even helped when experiencing economic difficulties. Factors that influence the empathy caregivers provide include affection maturity, educational programs (training and learning resources), and cognitive capacity of age. In other pairs,

empathy occurs through words and actions given. The empathetic attitude shown by caregivers has a positive impact by being followed by students, mainly intellectual disabilities children, who are easily influenced by their environment. Intellectual disabilities students are easily influenced by others, so their environment must be well maintained [24]. In addition, applying empathy can increase openness to suggestions, motivation, and confidence in completing tasks [25].

Equality

All caregivers provide space for students to contribute to daily activities at Bina Siwi Orphanage. Caregivers are optimistic that giving them the trust to contribute will foster a positive relationship between beliefs and abilities, resulting in increased self-confidence [26]. In pair 1, F mentioned that he was given space for creativity with musical instruments. The same situation is also shown in pairs 2 and 3; students can contribute according to their abilities and willingness. Students feel more confident and valued in every activity they participate in. The contribution space provided by caregivers will provide freedom for students, according to Anjali. et al. [27] freedom for students will improve motor coordination, problem-solving, and social skills. Allowing individuals to try new things will increase self-confidence, skills, knowledge, and decision-making autonomy [28].

Provisionalism

The findings show that students with intellectual disabilities tend not to dare to criticize their caregivers. In pairs 1 and 3, caregivers tend not to get criticism directly from students; they more often get student suggestions and new ideas. In pair 2, caregivers get criticism from students delivered through other intermediaries. The lack of criticism given by students is influenced by the psychological characteristics of people with disabilities; low intellectual function causes them difficulty making conclusions and thinking critically [29]. Caregivers should be able to encourage students further to dare to express opinions even though they are different; providing opportunities and support for students or students to be able to express views and dare to ask questions can increase self-confidence [24]. In addition, students can be taught to accept criticism to understand that they are not always right and must receive input from others to improve their quality [30].

Conclusion

The results found that supportive communication at Bina Siwi Orphanage Yogyakarta is quite good. All six dimensions of supportive communication have been applied in daily communication. Caregivers have provided explanations in directions and reprimands, meaning that the descriptive dimension has occurred. The problem orientation dimension is seen from the implementation of joint solution finding. The empathy dimension is seen from the creation of comfort in students, while the equality dimension is seen from students who feel valued, thus increasing their self-confidence. Of course, caregivers must improve some areas, such as in the provisionalism dimension, which

shows that students need to be used to delivering criticism. In addition, in the spontaneity dimension, the level of honesty of caregivers and students must be further improved. Seeing the conditions at Bina Siwi Orphanage Yogyakarta, it can be said that good supportive communication can increase the self-confidence of students with disabilities.

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