

## PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND EARLY DETECTION OF BULLYING FOR SANTRIWATI: PREVENTION EFFORTS IN THE ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

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**ABSTRACT** This activity aimed to provide psychoeducation to female Islamic boarding school students (santriwati) to enhance their understanding of bullying within the pesantren environment, whether as perpetrators, victims, or witnesses. The activity also aimed to build a safe and supportive pesantren environment to foster the psychosocial development of santriwati. The one-day psychoeducation session covered materials including the definition of bullying, its types (verbal, physical, social, and cyberbullying), and the negative impacts on victims. Participants were asked to identify their initial level of knowledge and detect potential bullying cases through self-reports and preliminary interviews. The information gathered served as a basis for planning follow-up interventions, such as social skills training and the formation of support groups within the pesantren. The results of the activity showed an increase in the santriwati's understanding of bullying and their ability to relate the materials to real-life experiences within the pesantren. The students realized that victims of bullying could suffer psychological impacts if not properly addressed, highlighting the need to resolve bullying issues through sharing with female teachers (ustazah) and establishing connections with government agencies and psychology programs offering counseling services. Moving forward, santriwati became more sensitive in recognizing and understanding bullying and actively participated in creating a healthy social environment. Perpetrators are expected to become aware of the negative impacts of their behavior, while witnesses are encouraged to report incidents without fear. This psychoeducation activity successfully increased the santriwati's awareness of bullying and its impacts, fostering a consciousness to create a safe and supportive pesantren environment. Santriwati became more attentive, perpetrators are expected to acknowledge their wrongdoing, and witnesses are encouraged to report incidents. Psychoeducation proved effective as an initial step in preventing bullying in pesantren.

**KEYWORDS:** *Bullying, Pesantren, Psychoeducation, Female Students, Early Screening.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are educational institutions that not only teach religious knowledge but also shape the character and social values of students (santri) through communal living in dormitory environments (Herman, 2013; Mokodenseho et al., 2024). However, the social dynamics within pesantren do not always run harmoniously. One common yet often overlooked issue is bullying behavior among female students (santriwati) (Hasanuddin & Amirullah, 2022).

Many female students do not fully understand the concept of bullying—its forms, impacts, or how to deal with it. Bullying behavior is often perceived as joking or a natural part of group interaction, when in fact it can cause serious psychological harm to victims (Olweus, 2016; Sarwono, 2011). This lack of awareness causes victims to remain silent and tolerate negative behavior, as they may not realize they are experiencing psychological or social abuse (Kurniati, 2021).

Bullying is categorized as antisocial or misconduct behavior, where power is abused by an individual or group against weaker victims, and it usually occurs repeatedly (Alwi, 2021). Research by Hasanuddin & Amirullah (2022) found five forms of bullying commonly occurring in pesantren: physical harm from seniors to juniors, harassment, threats, verbal abuse (such as name-calling, insults, slander, harsh criticism, humiliation), and extortion that violates property rights.

The hierarchical culture and power dynamics in pesantren also hinder victims and witnesses from reporting bullying incidents to female teachers (ustazah) or caretakers. Fear of stigmatization, retaliation, or being labeled as troublemakers allows perpetrators to act more freely (Yusuf, 2020; Wulandari & Kurniasari, 2022). Meanwhile, witnesses often hesitate to speak up due to peer pressure (Olweus, 1997). If left unaddressed, bullying can negatively affect the victims' mental health, self-esteem, and learning continuity in the pesantren environment (Rahmawati et al., 2021; WHO, 2020).

One effective strategy to prevent and manage bullying is through psychoeducation—providing psychological information and understanding aimed at increasing individual awareness of psychosocial issues (Corey, 2016).

Psychoeducation can help female students recognize various forms of bullying, distinguish between healthy and harmful interactions, and understand their roles as perpetrators, victims, or witnesses. Additionally, it can build courage to report incidents and strengthen social support systems within the pesantren (Setiawati & Nurhidayah, 2023). Therefore, such activities are essential as an initial step in creating a safe, supportive, and psychosocially healthy pesantren environment.

Based on these considerations, an initial psychoeducational screening activity was conducted to assess the extent to which female students understand the concept of bullying and their ability to identify its forms occurring in their environment.

## **2. METHOD**

The psychoeducational and bullying screening activity used a participatory approach by combining educational, explorative, and evaluative methods. This method was designed so that the female students (santriwati) not only receive information but also actively engage in the process of understanding, reflection, and expressing their experiences related to bullying.

### **Location and Target Participants**

The activity was held at Meunasah Dayah Raudhatul Madina, Krueng Geukuh, North Aceh. The target participants were 30 female students (santriwati) and 3 female religious teachers (ustazah), who are part of the dayah community. The meunasah was chosen as the venue because it serves as a spiritual and educational center familiar to the participants, thus expected to create a safe and conducive atmosphere.

a. Time of Implementation. The activity was conducted in one day, with the following time allocation:

1. Introduction and opening session: 30 minutes
2. Delivery of psychoeducational material: 45 minutes
3. Discussion and Q&A: 45 minutes
4. Initial screening (self-report): 30–45 minutes
5. Closing and reflection: 15 minutes

b. Implementation Techniques.

The implementation of the activity was divided into several stages as follows:

1. Introduction and Opening Session. The activity began with introductions among participants and facilitators, aimed at building rapport, trust, and creating an open and safe atmosphere. Ice-breaking was conducted to reduce tension and build participant engagement.
2. Delivery of Psychoeducational Material. The material was delivered by the facilitator through an interactive lecture and visual presentation (slides). The delivery used simple and contextual language to ensure understanding among the students. The material covered the definition of bullying, its types, psychological impacts, as well as the roles of perpetrator, victim, and witness.
3. Discussion and Q&A. Participants were given the opportunity to express opinions, experiences, and questions related to bullying. The discussion was conducted openly in a large group to build shared awareness and reinforce the message that bullying cannot be tolerated.
4. Initial Screening. After the discussion session, participants filled out a prepared self-report sheet. This instrument contained both open and closed questions to explore their knowledge,

attitudes, experiences, and courage in facing and reporting bullying. This data will serve as a basis for planning further interventions.

5. Closing and Reflection. The activity concluded with a summary, brief reflection, and motivational remarks for the participants to become agents of change in creating a safe and bullying-free dayah environment.
6. Evaluation and Follow-Up. Evaluation was conducted qualitatively based on participant activeness during the discussion and results of the screening forms. Follow-up activities may include:
  - a) Social skills and assertive communication training
  - b) Formation of support groups
  - c) Continued activities with ustazah to create a safe reporting system

### **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1 Implementation and Results**

The psychoeducational and screening activity was conducted at Dayah Raudhatul Madina, involving 30 female students (santriwati) and 3 ustazah as participants. The activity took place over one day at the meunasah of the dayah, which serves as the spiritual and educational center for the students. The meunasah is located in Krueng Geukuh.

The series of activities began with an introduction session, aimed at building rapport and a comfortable atmosphere between the facilitators and participants. The session started with name, age, class, and home address introductions; an introduction of the facilitator (resource person) and explanation of the activity's objectives; and a short ice-breaking session to ease tension and build trust. The goal was to create an open environment so that the santriwati felt safe to learn and share throughout the activity.

The results of the introduction session successfully created a friendly atmosphere between facilitators and participants. Through name mentioning, class, place of origin, and light ice-breaking, the students began to open up and appeared more relaxed about participating. This was important because in the pesantren context, santriwati tend to be cautious in interacting with outsiders. The rapport built served as an important foundation for effective learning (Corey, 2016).

**Increased Participant Trust Toward Facilitators:** Personal introduction of the facilitators and clear explanation of the activity's purpose made participants feel valued and important. This created a sense of psychological safety, which is crucial when addressing sensitive topics like bullying (Brown, 2015).

**Initial Participation Activation:** By asking them to casually mention personal data and engage in ice-breaking, participants began showing active involvement. This was evident in the increasing number of participants responding in subsequent sessions—indicating mental readiness to engage fully in the activity (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020).

**Effective Ice-Breaking to Reduce Initial Tension:** The short ice-breaking effectively reduced the stiffness typically present in formal activities. Some participants even began smiling and laughing, showing reduced social anxiety and the emergence of a healthy group dynamic.

The next activity was the delivery of psychoeducational material on bullying, including the definition of bullying (physical, verbal, social, and cyberbullying) (Olweus, 2016), types of bullying (direct, indirect, relational), the psychological and social impacts on victims (WHO, 2020), reasons bullying is often not reported (culture of silence, fear, power dynamics in pesantren), and the roles of perpetrator, victim, and bystander.

This was followed by a question-and-answer session to explore their initial understanding interactively. After the material was presented, participants were given the opportunity to ask questions and engage in open discussions about their personal or peers' experiences with bullying, the difficulties of reporting bullying, and what actions they could take if they were victims or witnesses. This discussion was essential for uncovering participants' perceptions, values, and attitudes toward bullying and creating a shared awareness that bullying is not something normal or to be tolerated.

Results of the psychoeducational delivery and interactive discussion, which lasted 30–45 minutes, showed that the facilitator used simple and context-appropriate language. After the session, participants were able to understand, describe, and name various forms of bullying (physical, verbal, social, and cyber), its types (direct, indirect, and relational), and its psychological and social impacts (Olweus, 2016; WHO, 2020). This was evident from the responses participants gave to facilitator questions, where they could provide relevant answers and real-life examples from their environment.

**Greater Awareness of the Culture of Silence and Fear:** The material on why bullying is often not reported triggered a new awareness among the students. They began realizing that their silence, fear, or reluctance to report stemmed from power imbalances and unhealthy norms within the pesantren environment. Some participants admitted witnessing bullying but chose to stay silent out of fear of seniors or social punishment.

**Emotional Engagement:** The discussion session successfully opened space for deep reflection. Some santriwati voluntarily shared experiences as victims or witnesses of bullying. This indicated the activity had created psychological safety and built courage to share personal stories.

Emerging Collective Awareness That Bullying Is Not Normal: Through open discussion, the students began to realize that bullying behavior common in their environment should not be normalized. A shift in attitude occurred—from passive acceptance to a more critical and caring perspective on social dynamics around them.

Emergence of Initiative to Take Action: Some participants proposed the creation of a safe space or confidential reporting system within the pesantren. This showed not only awareness but also the development of ideas for structural and social change in their environment.

Next, an initial screening process was conducted. The screening aimed to identify participants' early understanding of bullying and detect possible experiences as victims or witnesses. It also served to inform appropriate follow-up interventions.

Screening was conducted using written guided questions (self-report) designed to assess students' understanding of bullying, personal experiences as victims/witnesses, and their responses to bullying situations that might occur in the pesantren. Data from the screening results will be used as a foundation for planning follow-up interventions, such as social skills training and the formation of support groups.

Results of the initial screening conducted after the psychoeducation session showed varying levels of understanding of the concept of bullying. Most participants recognized physical and verbal bullying, but there was still confusion around relational bullying (e.g., exclusion) and cyberbullying. Some santriwati admitted to having experienced or witnessed bullying but had never reported it due to fear, shame, or uncertainty about whom to approach. There was a tendency to normalize bullying behavior, particularly in verbal and relational forms, which are seen as part of “discipline” in the pesantren environment. Some participants showed courage in sharing personal experiences, either as victims or witnesses, through open-ended questions, indicating the beginning of trust in the facilitators.

### **3.2 Evaluation And Follow-Up**

Evaluation of the psychoeducational and bullying screening activity was conducted qualitatively, focusing on two main indicators:

#### **a. Participation and Activeness of Participants:**

Most santriwati showed high enthusiasm during the discussion and Q&A sessions. There was an increase in openness, as seen from sharing personal experiences and opinions about bullying. Participants were able to identify different types of bullying, especially verbal and physical. Some participants expressed willingness to become agents of change, as seen from their spontaneous comments about helping peers who experience bullying.

b. Analysis of Screening Results:

Based on the self-reports, some participants had experienced or witnessed bullying, although they had never reported it. Most participants were still unaware of any safe reporting mechanisms in the dayah environment. These findings indicate a need for continued intervention—both in terms of knowledge, skills, and the support system within the pesantren.

### **3.3 Impact And Outcomes Of The Activity**

The community service activity in the form of psychoeducation and bullying screening had a significant impact on the female students in the pesantren environment, especially in the aspects of knowledge, attitude, and social skills.

- a. Increased Knowledge and Awareness. Santriwati gained a clearer understanding of:
  1. The definition and types of bullying, including physical, verbal, relational, and cyberbullying;
  2. The psychological and social impacts of bullying on victims;
  3. The roles of each party in bullying incidents—perpetrator, victim, and bystander.
  4. This increased understanding led the students to be more aware of the importance of creating a safe, respectful, and violence-free environment.
- b. Attitude Change Toward Bullying. This activity successfully nurtured the awareness that:
  1. Bullying is not acceptable or normal behavior in the pesantren environment;
  2. Every individual has the right to feel safe and respected;
  3. Reporting bullying is not shameful but an act of courage and social responsibility.
- c. Emerging Courage to Speak Up. Through open discussion and reflection sessions, some students began to:
  1. Share their personal experiences as victims or witnesses of bullying;
  2. Express discomfort regarding bullying incidents they had experienced or witnessed.
  3. This indicated that a safe and supportive atmosphere had been successfully created during the activity.
- d. Improved Social Skills. Students also received training in:
  1. Assertive communication;
  2. Expressing opinions without hurting others;
  3. Responding to bullying in a healthy and wise manner.
  4. These skills are essential for preventing conflict and improving the quality of social relationships in the pesantren.

- e. Formation of a Caring Culture and Peer Support. This activity also fostered values of solidarity and empathy among the students. They began to recognize the importance of:
1. Supporting each other;
  2. Becoming a “safe friend” for peers who are victims;
  3. Not being passive bystanders when witnessing bullying.



**Figure 1.** Opening of Pre-Test activities



**Figure 2.** Presentation of activity materials



**Figure 3.** Group Divisions



**Figure 4.** Discussion related to problems



**Figure 5.** Presentation of the results of the discussion by one of the student representatives



**Figure 6.** Photo at the end of the activity session

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The psychoeducational and early detection activities on bullying conducted in the pesantren environment made a significant contribution to improving the female students' (santriwati) understanding of the concept, types, and impacts of bullying. Through an educational and participatory approach, the santriwati not only gained new knowledge but were also able to identify personal experiences and situations around them related to acts of bullying.

This activity proved effective as an initial step in building collective awareness, fostering empathetic attitudes, and encouraging the courage to take action against bullying. The santriwati

demonstrated positive changes in understanding, willingness to report, and a commitment to creating a safe and supportive pesantren environment.

Findings from the screening results also serve as an important foundation for designing further interventions, such as social skills training, assertive communication workshops, and the establishment of peer support groups. Thus, this activity is not only informative but also transformative in the ongoing effort to prevent bullying within the pesantren setting.

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