

Self Love: A Counseling Practice for Handling Self Injury

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Abstrak: *Self injury* atau menyakiti diri sendiri adalah salah satu bentuk perilaku negatif yang merugikan diri sendiri dan dapat berdampak buruk bagi kesehatan mental. Munculnya perilaku *self injury* sebagai bentuk luapan emosional untuk mengatasi rasa sakit yang terlalu menyakitkan dan tidak dapat diungkapkannya dengan kata-kata. Salah satu penyebab munculnya perilaku *self injury* karena kurangnya *self love* pada diri sendiri. *Self love* adalah suatu upaya konseling yang dapat diberikan oleh konselor untuk menanggapi perilaku *self injury*. *Self love* merupakan salah satu aspek penting dalam menjaga kesehatan mental. Penerapan *self love* sangat penting dalam kehidupan pelaku *self injury*. Dengan adanya sikap *self love* pelaku akan lebih memahami, menerima dan mencintai diri sendiri sesuai dengan kondisi diri apa adanya, dapat meluruskan pola pikir yang negatif yang dapat merugikan diri sendiri, dapat menangani permasalahan yang dihadapi dengan bijaksana, dapat lebih bertanggungjawab atas tindakan yang dilakukan, serta akan lebih mudah untuk berpikir positif baik pada saat marah, sedih, kecewa, maupun pada saat menghadapi permasalahan dalam hidupnya.

Kata Kunci: *Self injury*, Konseling, Konselor, *Self love*.

Abstrac: Self injury or self harm is a form of negative behavior that harms oneself and can have a bad impact on mental health. The emergence of self injury behavior as a form of emotional outburst to overcome pain that is too painful and cannot be expressed in words. One of the causes of self-injury behavior is a lack of self love for oneself. Self love is a counseling effort that can be provided by a counselor to treat self injury behavior. Self love is an important aspect in maintaining mental health. The application of self love is very important in the lives of self injurers. With an attitude of self love, actors will better understand, accept and love themselves according to their condition as they are, can straighten out negative thought patterns that can harm themselves, can handle the problems they face wisely, can be more responsible for the actions they take, and it will be easier to think positively when angry, sad, disappointed, or when facing problems in life.

Keywords: Self injury, Counseling, Counselor, Self love.

INTRODUCTION

Self-injury is a form of maladaptive behavior aimed at inflicting harm on oneself without the intent to commit suicide, known as Nonsuicidal Self-Injury (NSSI). However, it is performed consciously and deliberately. This self-harming behavior is carried out as an emotional outlet to cope with overwhelming pain that is too difficult to express with words. For individuals who engage in this behavior, self-injury seems to be a method for managing emotions or expressing the pain they are experiencing. The motivations for engaging in self-injury include unresolved personal issues that cannot be shared, traumatic experiences, and poor family communication patterns (Asyafina, N., & Salam, N.S., 2022).

Self-injury is a form of defense mechanism used to cope with emotional pain, loneliness, loss, feelings of emptiness, and a desire for self-punishment, which results in physical injuries (Klonsky, E.D., 2007). However, individuals engaging in self-injury only achieve temporary relief (Margareta, 2019). Various forms of self-injury include scratching, cutting, or scraping the skin until it leaves marks or bleeds, hitting oneself with an object until the body bruises, tearing or ripping the skin, carving words or symbols into the skin, burning the skin with cigarettes or other flames, forcefully pulling out hair, hitting oneself, banging the body against an object, and pinching oneself until it bleeds (Kanan, M.K., Finger, J., & Plog, A.E., 2008). These actions are often triggered by stress, depression, feelings of loneliness, poor communication with others, feelings of pressure, an inability to express emotions, lack of emotional control, lack of self-love and self-care, feelings of worthlessness, the loss of a loved one, and an inability to cope with reality. As a result, self-injury serves as a form of self-punishment, an outlet for emotional distress, and an expression of self-hatred commonly seen in individuals with neurotic tendencies.

According to research conducted by Claes, L., Houben, A., Vandereycken, W., et al. (2010), it was found that 30.7% of students reported engaging in self-injury. The most common self-injury behaviors reported were: 52% cut themselves, 52.2% banged their heads, 47.8% engaged in severe scratching, and 41.3% hit themselves. Additionally, 71.6% of students who reported self-injury used one or two methods. Furthermore, 7% of students were found to have a very high tendency to engage in self-injury, 29% had a high tendency, and 64% were categorized as having a moderate tendency to engage in self-injury (Putri, N.R., & Nusantoro, E., 2020).

The research conducted by Kurniawaty, R. (2012) found the following: first, individuals frequently engaged in self-injury using razor blades as a form of emotional release, and they reported feeling calm after performing self-injury. Second, individuals engaged in self-injury less frequently, also using razor blades as a way to release unexpressed emotions, and they reported feeling better after performing self-injury.

A YouGov Omnibus survey conducted in June 2019 revealed that 36.9% of Indonesians have intentionally harmed themselves (Thesalonika & Apsari, N.C., 2022). Among the respondents, 45% in the age group of 18-24 reported having engaged in self-injury, while 7% reported engaging in self-injury on a regular basis (Santoso, A.R., 2020). A recent phenomenon in Karangasem involved 49 schoolchildren participating in mass self-injury, with 40 children inflicting a single cut, while nine others engaged in repetitive cutting (Ulya, N.F., 2023).

The phenomenon of self-injury represents a form of negative behavior that is harmful to oneself and, if left unaddressed, can disrupt the psychological condition of the individual or negatively impact their mental health. Research conducted by Glenn, C.R., & Klonsky, E.D. (2009) indicates that individuals who have engaged in self-injury are likely to repeat this negative behavior, often with increasing intensity over time. One contributing factor to an individual's tendency to engage in self-destructive behavior is a lack of self-love (Basaria, D., Satyagraha, M.D., Indriana, L.M., & Nathania, 2022).

Self-love is the act of fully loving oneself, treating oneself with kindness and respect, and nurturing one's growth and happiness. Moreover, self-love encompasses not only how one treats oneself but also the thoughts and feelings one has about oneself (Sinaga, A.F.G.B., 2023). Self-love is a form of therapeutic effort aimed at helping individuals better understand and love themselves as they are, as well as correcting negative thought patterns that can be self-destructive. Adopting an attitude of self-acceptance and self-love contributes to improved mental health. Additionally, self-love serves as a means for individuals to care for themselves, treat themselves well, and take greater responsibility for their actions. Therefore, the importance of self-love lies in its role as a therapeutic approach offered by counselors to address self-injury.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Self Injury

Self-injury is a form of negative behavior exhibited by individuals as a means of expressing emotional pain through self-harm. This behavior is performed consciously and deliberately but not with the intent to commit suicide (Kurniawaty, R., 2012). Self-injury serves as an expression of self-hatred, aimed at alleviating psychological suffering (Katodhia, L., & Sinambela, F.C., 2020) and achieving temporary relief (Margaretha, A.A., 2019). Research conducted by Joseph Franklin and his team found that self-injury helps individuals cope with negative emotions they experience (DeAngelis, T., 2015). Furthermore, self-injury is a defense mechanism to manage emotional pain, loneliness, loss, feelings of emptiness, and a desire for self-punishment, resulting in physical injuries (Klonsky, 2007).

The types of self-injury behaviors according to Caperton in (Maidah, D., 2013) are as follows: Major self-mutilation, which refers to self-injury behaviors that cause permanent damage to body organs, such as cutting off hands, legs, or even removing an eye, Stereotypic self-injury, which involves repeatedly harming oneself but not to a severe extent, such as banging one's head against a wall or floor repeatedly, Superficial self-mutilation, which is a type of self-injury behavior commonly practiced by individuals, such as pulling out one's hair, cutting the arm, banging the head, slamming one's body, or burning specific body parts.

Individuals who engage in self-injury possess several characteristics, including a dislike for themselves, frequent anger towards themselves, severe depression or stress, an inability to control their emotions or actions, fear of change, neglect of self-care, a traumatic childhood, low self-esteem, and rigid thinking patterns (Maidah, D., 2013). Additionally, they may exhibit high levels of aggression, poor impulse control, act on whims, and feel incapable of managing the problems they face (Knigge, 1992).

According to Eliana in (Walsh, B.W., 2006), self-injury behavior has the following characteristics: Based on the individual's personality, there are difficulties in controlling impulses in various areas, issues related to eating disorders or addiction to addictive substances, a tendency to have low self-esteem, a strong need for love and acceptance from others, rigid thought patterns, and a binary way of thinking (either/or), Based on the individual's family environment, individuals may have childhood trauma, come from incomplete families, struggle to internalize positive attention, and may not want or be able to take good care of themselves, Based on the individual's social environment, individuals may have difficulties in forming and maintaining stable relationships, fear of change in daily activities or new experiences in any form, behavioral changes, and necessary changes for recovery.

Self-injury is carried out by individuals due to several factors, including stress or depression, feelings of loneliness, poor communication patterns with others, feelings of pressure, an inability to express emotions, a lack of self-love and care, feelings of worthlessness, the loss of a loved one, and an inability to face reality (Sutton, J. 2007).

Self-injury behavior is a form of negative behavior that harms oneself, and if left unaddressed, it can disrupt the psychological condition of the individual or negatively impact their mental health. Higgins, M. (2014) states that self-injury can have serious effects on both the mental and physical well-being of the individual. A person who engages in self-injury may become isolated, experience diminished self-esteem, and feel shame and guilt for having harmed themselves. Furthermore, individuals who engage in self-injury may leave behind scars; cutting can result in blood loss and damage to tendons, nerves, and muscle tissue (Higgins, M., 2014), leading to anxiety and addiction for the self-injurer (Maidah, D., 2013). Psychologically, this behavior can provide temporary relief, satisfaction, sadness, and may even lead to suicidal thoughts or feelings,

representing the belief that suicide is the only way to cope with life's problems (Guntur, A.I., Dewi, E.M.P., & Ridfah, A. 2021).

The phenomenon of self-injury is a form of negative behavior that harms the individual, and if left unaddressed, it can disrupt the psychological condition of the individual or negatively impact their mental health. Research conducted by Glenn, C.R., & Klonsky, E.D. (2009) shows that individuals who have engaged in self-injury are highly likely to repeat this negative behavior, often with increasing intensity over time. One of the reasons a person may be prone to experiencing or engaging in self-harming behavior is a lack of self-love (Basaria, D., Satyagraha, M.D., Indriana, L.M., & Nathania, 2022).

Self-injury is a dangerous behavior that can jeopardize the individual's life and even lead to loss of life. Therefore, it is essential to have appropriate intervention from professionals to address self-injury behavior. The presence of a professional, such as a doctor, psychologist, psychiatrist, or counselor, can assist individuals in recognizing the triggers that lead to self-injury and finding ways to cope with it. A professional can implement prevention and intervention efforts using various techniques or therapeutic approaches tailored to the causes and forms of self-injury exhibited by the individual. Here, self-love is presented as a therapeutic approach provided by counselors or professionals to address self-injury.

Self Love

Self-love is the act of fully loving oneself, treating oneself with kindness and respect, and nurturing one's growth and happiness. Furthermore, self-love encompasses not only how one treats oneself but also the thoughts and feelings about oneself (Sinaga, A.F.G.B., 2023).

Self-love is crucial for individuals because having a self-love attitude helps one recognize, understand, and see the potential within themselves. Self-love is a form of positive behavior that needs to be developed and nurtured so that individuals can cultivate a positive attitude toward themselves. The practice of self-love enables individuals to accept themselves as they are. This acceptance includes embracing all aspects of life, both joyful and sorrowful, and taking greater responsibility for their actions (Rani, E.N., Sulistiawan, I., Yunita, R.D., et al., 2022).

Ways to develop self-love include starting from within oneself, changing one's thinking patterns to eliminate anxiety, and stopping self-blame. It is important not to focus on the opinions of others, always remember that our bodies are valuable and special, and choose a supportive circle (Septiana, N.Z., & Darina, J., 2021). Additionally, one should encourage self-confidence or self-esteem, get to know oneself better, avoid comparing oneself to others, disregard others' comments, make decisions with confidence, confront fears instead of avoiding them, maintain a positive lifestyle, and keep a friendship circle with positive individuals (Rani, E.N., Sulistiawan, I., Yunita, R.D., et al., 2022).

A negative environment can make it difficult for someone to practice self-love. Being in a supportive friendship circle can have a positive impact on the development of self-love. With self-love, life becomes happier, and individuals can accept themselves with all their strengths and weaknesses.

According to Melati, F.S.A. (2022), there are many benefits to practicing self-love, including maintaining mental health, reducing the risk of psychological disorders such as depression, antisocial behavior, isolation, anxiety, and emotional instability. It can also lower the risk of heart disease, promote relaxation and happiness, clarify thinking, and enhance creativity. Cultivating self-love within oneself can create happiness in the future, boost self-confidence, prevent comparisons with others, and develop a strong mindset. Self-love is an essential aspect of maintaining mental health. Therefore, the application of self-love is crucial in the lives of individuals engaging in self-injury. With a self-love attitude, individuals will find it easier to think

positively during times of anger, sadness, disappointment, or when facing life's challenges, and can replace thoughts of self-injury with self-loving actions that are far more beneficial.

METHODOLOGY

This research is a qualitative study with a library research type. The data collection techniques used are documentation study, literature review of books, literature, notes, scientific journals including articles, theses, dissertations, and reports related to the research problem. The collected data were analyzed and discussed in depth, and presented using content analysis and descriptive analysis.

FINDINGS

Based on the review of various literature and research findings, it was found that there are two types of classifications of self-injury behavior. For more details, please refer to Figure 1.

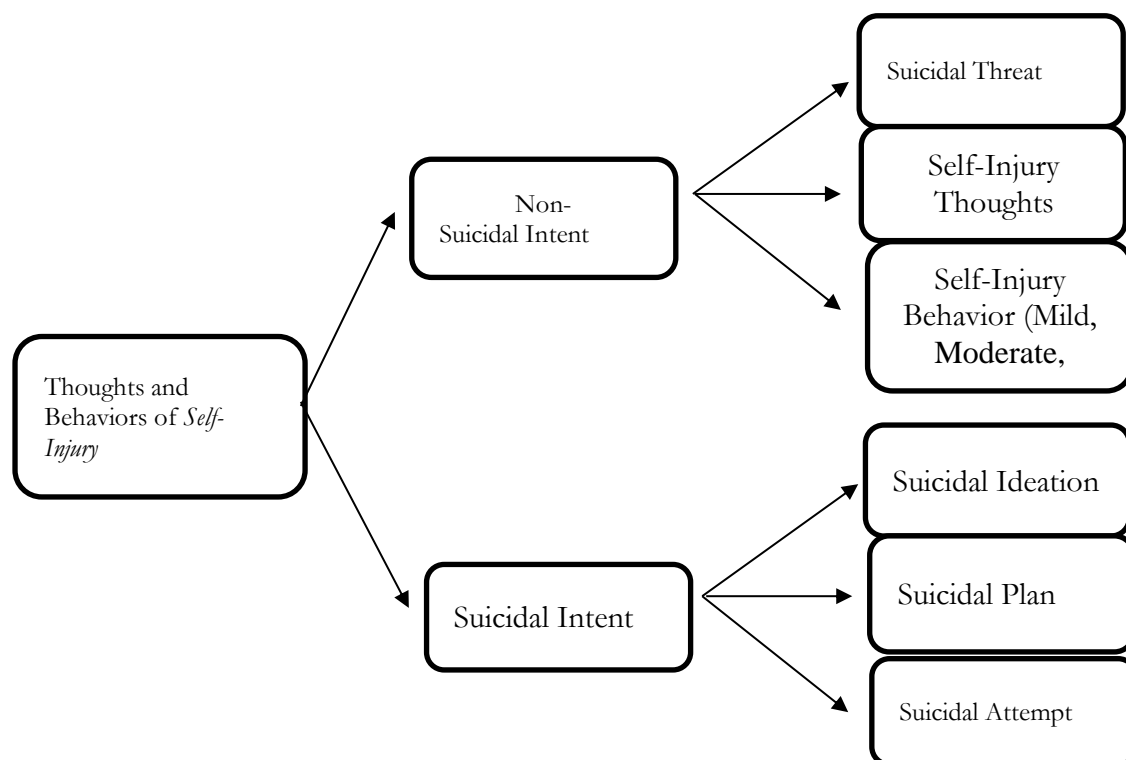


Figure 1. Classification of Thoughts and Behaviors Associated with Self-Injury

Figure 1 illustrates that there are two potential motivations for individuals to engage in self-injury: thoughts and behaviors related to self-injury that are not intended for suicide, which serve merely to inflict pain on oneself as a means of coping with overwhelming emotions, and self-injury behaviors associated with suicidal intent (Romas, M.Z., 2010).

The first classification, which involves thoughts and behaviors of self-injury without suicidal intent, consists of three stages: the first stage involves suicidal threats, the second stage is characterized by the emergence of thoughts related to self-injury, and the third stage is when the individual actually engages in self-injury, which can be categorized as mild (infrequently performed and not severe), moderate (occasionally performed and sometimes requiring medical intervention

for the pain caused), and severe (frequently performed, necessitating medical treatment and intensive professional care).

The second classification encompasses thoughts and behaviors of self-injury with suicidal intent, which also consists of three stages: the first stage involves mere ideation of suicide, the second stage entails formulating a plan to commit suicide, and the third stage involves attempts made to carry out the suicide.

Although self-injury behaviors are considered Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI), which are actions performed without the intention of committing suicide, research indicates that individuals who engage in self-injury possess a significantly high potential for suicidal behavior (Thesalonika, Apsari, N.C., 2022). Repeated acts of self-injury, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), can have fatal consequences and serve as a risk factor for suicide.

DISCUSSION

Self-injury is the act of deliberately harming oneself in various ways as a means of coping with or expressing emotional pain. Self-injury behavior is an urgent condition that requires immediate intervention or treatment. This is because self-injury can lead to suicidal ideation, especially if it is done repeatedly, which may result in addiction and poses a significant risk for suicide attempts.

There are several ways to eliminate the urge to engage in self-injury, including talking to someone who can provide comfort, recognizing the situations and conditions that trigger the desire to self-injure, expressing negative emotions in non-destructive ways such as crying, yelling, or hitting a pillow, finding alternative activities like exercising, listening to music, or writing, and seeking professional help by consulting a psychologist or counselor.

In addition, a way to address self-injury is by implementing self-love. Self-love plays a crucial role in maintaining an individual's mental health. Self-injury is an act of hurting oneself, while self-love is an act of loving oneself. Self-injury is not the right solution for dealing with various life problems. In fact, it is an action that is very detrimental to oneself. Therefore, with the presence of self-love, individuals will better understand, accept, and love themselves as they are, correct negative thought patterns that can harm themselves, handle the problems they face wisely, take greater responsibility for their actions, and be more inclined to think positively during moments of anger, sadness, disappointment, or when facing life's challenges. Individuals who have successfully applied self-love in their lives are expected to love themselves, eliminate self-injury thoughts, and stop the self-injury behaviors they have been engaging in. It is certainly not easy to implement self-love in the life of someone who has already engaged in self-injury. Therefore, individuals need time, a process, and support from close friends and a conducive and supportive environment.

CONCLUSION

Self-injury is a form of emotional outburst that is misguided and should not be allowed to occur continuously, as it can have detrimental effects on the individual both psychologically and physically. Therefore, preventive measures and interventions are necessary to address this issue, with some cases requiring specialized treatment from professionals. The involvement of doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and counselors is crucial in the effort to manage cases of self-injury. With professional support and intervention, it is hoped that self-injurious behavior can be prevented and alleviated. Additionally, families, especially parents, play a significant role in preventing self-injurious behavior. The presence of parents or loved ones can be invaluable for individuals in facing and resolving the issues they are experiencing.

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