

Implementation of Group Counseling Using Positive Self-Talk and Thought Stopping Techniques to Improve Self-Disclosure

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ABSTRACT

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The importance of self-disclosure in fostering healthy interactions can create a positive academic environment, including adaptability, self-confidence, and positive attitudes. This study aims to compare the effects of positive self-talk and thought-stopping techniques on students' self-disclosure. The research design used was a randomized 2-factor pretest multiple posttest group design with two intervention groups, namely group counseling using positive self-talk techniques and thought-stopping techniques. The research subjects were 12 students selected by purposive sampling. Self-disclosure measurements were carried out in three stages: before the intervention (pre-test), after the intervention (post-test), and two weeks after the intervention (follow-up) using the Self-Disclosure Scale. Mixed ANOVA analysis showed that both interventions significantly increased self-disclosure from pre-test to post-test ($p < 0.05$; $F = 215.302$). The main effect between groups was also significant ($p < 0.05$; $F = 4108.035$), indicating a difference in effectiveness between the group counseling techniques using the positive self-talk technique and the thought stopping technique, but there was no significant time $\times$ group interaction ($p > 0.05$; $F = 0.285$). The increase in self-disclosure scores in the group using the positive self-talk technique was more maintained at follow-up than in the thought stopping technique.

Keywords: *Positive Self-Talk, Technique group counseling, Thought Stopping Technique group counseling, self-disclosure*

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INTRODUCTION

Building positive relationships among students plays a crucial role in maintaining their psychological well-being. Positive relationships are a predictor of social well-being. It is essential for students to build effective relationships, develop problem-solving skills, find meaning in social interactions, and maintain strong psychological resilience. Self-disclosure is key to interpersonal communication and serves as a catalyst for building social relationships. Self-disclosure is key to interpersonal communication and a trigger for positive social relationships (Lutfha, 2024). Self-disclosure is one way to establish communication between individuals and create social relationships. Gainau et al. (2009) explain that without self-disclosure, individuals

tend to receive less positive social acceptance, which can impact their personality development. According to the Johari Window theory, the wider a person's open space, the more effective interpersonal communication can be, as individuals are able to provide and receive information about themselves more openly (Barker, 1996).

Based on this premise, self-disclosure is considered a crucial factor in fostering students' personal development. Consequently, examining self-disclosure among grade XI high school students is significant, as adolescents at this stage are in the process of identity formation and have needs regarding social acceptance and emotional management (Purba, 2025). Thus, grade XI students are a relevant target group, as they are in the middle adolescence developmental phase a period characterized by increased social interaction, a need for peer support, and a greater readiness to share personal experiences (Setianingsih, 2015). Khalid & Wahyuni (2023) highlight the importance of self-disclosure in fostering healthier interactions and creating a positive academic environment, thereby promoting students' psychological well-being. Johnson (cited in Gainau et al., 2009) also indicates that individuals capable of self-disclosure prove to be more adaptable, confident, competent, and reliable, while also demonstrating a positive attitude, trust in others, objectivity, and openness.

Indriani et al. (2022) strengthen this statement by stating that students must be able to increase self-disclosure because low self-disclosure will cause individuals to isolate themselves from their environment, making it difficult to make friends, potentially becoming victims of bullying, giving rise to negative thoughts, and having challenges in interacting. Based on the preliminary research conducted, it was revealed that some students still do not realize the importance of building good relationships with their peers in daily life, and also lack awareness of the importance of self-disclosure. This occurs due to negative thoughts from unpleasant experiences; students feel that if they open up, they will be judged, there will be negative assessments, and be compared with others, in addition to the lack of self-confidence and trust in others in disclosing information about themselves and expressing themselves, which becomes an obstacle to self-disclosure.

Research by Gusmawati et al. (2016) demonstrates that 55.29% of students fall into the "limited" category of self-disclosure breadth, while 37.65% fall into the "moderate" category; this indicates that, in general, students' self-disclosure breadth is limited, implying they still face constraints in engaging in self-disclosure. Lestari et al. (2022) showed that 100% of students had low self-confidence in self-disclosure; after being given self-disclosure training, students' self-confidence increased by 16.7% to the very high category, 50% of students had high self-confidence, and 33.4% still had low self-disclosure confidence. Then, research by Hendrawan (2015) found that most students had a level of self-disclosure in the moderate to low category. Similar findings were also shown by Laoli et al. (2023), who found that students' ability to express thoughts, feelings, personal opinions, and personal information to others was still low. Low self-disclosure causes students to receive less social support and be more vulnerable to experiencing various psychological problems when facing pressure in everyday life.

From the perspective of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), low levels of self-disclosure can be influenced by cognitive distortions or negative thought patterns that arise during social interactions. Young et al. (2023) explain that self-disclosure can play a role in reducing an individual's tendency to maintain negative thought patterns. By sharing experiences, thoughts, and feelings with others, individuals gain the opportunity to re-evaluate their thinking, thereby challenging and altering maladaptive cognitive distortions. These findings support the CBT approach, including the use of positive self-talk, as shifting negative internal dialogue toward

more adaptive patterns can be achieved through positive self-talk techniques. Therefore, interventions are needed to help students transform these negative thought patterns into more rational and adaptive ones. This statement is supported by Ovenstad et al. (2023), who explain that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy treatment will help overcome stress through self-disclosure. Students are asked to actively and positively engage so they can open up and share their problems. This is needed because the higher the social anxiety, the more inhibited self-disclosure in communication Mýlek et al. (2024). When individuals are able to self-disclose, social acceptance and relationship quality increase (Voncken & Dijk, 2012). If social anxiety is reduced, individuals become more comfortable in interpersonal conversations and more open in interactions (Leigh et al., 2021). Barata et al. (2022) proved that CBT group interventions help individuals reduce social fear through social situation skills training and direct exposure to interpersonal interactions. Less avoidance behavior allows students to be more confident and more comfortable in self-disclosing in social relationships.

Positive self-talk techniques can be used to generate positive thoughts (Hidayati & Christiana, 2025). Young et al. (2023) showed that self-disclosure is associated with a reduced tendency to self-destruct and challenges negative cognitive distortions. These findings support the CBT approach, including the use of positive self-talk, as positive self-talk can transform negative internal dialogue into a more adaptive one. Thus, self-talk can indirectly support self-disclosure behavior. Masi (2025) provides evidence that group counseling using self-talk techniques can increase students' positive self-talk and self-disclosure, improve student behavior, and reduce social stress.

Meanwhile, thought stopping can help correct self-destructive negative thoughts (Sutriyani, 2020). This technique, similar to positive self-talk, aims to replace negative thoughts with more positive ones. However, thought stopping involves stopping negative thoughts from arising. Thought stopping refers to a deliberate, self-initiated cognitive control technique to block ongoing thought sequences, which is usually followed by deliberate positive self-talk (Bakker, 2009). Grecco et al. (2013) explain that self-disclosure can be enhanced through psychological stimuli or tapping into the subconscious mind, thereby encouraging self-disclosure (disclosure priming). Through Thought Stopping, students will imagine situations that inhibit self-disclosure and replace them with positive thoughts.

This research is significant because self-disclosure can foster healthy interactions and a positive academic environment, while also enhancing students' psychological well-being through positive social connections. It differs from previous studies in terms of its focus, approach, and design. Past research has generally examined the causes and effects of self-disclosure, as well as the relationship between self-disclosure and self-confidence; consequently, studies on enhancing self-disclosure through counseling interventions that incorporate CBT techniques remain scarce. Thus, this research offers a more contextual and practical contribution to strengthening school guidance and counseling services. It introduces a novel contribution in the form of an integrated and comprehensive CBT group counseling service utilizing positive self-talk and thought-stopping techniques aimed at increasing self-disclosure among high school students.

METHODS

This study employs a quantitative approach with an experimental research design. Specifically, it utilizes a randomized two-factor pretest–multiple posttest group design, an experimental framework involving the random assignment of participants into two treatment groups, the comparison of two treatment factors, a baseline measurement (pretest) before the

intervention, and multiple post-intervention measurements (multiple posttests) to observe changes in outcomes over time (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Field, 2018). The study implements an experimental quantitative method by administering treatments, specifically positive self-talk and thought-stopping techniques, within group counseling sessions for the experimental groups. The study population consisted of 110 Grade XI students from SMA Negeri 12 Semarang. The sample comprised 12 respondents falling into the "very low" category, selected using a purposive sampling technique. This sample size was relatively small due to research limitations, as the study was restricted to four classes for the distribution of research instruments.

Once the 12 students meeting the research criteria were identified, all participants' names were entered into a randomization process. Random assignment was then conducted to determine group allocation, resulting in two balanced experimental groups. Measurements were taken at three time points: prior to the intervention (pretest), after the completion of all counseling sessions (posttest), and two weeks following the intervention (follow-up). Thus, this design not only evaluates changes in self-disclosure following the treatment but also identifies the sustainability of the intervention's effects over time and compares the effectiveness of the two CBT techniques. The screening process was designed to select participants possessing specific characteristics: Grade XI students; students with low or very low self-disclosure scores; students who had not previously participated in group counseling utilizing positive self-talk and thought-stopping techniques; and students willing to participate fully from start to finish.

This study used a psychological scale from the Self-Disclosure Scale (SPD), a scale designed and adapted to the expert theory of Wheelles & Grotz (1976), which includes five dimensions, namely intention, amount, valence, honesty, and depth control. This instrument uses a five-point Likert scale ranging from "very appropriate" (5) to "very inappropriate" (1). Testing the validity of the self-disclosure scale produced a coefficient of 0.254, with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.667. This study included three measurement phases, namely at the pre-test before the intervention of 2 CBT groups, the post-test after the intervention of 2 CBT groups, and follow-up (after 2 weeks of intervention). Data were analyzed using a mixed ANOVA test; this statistical analysis method is used to test the effects of two types of independent variables in one study (two types of intervention).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study aims to examine and compare the effectiveness of two techniques in the Cognitive Behavior Therapy counseling approach, namely positive self-talk and thought stopping techniques, to improve self-disclosure in grade XI students at SMA Negeri 12 Semarang. To provide bigger changes to the results of self-disclosure measurements, a categorization system is applied based on certain score ranges. This categorization serves to group students' self-disclosure levels descriptively, thus facilitating the process of data analysis and drawing conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the intervention provided. The following is a description of the data per group between positive self-talk and thought-stopping group counseling on improving self-disclosure based on three stages of measurement: pretest, posttest, and follow-up.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Pre-test	Positive Self-Talk	33,00	3,162	6
	Thought Stopping	30,67	3,777	6
	Total	63,67	6,939	12

Variable	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Self-Disclosure	Post-test	Positive Self-Talk	49,17	4,535
		Thought Stopping	46,83	3,125
		Total	96	7,66
	Follow-Up	Positive Self-Talk	52,00	2,530
		Thought Stopping	48,33	3,386
		Total	100,33	5,916

The table illustrates the development of students' self-disclosure from two intervention groups: positive self-talk and CBT thought-stopping groups through three sequential measurement phases: pre-test, post-test, and follow-up. In the initial phase (pre-test), both groups showed relatively low $\bar{x}$, with positive self-talk slightly higher than thought-stopping (around 33.00 compared to 30.67). After the intervention through group counseling with different techniques, both groups with positive self-talk and thought-stopping techniques showed an increase in self-disclosure scores at the post-test stage. At follow-up, both CBT groups maintained most of the increase in self-disclosure that had been obtained after the intervention. The group with positive self-talk techniques showed a higher $\bar{x}$ of 52.00, proving that the intervention effect was relatively more effective and maintained without any decline. Thus, it was concluded that the consistency of the positive self-talk group showed a more durable interaction effect. Meanwhile, the thought-stopping group only experienced a slight increase in its scores. It is known that the CBT group using the positive self-talk technique was more effective in terms of interaction effects. To answer the hypothesis using a Mixed ANOVA, scientifically, a series of assumption tests must be followed as required by the parametric test. If the assumption tests meet the requirements, the parametric test, the Mixed ANOVA, will proceed.

Table 2. Assumption Test

Assumption Test	Test Method	(p-value)	Explanation
Normalitas	Shapiro-Wilk	$p > 0,05$	Normally distributed data
Homogenitas varians (Pre-test, Post-test & Follow-Up)	Levene's Test	$p = 0,465$	Variance between homogeneous groups
Sphericity (Within-subjects)	Mauchly's Test	$p = 0,812$	Assumptions accepted

Table 3. Mixed ANOVA

Source	df	SS	MS	F	p-value
Group (Between)	1	67600,000	67600,000	4108,035	$0,000 < 0,05$
Phase (Within)	1	2016,667	2016,667	215,302	$0,000 < 0,05$
Interaction (G × P)	1	2,667	2,667	0,285	$0,605 > 0,05$

Based on the results of the Mixed ANOVA analysis in the table above, the main effect of time (pretest, posttest, and follow-up measurement phases) to answer the hypothesis showed high significance, with the within-subject test result being ($F=215.302$, $P<0.05$). This value indicates that there was an increase in self-disclosure in all subjects over time. However, this time effect is not specific to a particular group type; therefore, to test the first and second hypotheses, a Repeated Measures analysis was conducted on each group. The results for both groups were ($F=215.302$ ($p<0.05$)). The findings concluded that there was a significant influence on the difference between the conditions before treatment (pre-test) and after treatment (post-test). Thus,

the first and second hypotheses were accepted (group counseling intervention using positive self-talk and thought stopping techniques is effective in increasing student self-disclosure).

Furthermore, it was found that the group factor (between subjects) had a significant influence on self-disclosure scores. ($F = 4108.035$, $p < 0.05$), indicating a significant difference between the groups receiving Positive Self-Talk Group Counseling and Thought Stopping Group Counseling. Therefore, the third hypothesis stating that there is a difference in self-disclosure improvement between groups is accepted. However, the interaction between time and group was not significant; thus, the fourth hypothesis was rejected, and no interaction effect was found ($F = 0.224$; $p > 0.05$). This indicates that the pattern of change in self-disclosure scores over time (from pretest to posttest and follow-up) did not differ significantly between the two intervention groups. Therefore, although both CBT techniques were effective in enhancing students' self-disclosure, the groups exhibited relatively similar patterns of improvement, meaning the magnitude and stability of the improvement were essentially the same for both the positive self-talk and thought-stopping groups.

Furthermore, there is a graphic visualization in this study that aims to strengthen the interpretation of the results of the statistical analysis conducted using the Mixed ANOVA technique. The graph is used as an aid to illustrate the dynamics of change. Self-disclosure experienced by the two CBT intervention groups during three measurement phases, namely before the intervention (pre-test), after the intervention (post-test), and two weeks after the intervention ended (follow-up).

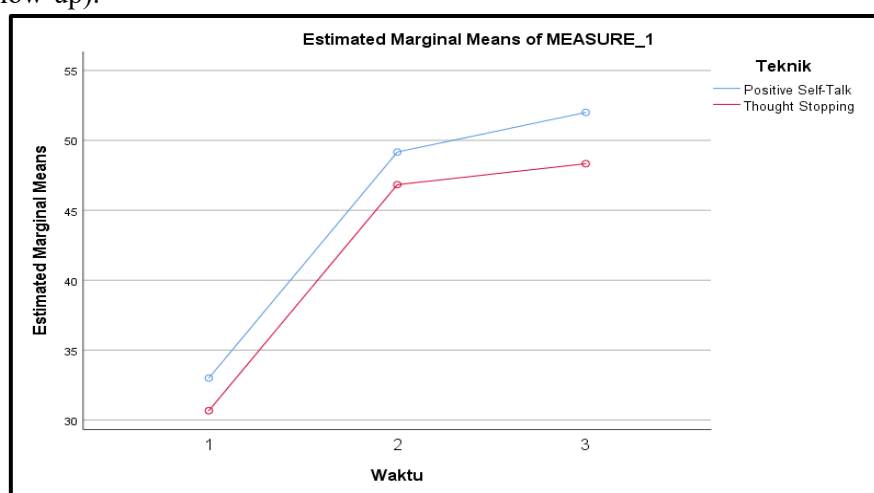


Figure 1. Comparison of the effectiveness of positive self-talk and thought stopping

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the approach with positive self-talk techniques can be used as a strategic alternative in implementing group counseling services to improve student self-disclosure. These results are also in line with previous findings, which confirm that positive self-talk group counseling is an effective approach in helping students grow self-confidence so that it can increase student self-disclosure. The findings in this study strengthen the conclusion that group counseling with Positive Self-Talk and Thought Stopping Techniques effectively increases self-disclosure of class XI students at SMA Negeri 12 Semarang. Research by Masi (2025) strengthens the evidence that group counseling using self-talk techniques can increase positive self-talk and self-disclosure of students, change student behavior for the better, make thoughts more adaptive, and reduce social stress. In addition, research by Ayumi & Siregar (2024)

provides evidence that after implementing group counseling through positive self-talk techniques, it can increase self-confidence to speak to others and to the general public, and can provide self-affirmation to dare to communicate with others openly. Other research findings indicate that positive self-talk techniques are effective in increasing students' self-confidence because they help individuals build positive self-suggestions and reduce negative thoughts that hinder self-confidence (Istighfarini et al., 2025; Wahyuni, 2024). Through self-disclosure, students gain experience expressing their thoughts and feelings more freely, thereby increasing their self-confidence and social skills (Lestari et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the thought-stopping technique in this study focuses on stopping and blocking negative thoughts that arise when participants imagine unpleasant situations related to self-disclosure. This technique is expected to reduce participants' anxiety and fear of self-disclosure. Maharani & Naqiyah (2022) explained that their research results show that the thought-stopping technique is effective in reducing social anxiety. The main problem of social anxiety is difficulty disclosing oneself to others, especially family, and they proved that the thought-stopping technique can reduce social anxiety. According to Anjani & Sinaga (2024), the thought-stopping technique can help individuals manage negative thoughts, replace them with positive ones, and increase students' self-confidence, which inhibits self-disclosure.

Empirically, the positive self-talk technique has demonstrated superiority over the thought-stopping technique in improving self-disclosure. This is known to work directly on students' cognitive processes and self-regulation. Pratama (2021) stated that through positive self-talk, individuals can increase their positive self-evaluations, help reduce detrimental self-criticism, and improve overall psychological well-being. According to Irawan (in Agestianti et al., 2024), positive self-talk is a way to transform irrational thoughts into rational ones through positive dialogue with oneself and renew one's perspective and feelings to be more optimistic. Meanwhile, the thought-stopping technique emphasizes the thought process and stopping negative thoughts, so its impact is highly dependent on the students' thought processes and focus during the session. The difficulty in implementing this technique is that some group members tend to have difficulty identifying and finding negative thoughts that arise, often feel denial, and have difficulty focusing on negative thoughts that hinder self-disclosure. Group members experience difficulty focusing and difficulty distinguishing negative thoughts that arise, so this technique is not superior to the positive self-talk technique applied in group counseling. Putri et al. al (2021) also proved that the results of group interaction tests during the measurement period showed that between the two techniques used, the self-talk technique is superior to the thought-stopping technique because it provides more benefits for improving negative thoughts.

Given the known significant interaction between time and type of intervention, the improvement of students' self-disclosure did not only develop over time or due to the counseling technique, but also due to the relationship between time and the counseling technique used. Therefore, it can be seen that both positive self-talk and thought-stopping techniques have the same impact on each measurement; students are able to apply the skill of changing negative thoughts into positive or rational ones, thus contributing to the improvement of students' self-disclosure.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the Mixed ANOVA analysis, this research provides evidence that group counseling positive self-talk techniques and thought stopping techniques are effective in increasing self-disclosure of class XI students at SMA Negeri 12 Semarang. Results and

discussion regarding the effectiveness of group counseling, positive self-talk techniques are effective in increasing students' self-disclosure; group counseling thought stopping technique is effective in increasing students' self-disclosure; there is a difference in the level of effectiveness between CBT group counseling with positive self-talk techniques and CBT group counseling intervention with thought stopping techniques in increasing students' self-disclosure; There is no difference in the interaction effect of the effectiveness of group counseling with positive self-talk and thought stopping techniques to increase student self-disclosure. These findings can be used as a basis for guidance and counseling teachers for intervention strategies that are based on more specific student characteristic needs. Through positive self-talk, students tend to develop confidence that they are capable of dealing with social and academic situations, which ultimately increases their urge to act more confidently in expressing themselves. This research proves that Guidance and Counseling teachers need to understand and master professional skills in implementing counseling in order to be able to adapt it to students' approaches, needs, and characteristics. In addition, the evidence-based approach used in this research provides encouragement for educational institutions to integrate more systematic and measurable counseling models into student character development programs. Furthermore, the results of this research can also be the basis for developing training programs for counselors to increase competence in designing and executing group counseling services that are relevant, adaptive, and impactful.

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