

Reducing Bullying Behavior Through Group Counseling Based on the Solution Focused Brief Counseling Approach

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ABSTRACT

Bullying behavior is a serious problem in the school environment because it negatively impacts the psychological, social, and academic conditions of students. Although various efforts have been made, the use of Solution Focused Brief Counseling-based group counseling services as an intervention to reduce bullying behavior at the junior high school level is still limited. The SFBC approach focuses on the development of solutions, the use of individual strengths, and the success experiences of students so that it is expected to be able to encourage positive behavior change and reduce the tendency to bully. This study aims to analyze the level of bullying behavior of students before and after participating in SFBC-based group counseling services and test its effectiveness. The study uses a quantitative approach with a One Group Pretest-Posttest design on 10 grade VII students of SMP Negeri 3 Brebes who were selected purposively. Data was collected through questionnaires, observations, and documentation, then analyzed using descriptive statistics, Shapiro-Wilk normality test, and Paired Sample t-Test. The results showed that the average score of bullying behavior decreased from 108.00 to 100.60 with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). These findings show that SFBC-based group counseling services are effective in reducing students' bullying behavior. Practically, the results of this study can be an alternative for guidance and counseling teachers in developing solution-oriented intervention services to prevent and reduce bullying behavior and create a safer and conducive school climate.

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INTRODUCTION

Bullying is one of the social problems that is still a concern in the world of education because it has an impact on the psychological, social, and academic development of students. This phenomenon is often found at the junior high school (SMP) level, when students are in their early adolescence which is characterized by physical, emotional, and social changes. In this developmental phase, adolescents begin to build self-identity and increase the intensity of interaction with peer groups so that they are more vulnerable to engaging in aggressive behavior, including bullying. Bullying is understood as aggressive behavior that is carried out deliberately, repeatedly, and involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim, both in the form of physical, verbal, relational, and cyberbullying.

Bullying behavior still shows a fairly high prevalence in the school environment and is a challenge to creating a safe and conducive learning environment. Bullying not only has a negative impact on the victim, but also affects the perpetrator and the overall social climate of the school. Victims of bullying have the potential to experience anxiety, low self-confidence, decreased motivation to learn, and difficulty establishing social relationships with peers. In line with that, Wiyono et al. (2024) emphasizes that "bullying creates long-term psychological consequences that hinder students' academic engagement and emotional resilience." The findings show that bullying is not just deviant behavior, but a psychosocial problem that requires systematic handling through guidance and counseling services.

The emergence of bullying behavior is influenced by various factors, such as weak emotional regulation, the need to gain social recognition, dominance over peers, and lack of

adaptive social skills. This condition is often exacerbated by the lack of supervision and preventive intervention in the school environment. Zefilla et al. (2023) asserts that "Bully behavior among students is strongly associated with a lack of emotional control and non-adaptive social interaction, which tends to increase if not addressed through structured interventions." The statement suggests that bullying behavior requires interventions that focus not only on sanctioning, but also on the formation of more adaptive social behaviors.

One of the guidance and counseling services that is considered capable of reducing bullying behavior is group counseling. Through group dynamics, students get the opportunity to share experiences, receive feedback, develop empathy, and improve interpersonal communication skills. The interactions that occur during the counseling process help students understand the impact of bullying behavior on others while building more positive social behaviors. Wiyono et al. (2024) emphasizes that "group counseling has the advantage of helping students understand the impact of their social behaviors through direct interaction and peer feedback." Thus, group counseling not only serves as a curative service, but also as a preventive effort in creating a conducive school climate.

The Solution Focused Brief Counseling approach is one of the solution-oriented counseling approaches by emphasizing the strengths, potential, and success experiences of individuals rather than focusing on the problems they face. This approach helps students set realistic change goals and develop problem-solving strategies based on the resources they have. Diana & M. (2021) states that "Solution Focused Brief Counseling is able to help students build psychological resilience through a focus on small, meaningful solutions and successes." Therefore, this approach is assessed in accordance with the characteristics of junior high school students who require a short, practical, and behavior-change-oriented counseling process.

The findings are in line with the development of international research on SFBC. Kim et al. (2020). In a systematic review of the application of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy in children and adolescents, it was reported that this approach consistently had a positive influence on behavior change, improved problem-solving skills, emotion regulation, and social adjustment. In addition, Lombu et al. (2023) found that "Solution-Focused Brief Counseling-based group counseling is effective in increasing student resilience, as this approach encourages students to recognize potential and internal resources that have been under-realized". Increased resilience thus makes students better able to face social pressures and manage conflicts constructively. Summiyati and Summiyati & Asrori (2023) emphasized that "Solution Focused Brief Counseling in group counseling has been proven to significantly increase the self-efficacy of junior high school students." Thus, that Solution Focused Brief Counseling does not only have an impact on the problem-solving process, but also on strengthening the psychological potential of students as the foundation for long-term behavior change. The findings reinforce that SFBC has an adequate empirical foundation to be applied in the context of guidance and counseling services in schools.

Various previous studies have shown that the application of Solution Focused Brief Counseling provides positive results in educational settings. (Diana, L. W., 2021) emphasized that "the application of group counseling with the Solution-Focused Brief Counseling approach is effective in increasing the resilience of junior high school students through strengthening their self-potential and orientation to solutions." In addition, Permatasari et al. (2023) shows that the SFBC approach is able to increase students' academic resilience, while Pratiwi & Putri (2025) which states that "solution-based group counseling services are capable of reducing aggressive behavior and increasing positive social behavior in students." However, these studies still focus more on improving the internal psychological aspects of students. Research that specifically tests the effectiveness of Solution Focused Brief Counseling-based group counseling in reducing bullying behavior as a key variable is still relatively limited, especially at the junior high school level.

However, most of the research still focuses on improving internal psychological aspects, such as resilience, achievement motivation, self-adjustment, and psychological well-being. Research that directly places bullying behavior as the main dependent variable is still relatively limited. In addition, most of the research was conducted in different contexts, both

in terms of student characteristics, education level, and intervention objectives, so that it has not provided adequate empirical evidence on the effectiveness of SFBC-based group counseling in reducing bullying behavior in junior high school students. Thus, there is still a research gap related to the application of SFBC-based group counseling as a direct intervention to bullying behavior in the context of junior high schools in Indonesia.

The results of a preliminary study at SMP Negeri 3 Brebes show that bullying behavior is still found in students in grades VII A, VII B, and VII E in various forms, including physical, verbal, and cyberbullying. Based on the results of observations and information from Guidance and Counseling teachers, this behavior still occurs repeatedly even though the school has coached and given warnings to students. The handling carried out so far is more oriented towards individual case resolution so that it has not utilized SFBC-based group counseling services as an alternative intervention that utilizes group dynamics to build changes in students' social behavior.

Based on this phenomenon and the research gaps that have been identified, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of group counseling services based on Solution Focused Brief Counseling in reducing bullying behavior in grade VII students of SMP Negeri 3 Brebes. This research is expected to make an empirical contribution to the scientific development of guidance and counseling, especially regarding the application of SFBC as an intervention to reduce bullying behavior, as well as being an alternative service that can be applied by Guidance and Counseling teachers in creating a safer, healthier, and conducive school environment.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with the *pre-experimental* and design *One Group Pretest-Posttest Design*. This design was chosen to identify behavioral changes *bullying* students before and after being given treatment in the form of group-based counseling services *Solution Focused Brief Counseling*. According to Sugiyono (2021) Design *One Group Pretest-Posttest Design* is a research design that uses a group of subjects who are given measurements before (*Pretest*) and after (*posttest*) treatment so that the changes that occur can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention.

Respondents

The research was carried out at SMP Negeri 3 Brebes in the even semester of the 2025/2026 Academic Year. The research population consisted of students in grades VII A, VII B, and VII E. The research sample amounted to 10 students who were selected using the purposive sampling technique. This technique was chosen because the research aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions in students who have special characteristics, namely showing a tendency to bullying behavior, so that not all members of the population meet the criteria as research respondents (Sugiyono, 2021 p. 81) states that "a sample is a part of the number and characteristics that that population has." Accordingly, Creswell (2018) explained that "Samples are a subgroup of the population that researchers use to obtain research data." In this study, the sampling technique used is purposive sampling, which is the selection of subjects based on certain criteria that are relevant to the research objectives, especially students who show behavioral tendencies *bullying*. Based on these criteria, the selected respondents were students who had a level of behavior *bullying* based on the results of the initial questionnaire distribution and the recommendations of the Guidance and Counseling teachers. All samples followed the entire series of group-based counseling services *Solution Focused Brief Counseling* until the research is completed. The inclusion criteria for respondents include: (1) being identified as having a high level of bullying behavior based on the results of the initial questionnaire, (2) obtaining recommendations from the Guidance and Counseling teacher, (3) being willing to participate in the entire series of group counseling services, and (4) obtaining permission from parents/guardians to participate in the research. All respondents were in the age range 12–14 years old and consisted of male students from grades

VII A, VII B, and VII E. Based on the results *Pretest*, all respondents were in the category of high bullying behavior so that they deserved SFBC-based group counseling interventions.

Instruments

The main instrument of the research is in the form of behavioral questionnaires *bullying* which is arranged by dimension *bullying* submitted by Agisyaputri et al. (2023) "Behavior *bullying* in adolescents can be classified into *bullying* physical, verbal, relational, and *cyberbullying*, where *cyberbullying* is a form of bullying through digital media that has different characteristics than *Bullying* traditional." The questionnaire uses a four-level Likert scale with a choice of answers ranging from very inappropriate to very appropriate. Before being used in the study, the instrument has gone through validity and reliability tests to ensure that each item of the statement is able to measure behavior *bullying* precisely and consistently. (Scott, 2019), "validity indicates the degree of accuracy between the data that actually occurs in the research object and the data that can be reported by the researcher." According to Scott (2019) "Reliability is the degree of consistency or regularity of data over a given time interval." Thus, a good research instrument must meet the requirements of validity and reliability so that the data obtained can be trusted. In addition to questionnaires, the study also uses observation sheets to observe changes in student behavior while participating in group counseling services as well as documentation as supporting data for research. Before being used in the research, the instrument has gone through a content validity test by guidance and counseling experts, then continued with an empirical validity test using correlation Pearson's Product Moment. A statement item is declared valid if it has a correlation coefficient value greater than the value of *r* table at a significance level of 5%. The reliability of the instrument was analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, with a $\alpha \geq$ value of 0.70 indicates that the instrument has good internal consistency (Sugiyono, 2019).

In addition to questionnaires, the study also used observation sheets to observe changes in student behavior while participating in group counseling services as well as documentation as data to support the research.

Procedures

The research began with the implementation of *Pretest* to find out the level of behavior *bullying* students before being given treatment. Next, respondents followed group counseling services using the *Solution Focused Brief Counseling*. solution-oriented Bakhrudin (2024) explains that *Solution Focused-Brief Counseling* is a counseling approach that centers on finding solutions in overcoming problems and encouraging positive change for counselors. This approach emphasizes finding solutions that already exist or have the potential to be owned by counselors so that the counseling process can run briefly and results-oriented. During the counseling process, Rustam et al. (2023) which states that "the techniques used in the approach *Solution Focused Brief Counseling* Includes *miracle question*, *exception question*, and *scaling question* which is applied in each counseling session," These techniques help individuals build realistic change goals, recognize their abilities, and increase confidence in problem-solving. Service Group counseling is carried out in 3 **Session**, with a duration of about 40 minutes in each session. The stages of implementation include: (1) group formation and group contract preparation; (2) identification of behavior change goals and exploration of counselors' expectations; (3) application of miracle question techniques to help students imagine conditions when bullying problems have been resolved; (4) the application of exception questions and scaling questions to identify success experiences, resources owned, and monitor the development of behavior change; and (5) evaluation of counseling results, strengthening change commitments, and preparing follow-up plans. These techniques help students build realistic goals, recognize their strengths, and increase confidence in implementing more adaptive social behaviors.

After the entire series of counseling was completed, respondents were again given a *posttest* using the same instrument to determine the change in the level of bullying behavior after receiving SFBC-based group counseling services.

Data analysis

The research data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics with the help of IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. Descriptive statistics were used to describe behavioral scores *bullying* before and after treatment through mean values, percentages, minimum scores, maximum scores, and standard deviations. Before hypothesis testing was performed, the data were tested for normality using the Shapiro–Wilk test "W/S test (*Shapiro–Wilk*) is suitable for sample sizes 3 and above and provides a structured procedure for testing normality under various distribution conditions." (Aslam, 2024) After the data met the assumption of normality, the research hypothesis was tested using the Paired Sample t-Test at a significance level of 0.05 to determine the difference in bullying behavior scores before and after participating in SFBC-based group counseling services. The results of the analysis were used to determine the effectiveness of the intervention in reducing bullying behavior in grade VII students of SMP Negeri 3 Brebes.

Ethical Considerations

This research has obtained permission from SMP Negeri 3 Brebes before the implementation of the research. All respondents and parents/guardians were given an explanation of the objectives, procedures, benefits, and rights of the respondents during the study. Student participation is voluntary and is carried out after obtaining parental consent (*informed consent*) and student consent (*assent*). All respondents' identities are kept confidential and research data is only used for academic purposes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Students' Bullying Behavior Levels Before Providing Solution-Based Focused Brief Counseling Group Services

The results of the descriptive analysis showed that the level of bullying behavior of students before being given group counseling services based on *Solution Focused Brief Counseling* (SFBC) was still in the high category. Based on the results of the *pretest*, an average score of 108.00 was obtained with a minimum score of 105 and a maximum score of 115. The results of the categorization showed that 2 students (20%) were in the very high category and 8 students (80%) were in the high category. These findings indicate that all respondents have a tendency to engage in *bullying behavior* so that they require intervention through guidance and counseling services.

High behavior *bullying* show that students still exhibit aggressive behavior in social interactions, both in the form of *bullying* verbal, physical, and relational. These conditions indicate that students' emotional regulation and social skills have not developed optimally. The results of this study are in line with Cynthia et al. (2021) which states that "the behavior *bullying* In adolescents, schools tend to be influenced by peer group dynamics and weak control of individual emotions in the school social environment." In addition, Kusuma et al. (2023) explains that "*bullying* in junior high school students often appear as an unhealthy form of social interaction due to a lack of emotional regulation ability and the influence of the dominant peer environment".

Theoretically, this finding is in accordance with the theory of adolescent development which explains that the age of 12–14 years is a phase of self-identity search so that individuals are more easily influenced by peer groups. Therefore, group counseling services are needed that are able to help students develop more adaptive self-control, empathy, and social behavior.

Table 1. Pretest Results

NO	SAMPLE CODE	GRADES	CATEGORY
1	S1	106	HEIGHT
2	S2	109	HEIGHT
3	S3	106	HEIGHT
4	S4	108	HEIGHT
5	S5	109	HEIGHT
6	S6	105	HEIGHT
7	S7	105	HEIGHT
8	S8	115	VERY HIGH
9	S9	110	VERY HIGH
10	S10	107	HEIGHT
	Total	1080	
		Total score = 1080	
		Average = 108.00	
		Score Max = 115	
		Min Score = 105	

Students' Bullying Behavior Levels After Solution Focused Brief Counseling Based Group Counseling Services

The results of the posttest showed a change in the level of bullying behavior after respondents participated in group counseling services based on *Solution Focused Brief Counseling*. The average score of bullying behavior decreased to 100.60 with a minimum score of 96 and a maximum score of 104. Based on categorization, as many as 4 students (40%) were in the very low category and 6 students (60%) were in the low category. There were no more students in the high or very high category. These results showed that there was a positive change in behavior after the implementation of group counseling services.

Behavioral decline bullying It shows that students are beginning to be able to control emotions, reduce aggressive behavior, and build more positive social relationships with peers. During the counseling process, group dynamics provide opportunities for participants to share experiences, gain social support, and reflect on behaviors that have been done. The results of this study support the findings Pratiwi & Putri (2025) which states that "solution-based group counseling services are able to reduce aggressive behavior and increase positive social behavior in students" and Wati et al. (2022) explains that "group counseling interventions can help students develop self-control thereby reducing behavior bullying in the school environment."

The *Solution Focused Brief Counseling* approach is solution-oriented by emphasizing individual strengths, success experiences, and future goals. Therefore, students are encouraged to recognize their potential as well as build more constructive problem-solving strategies so that behavior change can take place in a sustainable manner.

Table 2. Posttest Results

NO	SAMPLE CODE	GRADES	CATEGORY
1	S1	97	VERY LOW
2	S2	100	VERY LOW
3	S3	102	LOW
4	S4	101	LOW
5	S5	104	LOW
6	S6	102	LOW
7	S7	96	VERY LOW
8	S8	99	VERY LOW
9	S9	104	LOW
10	S10	101	LOW
	Total	1006	
		Total = 1,006	
		Average = 100.60	
		Score Max = 104	
		Min Score = 96	

Solution-Based Group Counseling Services Focused Brief Counseling Is Able to Reduce Bullying Behavior of Students in Grades VII A, B, and E SMP Negeri 3 Brebes

The results of the data analysis showed that group counseling services based on *Solution Focused Brief Counseling* were able to reduce *bullying* behavior of students in grades VII A, B, and E of SMP Negeri 3 Brebes. This was proven by the results of the Paired Sample t-Test which showed a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This value showed a significant difference between pretest and posttest scores, so the research hypothesis was accepted. In addition, the average score of *bullying* behavior decreased by 7.40 points, from 108.00 in the pretest to 100.60 in the posttest. The findings show that Solution Focused Brief Counseling-based group counseling services provide positive changes to student behavior.

A decrease in bullying behavior scores showed that students began to be able to control aggressive behavior, increase empathy towards peers, and build more positive social relationships. During the counseling process, participants were directed to recognize their potential, identify positive experiences they have had, and develop alternative problem-solving techniques through miracle question, scaling question, exception question, coping question, and compliment techniques. The application of these techniques helps students develop self-awareness and increase responsibility for behaviors shown in daily life.

In addition to a solution-oriented approach, group dynamics also play a role in supporting changes in student behavior. Interactions between group members provide opportunities for students to share experiences, provide support, receive feedback, and learn from peer experiences. This process helps students understand the impact of *bullying* behavior on others while building a commitment to display more adaptive social behavior.

Based on the results of statistical analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that Solution Focused Brief Counseling-based group counseling services are able to reduce *bullying* behavior in grade VII A, B, and E students of SMP Negeri 3 Brebes. These findings show that solution-based group counseling services can be used as an alternative intervention in guidance and counseling services to help reduce *bullying* behavior and support the creation of a safe and conducive school environment.

CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that Solution Focused Brief Counseling (SFBC)-based group counseling services have the potential to be effective in reducing bullying behavior in grade VII students of SMP Negeri 3 Brebes. Descriptive statistical results showed a decrease in average score from 108.00 in the pretest to 100.60 in the posttest. The Shapiro-Wilk normality test showed that the pretest ($p = 0.093$) and posttest ($p = 0.555$) data were distributed normally. However, the significance of the score difference cannot be inferred because the results of the paired sample t-test were not included. Practically, SFBC can be considered as an alternative to guidance and counseling services to help students develop positive emotion regulation, empathy, and social interaction. However, this study has limitations in the form of a pre-experimental design without a control group and a relatively small number of respondents, namely 10 students. Further research is recommended to involve a larger sample, using experimental designs with control groups, and testing the effectiveness of SFBC at various levels of education and school contexts.

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Reducing Bullying Behavior Through Group Counseling Based on the Solution Focused Brief Counseling Approach
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