

## Research Article

# Pastoral Counseling and Care for People with Depression That Leads to Self-Harm and Suicidal Ideation

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**Abstract.**

Pastoral counseling and care are essential efforts for people with depression that leads to self-harm and suicide. Therefore, patients should get full and continuous recovery by restoring themselves through rational thinking and gaining hope and spirit to live a normal life. This study is based on a literature review. It concludes that depression is a serious mental illness that should be handled properly and ideally. In addition, patients can have proper recovery and reconciliation. Finally, this research is expected to contribute to solving the problem of people with depression that leads to self-harm and suicide by providing an action to value, forgive, and love themselves based on the given steps of pastoral counseling and care.

**Keywords:** pastoral counseling, depression, self-harm, suicide

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Life's problems have a different impact on everyone, including one's mental response in dealing with them. Life's problems also weaken the harmony of one's life and create an imbalance. Very rarely encountered when encountering trouble, but his mood is good. Most people when faced with a problem must be in a bad mood and respond negatively both in thoughts, words spoken and actions taken in expressing their response to the problem. There are those who experience stress, anxiety, and what has the most bad and dangerous impact on a person's life is depression.

Depression is a change in a person's emotions in a prolonged state of sadness and makes the presence of depression and helplessness in dealing with everything. (Mandasari, Linda., Tobing 2020) Depression can stem from significant social and personal problems, which is also a mental disorder. In a study stated, the presence of depressive disorders in oneself can pose risks that are detrimental to sufferers, such

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as insomnia, interpersonal disorders (easiness to offend, distance themselves from the social sphere, quickly carried away by any atmosphere etc.), at work being unfocused, health including life patterns become irregular, even the emergence of destructive behavior such as selfharm or self-injury and even worse, the desire to commit suicide appears. (Hasanah, Uswatun., Fitri, NL., Supardi, S., Livana 2020) Negative actions that hurt physically are very dangerous for someone who is in a slump. Selfharm is an action taken to express emotions or transfer verbal pain that is felt, but it can also be a trigger for suicide. This phenomenon is not only witnessed in a drama, TV series, or fictional story but actually occurs in the reality of today's life. Self-harm to the point of suicide becomes the culmination of an inevitable depression. But many people underestimate and taboo this issue without any role that would be a relief effort. Even when faced with such an event, many people would easily give bad comments to the perpetrators but also to their families,(Alexander, Christopher., Christiano, Josef., & Venturini 2022) because this is a crucial issue and must present appropriate and ideal efforts and handling, so that it can be avoided

*Selfharm* and suicide is a phenomenon that is rife in Indonesia. According to WHO data for 2019, around 800,000 people died as a result of suicide, and Indonesia is one of the countries that has the percentage above. In addition, according to DATIN information from the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, the number of deaths due to suicide per year is the same. (ZZ Huda 2022) In fact, a mental health survey conducted by Into the Light (a community with a mission to prevent suicide), stated that 5,211 respondents admitted that they had loneliness and depression that have the potential to commit suicide. Meanwhile, depression that results in suicide is more common among young people or adolescents – the productive ages of 20-40 years, although it is not uncommon for these actions to be carried out by children and adults to the elderly.(dr.Agung Frijanto 2022) So people of all ages can commit suicide because of the inevitable depression.

Apart from being a responsibility in the psychological world, this phenomenon involves a person's mental existence, but it is considered necessary and important to present pastoral counseling as an effort to provide assistance to sufferers. Pastoral counseling is a service to help those who are in a state of life crisis, so that the counselee or client is able to get or find a possible solution that can answer the crisis they are facing in this case when they are in a state of depression. There are two pastoral areas that can help: 1) Pastoral Conversations and 2) Pastoral Visits.(Tuhumury 2018) The conversational service carried out by the counselor must be based on sincerity

to truly understand each other both the counselor and the counselee, but also the counselee and the counselor. So that there is a clear openness to understand the crisis experienced and present the right solution even with pastoral visits. Pastoral counseling is an answer to everyone's need to provide warmth, full attention, support and shepherding (accompaniment). This pastoral counseling assistance is also an act of help carried out by representative Christian individuals aimed at providing healing, support, guidance, and reconciliation, but also as a preventive measure for people with problems (Tadung, Frieska. dan Londo 2022), including for people with depression who have the impact of selfharm and suicidal ideation. Pastoral counseling is also relative and adaptive based on the level or severity of the crisis of the counselee/client. So that pastoral counseling assistance becomes a means of acknowledging the downturn he is experiencing, but also presents a path to prevention, recovery, healing and reconciliation based on an integrative approach that is relevant to the counselee's crisis.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, researchers used qualitative research methods with a descriptive approach, namely describing various theories related to the content and needs of the research. Albi Anggito & Johan Setiawan (2018) state that this approach is used to collect and manage data in a natural setting by interpreting a phenomenon that occurs, so that the instrument of this research is the researcher himself. Noman K. Denzin and Yvona S. Lincoln in the book *Handbook Qualitative Research*, h This method also produces descriptive data in the form of words either written or spoken from the people, behavior or observed phenomena. In qualitative research there are types of data, including interviews: the results of responses about perceptions, opinions, feelings, and people's experiences. So that in carrying out this research, researchers will conduct unstructured interviews to obtain opinions, perceptions or ideas that will be put forward by several data sources related to the research issues being carried out. But also the process in this research is accompanied by a literature review, namely collecting data from various written documents such as books, journals, articles and others that are relevant to research.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Selfharm and Suicide

Acts of selfharm and suicide are based on various things, including severe depression. In addition, there are several things that can cause negative actions to injure and end one's life, such as: 1) Bullying/bullying can be physical or verbal. There is a desire to self-harm and want to take his own life because he feels he has no self-esteem. The act of bullying makes a person feel humiliated, loses self-confidence, thereby isolating and isolating himself from the social sphere. Inner wounds torment the soul and create negative self-esteem: considering yourself petty and low. 2) Loneliness. This causative factor is also a high trigger for the presence of suicidal ideation. There is alienation and dissatisfaction in social life. This situation is also based on various stages so that sufferers choose to isolate themselves. Emotional loneliness, namely the loss of relationships or emotional closeness between parents and children, husband and wife, loss, divorce, miscarriage and so on. Social loneliness such as losing a job, fighting and breaking up with a lover, being abandoned by a teammate and so on. So it is very clear that loneliness is the basis for a person not feeling his life has meaning and it is better to end it. (Tampubolon., Ernawaty & Hermanto, Yanto P. 2022) People with depression engage in a wide variety of inappropriate verbal and nonverbal social behaviors, which tend to lead to rejection and hostility towards others. 3) Severe/chronic illness. Based on research in the United States, a high death rate due to suicide occurs in those who have chronic pain. (dr. Reza Fahlevi 2023). They experience depression because they don't go away and are in a slump phase because of the pain they are experiencing. This arises because you feel that you are no longer useful, you can't do anything and your soul is already in death, even though it is still alive. 4) Spiritual and spiritual causes can also trigger depression leading to suicide. Disbelief in God or anger because of various problems in life, and it is also undeniable that there may be sins committed and cause depression.

### 3.2. Depression and Pastoral Counseling Care

Depression greets a person's life with various causes or backgrounds. But it is undeniable that depression does not always have a clear cause. It is even said that depression is mysterious, including for the sufferer. Unseen and unnoticed. (Haig, Matt. 2020) Being in such a state makes a person not have the passion to move on and continue

the journey of life. So that selfharm and suicide are considered to be the last and only option that must be taken, because life becomes a waste. Edward T. Welch describes depression with the following statements:

*The deep sorrow of the soul is a constant torturous suffering. Unmerciful, pain that gives no window of hope, gives no choice but to a dreary and sickening existence, and gives no rest from the cold subconscious thoughts and feelings that dominate the nights of terrible and restless despair. Depression is a disease. A disease that torments a person physically and mentally. Locked up and hard to get out to find a light path. Such a situation is not just pain, but pain that does not mean. An empty and unbearable pain, which only produces darkness or emptiness, thus destroying one's soul.*

There are two types of depression based on the level: 1) Depression that is not so severe, namely situational depression or based on a certain situation only, and is caused by dysthymic disorder so that you feel dissatisfaction or a depressive mood. 2) Severe depression, namely clinical depression because it is related to mentality, and from this level the sufferer will feel that he has no hope of life. Suicide is based on various causes and also using several ways. Several data sources or informants stated that he tried to end his life using a sharp instrument: a knife and taking large amounts of drugs. Even this suicide attempt was carried out consciously but under pressure and emotion. There is a desire to commit suicide because there is a big problem that occurs in the family: the burden of excessive shame and the feeling that God is leaving, thus destroying the spirit of life and encouraging the desire to end one's life. Trying to end life by drinking poison. The suicide attempt was made consciously in the void, so it couldn't control itself.

Pastoral is a planned and proactive service activity to help individuals or groups of people who are struggling with problems that bring them down like those who are depressed. This command is based on the command of the Lord Jesus to feed His flock. The process of pastoral counseling as a service that guides the counselee in an ideal conversational atmosphere and enables the counselee to correctly understand his whole self with his life goals based on the strength obtained from God. (Brek, Yohan. 2022) Assistance that aims to help is assistance that is holistic in nature. Holistic assistance means requiring the counselor to touch all aspects: physical, mental, social and spiritual. This assistance also means service that is comprehensive and not divided, namely by understanding, viewing, approaching and treating humans as a whole who is intact and has dignity. Pastoral assistance services cannot be separated from the biblical basis. In this case the Lord Jesus is a great role model in holistic assistance

for a broken world. His ministry work is intact.(Desa, Maria Vianti. 2021) Conceptually, counseling and pastoral care have the same function, namely healing a wounded soul. Pastoral assistance is carried out on an ongoing basis that is for life, but pastoral counseling is carried out when someone needs help or there is a crisis followed by various approaches. (Engel 2016)

### **3.3. The Stages of the Counseling Process for People with Depression impact SelfHarm and Suicide**

In dealing people with depression who have the impact of self-harm and suicide, pastoral assistance must be accompanied by pastoral counseling using stages and approaches that are appropriate to the counselee's needs in their crisis. This is an organized and structured effort so that its functions can be felt by the counselee properly, effectively and efficiently. The several stages are: 1) Creating Relationships. The initial stage is to build trust from the counselee. This stage can also determine the next steps that need to be taken by the counselor, namely only carrying out pastoral assistance or professional pastoral counseling – accompanied by skills. 2) Anamnesis, this initial stage must also be accompanied by obtaining clear information about the counselee, but must be based on his permission. There are two types of information that need to be obtained, namely subjective information in the form of emotional memories, thoughts or feelings and objective information such as the counselee's identity (which can be seen or obtained based on observation and assessment). 3) Diagnosis/diagnosis is a stage that can be carried out in the second session of the meeting. The counselor synthesizes with data analysis or links between one information and another. Pastoral diagnosis is looking at the holistic aspects of the counselee: physical, mental, social and spiritual. 4) Treatment Planning, or making an action plan, namely determining the methods and approaches that will be used to help the counselee's crises and problems. 5) Treatment, this stage can be carried out during the third to fifth meeting sessions. Counselors carry out various actions that have been prepared or planned beforehand. 6) Review & Evaluation, namely reviewing and providing evaluation by reassessing the process and the final results of the pastoral counseling actions that have been carried out. 7) Termination or disconnection. Professionally, disconnection needs to be done by the counselor which is done at the fifth to sixth meeting sessions. But termination is not the end, because social relations with counselees can be continued. disconnection needs to be done by the counselor which is carried out in the fifth to sixth meeting

sessions. But termination is not the end, because social relations with counselees can be continued. disconnection needs to be done by the counselor which is carried out in the fifth to sixth meeting sessions. But termination is not the end, because social relations with counselees can be continued. (Totok S. Wiryasaputra 2019).

### **3.4. Pastoral Counseling Approaches and Techniques for People With Depression impact SelfHarm and Suicide**

Everyone's experience of depression may be similar, but the causes and historical settings are different. Based on this, surely the handling process will be different. In dealing with clients or counselees who experience severe depression with the potential for self-harm and suicide, proper and ideal treatment steps are needed as a preventive measure. The pastoral counseling approach can also be called the pastoral counseling method. So simply the pastoral counseling approach or method means the counselor's efforts to create ways and ways to approach, observe, overcome and solve the problems faced by counselees. The pastoral counseling approach can be integrative, namely a combination of several approaches that are appropriate for the counselee's conflict or crisis is (Totok S. Wiryasaputra 2019):

### **3.5. Psychoanalytic Approach**

Depression is related to a person's psychology and mentality. Even self-harm to suicidal thoughts, is controlled by irrational powers. The rationale of this approach states that present anxiety or depression is thought to result from the immersion of inner conflict within the sufferer or in this case the counselee. The purpose of this approach is to help the counselee to be aware of the conflicts that exist in his unconscious world, his childhood (which could have been a cause of depression) in this case mental wounds or trauma, so that the counselee is able and able to express what is pent up, also expressing psychosexual conflicts of age. early childhood and the immersion of feelings in the present caused by fear, anxiety and depression.

### **3.6. Person-Centered/Client-Centered Approach**

Experiencing severe depression, the counselee often feels emptiness and emptiness within him. This approach seeks the counselee to experience what was previously

unconscious to reach full awareness, confidence and self-direction. The counselee is expected to have awareness of deviant behavior or inappropriateness of what should be done. The purpose of this research is directed and focused on the counselee, so that the counselee can carry out self-exploration and know correctly the things that are a barrier for him to grow. The important thing about this approach is that the counselee has a willingness to enter into the process and strengthen spontaneous feelings and enthusiasm for life. The correct technique in this approach is how the counselor's skills are applied in the counseling process.

### **3.7. Gestalt approach**

This approach has 3 important aspects: cognitive, affective and behavioral. The counselor functions as a supporter, director and challenger for the counselee. Even in a downturn in life, the counselee must be ready to accept challenges so that renewal occurs in his life. The counselee must bring "what has not been resolved" in the present, so that it can be completed in full. Thus, the counselee gains awareness of his experiences over time, and makes himself a substitute for external support. Several techniques that can be used in this approach are analysis of dreams and empty chairs (in order to pour out and remove all the hidden thorns in the counselee).

### **3.8. Behavioral Approach**

Behavioral therapy specifies the goals of each helping process as clearly as possible. The approach then details the relief action plan as clearly as possible. Avoiding abnormal behavior to produce normal behavior is obtained from the process of strengthening stimuli. The purpose of this approach is to help the counselee to eliminate the counselee's deviant behavior and learn more effective behavior. Helping counsees to see the factors that influence current behavior and change problematic behavior. Irrational fears and phobias must be experienced by people with depression. In this approach, approach techniques that can be carried out are desensitization practices in real life, relaxation training (inhaling and taking deep breaths and exhaling, relaxing body muscles, etc.), strengthening behavior, modeling or imitating, cognitive restructuring, monitoring one's own behavior, stopping destructive thoughts, self-management programs, social skills and others. Some of the techniques in this approach can be appropriate preventive measures for people with depression resulting in suicide.



### 3.9. The Emotive-Rational Approach

The purpose of this approach can really help people with depression impact self harm and suicide, including: helping counselees to eliminate thoughts that tend to self-destruct and make counselees more tolerant of their lives. One of the techniques in this approach is that the counselee can train new behaviors to embarrass and fight himself and learn healthy behaviors and actions by forgiving and loving himself. This is also considered a challenge for the counselee.

### 3.10. Reality Approach

This approach encourages the counselee to be strong and rational both emotionally, in thought and action. The purpose of the approach that must be carefully carried out by the counselor is to challenge the counselee to reassess what is being or has been done and think about how best to take appropriate and appropriate actions.

### 3.11. Bitterness Cognitive Theory

Depression is a mental illness that keeps many hidden thorns within. Sufferers of depression are sure to experience bitterness, thus bringing him into a slump and helplessness in living life. Bitterness becomes a big black hole that drags someone into it and destroys life that should have meaning. Bitterness is present because of various negative events that scratch and leave deep wounds such as: betrayal, rejection, abuse (verbal and non-verbal), unresolved feelings of offense and low self-esteem, can damage mental health – depression.(Simanjuntak, Julianto., Ndraha 2020) This therapy seeks to re-educate the counselee to think and act positively. Three steps of the counseling approach taken are (Opit, Hesky C. 2020): 1) Think irrationally. For people with depression who have tried to end their lives, this must be done with caution. The counselor tells the counselee how to think irrationally (illogically), then invites him out of that way of thinking. The purpose of this initial step is for the counselee to clearly distinguish what is rational and positive, and vice versa. 2) The counselor invites counselees with depression to leave irrational ways of thinking, and make them aware that it makes them disturbed and suffer, but can also damage and take lives. 3) In order for the counselee to abandon irrational ways of thinking, the counselor uses a direct

approach, so that the counselee leaves the “band of irrational thinking” and replaces it with rational/logical thoughts.

### 3.12. Cybercounseling

In a research paper, this approach or method is also a form of recovery for the counselee. This approach is done virtually. According to previous research, cyber counseling is effective in overcoming the problems experienced by counselees and provides high satisfaction. This is an advantage for sufferers of depression, when they refuse to meet in person or because of the social isolation experienced (from various factors), this virtual counseling encounter is very helpful. Important in this approach is thorough preparation, such as internet connection, the platform used and so on. This approach can also use several stages: delivery/initial, assessment (information with several open questions), interpretation (giving meaning and meaning to the counselee’s problem) (Alexander, Christopher., Christianto, Josef., Venturini 2022).

Various approaches must be able to be carried out effectively and maximally, so that the counselee continues to present self-esteem and continue to apply healthy and sustainable behavior. Several forms of pastoral care can also be goals for counselees with depression: caring for them in a severe crisis including the physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental dimensions; supporting those who are going through great challenges, guiding sufferers to be able to answer questions about their problems, and most importantly addressing needs through soul healing and reconciliation from broken relationships. (Hutagalung, Stimson., Nainggolan, Bartholomeus D., Hendriks, Alwyn Cesarinto., Walukouw, Yane Restuwati., Hutabarat, Reymand.,Sagala 2021) Depression sufferers impact self harm and suicide must experience reconciliation. With reconciliation supported by the counselor for the counselee it will restore and reconcile injured relationships, through reconciliation it makes the counselee a counselor for others who are also suffering, and through reconciliation gives the ability to accept the realities of life that are happening and willing to learn, grow and develop from the suffering that has occurred. experienced.(Julie, Frengki., Purwati, Ester., Kanto, Zakaria., Jumari, Amor., Alfius, Yohanes. n.d.).

## 4. CONCLUSION

Purposeful and supportive accompaniment is a meaningful pastoral counseling approach with a helping impact. Actions that have been damaged can be repaired and continue to grow gradually when able to address them constructively and appropriately for those who are troubled. Depression as a crucial illness can be cured. Recovery and healing for people with depression that has an impact on selfharm and suicide must go through various stages of the pastoral counseling approach in order to obtain maximum impact and results for the counselee. Pastoral counseling assistance that is carried out brings sufferers to self-renewal and enthusiasm for life and abandons a life that has been considered damaged, and brings oneself to fully cling to God as the Great counselor, because someone who wants to be truly and fully directed to His truth makes him live a holistically healthy life both in thought, word and action because it is based on His example.

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