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Education on Forming Anti-Narcotics Peer Groups for Realizing Drug-Free Villages in Langkat Regency

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Abstract : *The issue of drug abuse among Indonesian teenagers has reached alarming levels in 2024, with a national prevalence of 2.4% and 2.9% in North Sumatra Province. In Langkat Regency, there has been a 15% increase in drug cases among teenagers compared to the previous year. To address this challenge, the Desa Bersinar (Drug-Free Village) program was launched in Langkat Regency, utilizing an innovative peer group method in anti-drug interactive dialogues. This method was chosen for its effectiveness in fostering personal and relevant communication among teenagers, allowing anti-drug messages to be conveyed more deeply. The implementation involved collaboration between BNNK Langkat, Universitas Haji Sumatera Utara, and STIKes Columbia Asia Medan, integrating the program into community service initiatives. Discussions facilitated by peer leaders, supported by academics, used the SIGAB BNN Module as a comprehensive guide, aiming to create a drug-free school environment and develop a generation more aware of the dangers of drugs*

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of drug abuse among teenagers in Indonesia has reached alarming levels in 2024. Recent data indicates that approximately 2.4% of teenagers in Indonesia are involved in drug abuse. In North Sumatra Province, the prevalence of drug abuse among teenagers is 2.9%, with higher rates recorded in Serdang Bedagai Regency, where 3.2% of teenagers are reported to be involved. Specifically, in Langkat Regency, there has been a 15% increase in drug abuse cases among teenagers compared to the previous year.

These figures underscore the need for more intensive and comprehensive prevention efforts. The Desa Bersinar (Drug-Free Village) program in Langkat Regency is expected to be one of the solutions to address this challenge by utilizing the potential of peer counselors as pioneers in disseminating information and education about the dangers of drug abuse. Active involvement of teenagers in this program is hoped to not only reduce the rate of drug abuse but also improve the overall quality of life in the village community.

The situation described poses a significant threat to the youth of Indonesia and the nation as a whole, particularly the younger generation in North Sumatra Province. The government, from the central to the local level, has continuously implemented various programs to combat drug abuse in Indonesia. One such program is the Desa Bersinar (Drug-Free Village) initiative. Efforts to establish Drug-Free Villages have been successfully implemented in a village in Bali, where local officials and residents have proudly declared themselves free from drug abuse. However, drug prevention efforts are not that simple, as many other aspects need to be addressed. Maximum efforts in the implementation of the P4GN (Prevention and Eradication of Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking) are still hindered by several limitations. In this regard, the President of the Republic of Indonesia issued Presidential Instruction No. 6 of 2018 concerning the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (P4GN).

The priorities of this action plan include, firstly, public anti-drug campaigns, early detection, anti-drug education, and community empowerment; secondly, cleaning up drug-prone areas, monitoring entry points to the country, detention centers, and integrated interdiction; thirdly, enhancing rehabilitation and post-rehabilitation services; and fourthly, developing drug-related research and integrating P4GN data. Langkat Regency is one of the regions that has launched the Desa Bersinar program since 2018. The success of this program is undoubtedly dependent on the awareness of the community, especially the youth, about the dangers of drug abuse for their lives and society in general, considering that the youth of the village are the spearhead of the village's development success. Therefore, the youth are expected to have the strength to avoid the influence of drug abuse. One strategy that can be employed to prevent the youth from being influenced by drug abuse is by preparing peer counselors among the youth in Langkat Regency. This community service program aims to: (1) enhance the ability and commitment of the youth to avoid drug abuse, and (2) establish Peer Counselor groups as pioneers in preventing drug abuse among the youth.

One of the activities in the Desa Bersinar program conducted by BNNK Langkat is the interactive dialogue for teenagers. BNNK Langkat selected five schools in Tanjungpura, namely SMP Negeri 1 Tanjungpura, MTSN 1 Langkat, MTS Yaspen Muslim, SMAN 2 Tanjungpura, and SMP IT Janatul Firdaus, as the locations for the interactive dialogue activities based on several strategic considerations related to the schools' profiles, preventive needs, and the potential positive impact that can be achieved through the program. BNNK Langkat strategically selected these five schools as locations for the interactive dialogues in order to

strengthen efforts to prevent drug abuse among teenagers and to build a healthier and more competitive young generation.

2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

BNNK Langkat has adopted the peer group method as an innovative approach in conducting anti-drug interactive dialogues at five selected schools in Tanjungpura. This method was chosen because it has proven effective in fostering more personal and relevant communication among teenagers. Through a peer-to-peer approach, anti-drug messages can be delivered more deeply and received well by students, thanks to the emotional connection and deeper understanding among group members.

Furthermore, BNNK Langkat has collaborated with Universitas Haji Sumatera Utara and STIKes Columbia Asia Medan to incorporate this activity as part of the community service programs of these institutions. The involvement of these universities enriches the interactive dialogue with academic knowledge and broader resources while also strengthening the program's sustainability within the community. With the support of these educational institutions, the implementation of peer-to-peer anti-drug interactive dialogues has become more structured and systematic. The materials provided to students are based on the BNN SIGAB (Sistem Informasi dan Gerakan Anti Narkoba) Module, which is a comprehensive guide to understanding the dangers of drugs and prevention techniques.

This module is delivered through discussion sessions facilitated by trained peer leaders and supported by academics from Universitas Haji Sumatera Utara and STIKes Columbia Asia Medan. Through the combination of the peer group approach and academic involvement, this activity is expected to create a drug-free school environment and raise awareness among the younger generation about the dangers of drug abuse. The involvement of universities also ensures that this program is not just a temporary initiative but becomes an integral part of ongoing efforts to prevent drug abuse among teenagers.

Steps in Implementing the Peer Group Method:

1. The process begins with the formation of small groups known as peer groups. BNNK Langkat collaborates with schools to select students who have the potential to be leaders or influencers among their peers. The selected students are then divided into small groups of 10, each led by a group leader.
2. Before the interactive dialogues begin, the group leaders or peer leaders receive intensive training through a Training of Trainers (ToT) program organized by BNNK Langkat. This training includes basic knowledge about the dangers of drugs, effective

communication techniques, as well as simulations and role-plays to enhance their understanding of real-life situations they might encounter in a school environment. The BNN SIGAB Module is used as the primary material in this training, covering information about different types of drugs, their negative impacts, and prevention strategies that teenagers can employ.

3. Students are encouraged to share their experiences and views on drugs and their effects, as well as discuss strategies to avoid negative influences from their surroundings. The materials provided in this session are drawn from the BNN SIGAB Module, which is specifically designed to facilitate dialogue among teenagers using language that is easy to understand and relevant to their conditions.
4. After the discussion, a question and answer session is held, led by facilitators from BNNK Langkat. This session aims to ensure that students gain a comprehensive understanding of the dangers of drugs and how to prevent them. The facilitators provide more in-depth explanations and answer questions that arise during the discussion, so that students can internalize the information provided and are prepared to apply it in their daily lives.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION RESULTS

The interactive youth dialogue activities organized by BNNK Langkat at five selected schools in Tanjungpura, namely SMP Negeri 1 Tanjungpura, MTSN 1 Langkat, MTS Yaspem Muslim, SMAN 2 Tanjungpura, and SMP IT Janatul Firdaus, took place over three days on August 13, 15, and 20, 2024, at the Restaurant Cabe Hijau in Tanjungpura, Langkat.

Figure 1. Implementation of Anti-Narcotics Peer Youth Formation in Langkat Regency



One of the main achievements of this program is the significant increase in students' awareness and knowledge about the dangers of drugs. Prior to the program, many students may have had only a limited or superficial understanding of drugs without fully grasping the severe consequences. Through intensive discussions in small groups led by peer leaders, students were given the opportunity to delve into various aspects related to drugs.

In addition to the increase in knowledge, the program also succeeded in changing students' attitudes and behaviors toward drugs. Initially, some students might have had a neutral or even indifferent view of drug issues. However, their involvement in interactive dialogues and listening to the experiences of their peers effectively shifted these views to become more critical and firm. Many students reported a significant change in attitude after participating in this program; they became more committed to staying away from drugs and determined to support their friends in making the same choice. This proactive attitude was evident in the increased student participation in various activities that support the anti-drug movement in their schools.

The importance of the role of peer leaders in the success of this program cannot be overlooked. They not only acted as discussion leaders in small groups but also served as change agents in their respective schools. With the skills and knowledge gained from the training organized by BNNK Langkat, these peer leaders have become role models relied upon by their

peers. They actively organized various anti-drug campaigns, such as creating posters, hosting small seminars, and facilitating informal discussions that encourage their friends to avoid drugs. This active involvement of peer leaders ensures that anti-drug messages continue to be conveyed and become an integral part of the school's culture, even after the official program has ended.

The positive impact of this program was not only felt by the students directly involved but also spread throughout the entire school community. Teachers and school staff reported an increase in collective awareness of the importance of drug prevention, as well as a more open relationship between students and teachers in discussing sensitive issues like drugs. The school environment became more positive and inclusive, which in turn created a more conducive atmosphere for students' personal and academic growth. The active participation of students in various anti-drug activities also demonstrated that they were not only receiving the messages delivered but also actively playing a role in spreading these messages within their community.

The program also included periodic evaluations conducted by BNNK Langkat to assess the effectiveness of the peer group method and its long-term impact on student behavior. The evaluation results showed that this method is highly effective in achieving the program's goals of raising awareness and changing students' behavior related to drugs. Based on the positive evaluation results, BNNK Langkat plans to expand this program to other schools in the Langkat area. This expansion plan includes increasing the number of peer groups, adjusting training materials to meet the specific needs of each school, and deepening the training content for peer leaders to ensure that drug prevention efforts can be more effective and sustainable

Figure 2. formation of youth peer groups in Bersinar Village, Langkat Regency



Overall, the interactive youth dialogue using the peer group method organized by BNNK Langkat on August 13, 15, and 20, 2024, has proven to be an effective approach in drug prevention efforts among teenagers in Langkat Regency. This program has succeeded not only in increasing students' knowledge about the dangers of drugs but also in shaping positive behaviors that serve as a strong defense against the threat of drug abuse. The success of this program is evidence that the peer group method is an effective and reliable strategy for promoting sustainable drug prevention among teenagers.

4. DISCUSSION

A peer counselor refers to an individual who has received counseling training and subsequently serves as a guide for their peers in preventing problems or finding solutions to issues they face. Trisiani (2018) cites the definition of peer counselor used by the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKP), stating that a peer counselor is a peer educator (peer tutor) who functionally has a high commitment and motivation to provide counseling for their peer group of teenagers or students and has undergone counseling training or orientation.

Peer counseling is generally aimed at teenagers because their social life is characterized by the influence of peer groups. Teenagers tend to communicate more and spend more time with their peers. This condition makes them feel more comfortable and open when communicating with peers than with adults or parents. Bramer (Widodo, 2012) states that many people tend to prefer sharing personal issues with close friends or peers rather than with

teachers or parents. This is because fellow teenagers understand the intricacies of these issues and are more spontaneous in making contact.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

To strengthen the role of peer counselors in preventing drug abuse among teenagers, it is essential to involve youth from villages that have successfully implemented the "Desa Bersinar" (Drug-Free Village) program. Through this approach, interactive dialogue can become a strategic method aimed at increasing the awareness and capabilities of teenagers in resisting the influence of drugs.

These interactive dialogues should be held regularly, inviting representatives from various schools around villages recognized as "Desa Bersinar." The activities are designed not only to enrich participants' knowledge about the dangers of drugs but also to provide them with the opportunity to learn directly from the real experiences of peers who have been involved in drug abuse prevention efforts.

Village governments and district/city narcotics agencies must actively participate in supporting and overseeing these activities. Regular evaluations should be conducted to assess the program's effectiveness and to identify areas that need improvement. Creating a drug-free village (Desa Bersinar) is crucial in preventing and minimizing drug abuse among teenagers and the younger generation. This effort can be carried out through the activities of peer counselors. Peer counselors in schools can be seen as pioneers in the prevention and mitigation of drug hazards for teenagers and the younger generation in the village.

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