

Enhancing Students' Emotional Well-Being through a Peer Counseling Bootcamp

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Article Info	Abstract
Article history: Received: September 13, 2025 Accepted: February 13, 2026 Published: March 4, 2026 Keywords: Emotional well-being Peer counseling Riverbank school This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License © 2026 Bubungan Tinggi: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat	SMP Negeri 24 Banjarmasin is situated in an area along the riverbank where incidents of bullying are still present. Students who experience bullying often struggle with low emotional well-being and require social support from their peers. The Mandatory Lecturer Service Program aimed to provide a bootcamp for OSIS members, enabling them to offer peer counseling and enhance emotional well-being in the school environment. The method of the Mandatory Lecturer Service Program was Participatory Action Research (PAR). A peer counseling bootcamp to enhance emotional well-being was held on September 3, 2025, at SMP Negeri 24 Banjarmasin. Ten OSIS members participated in this bootcamp. After participating in the bootcamp, students experienced an average increase in their emotional well-being of 7.42%. Additionally, the satisfaction evaluation of the bootcamp revealed an average score of 94%, indicating that the peer counseling bootcamp was beneficial for students in improving their emotional well-being and preventing bullying.
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INTRODUCTION

Junior high school students are in the adolescent developmental stage. Adolescence is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood, characterized by physical, mental, and emotional changes. During this time, students are prone to experiencing various mental health issues, such as stress, anxiety, suicidal tendencies, and self-harm ([Lestari & Astuti, 2021](#)). Adolescents begin to explore their identity and strive for independence, often experiencing inner conflict between their personal desires and the demands of their environment. Hormonal changes during this stage can also impact emotional stability, making students more vulnerable to stress and social pressures. As a result, many adolescents face mental health challenges such as stress, depression, self-harm, and suicidal thoughts or attempts. It is essential to prioritize mental health support for adolescents, whether through support from family, school, or guidance and counseling services.

SMPN 24 Banjarmasin is situated along the banks of the Martapura River. A preliminary study revealed that several students were experiencing issues related to

bullying. Victims of bullying often suffer physical stress and display low emotional well-being. Furthermore, bullying has both short-term and long-term effects on students' overall well-being, which can persist into their mid-twenties. This indicates that bullying negatively impacts students' emotional health ([Eyuboglu et al., 2021](#)).

School plays a vital role in supporting the mental health of students. One important aspect of mental health is emotional well-being. This refers to an individual's overall positive feelings about life, which include happiness, life satisfaction, a sense of purpose, and the ability to pursue goals ([Park et al., 2023](#)). Emotional well-being improves students' self-confidence, academic performance, academic achievement, and self-discipline ([Carreño-Flores et al., 2024](#)).

An analysis of the mental health needs at SMPN 24 Banjarmasin reveals that many students are categorized as having "poor" mental health due to a high prevalence of mental illness among them. This situation is partly attributed to some students experiencing verbal and physical bullying, which negatively affects their emotional well-being. To address this issue, it is recommended that the school implement a peer counseling bootcamp to provide emotional support and promote mental health among students. A boot camp is a short and intensive training program designed to enhance basic counseling skills ([Supriyanta & Al Muttaqien, 2023](#)). Peer counseling involves trained students who assist their peers in addressing and coping with various challenges they may face ([Liqoiyah et al., 2022](#)). The peer counseling was effective in improving quality of life, hope, empowerment, service satisfaction, social support, and well-being ([White et al., 2020](#)).

Based on the analysis of mental health needs at SMP Negeri 24 Banjarmasin, we partnered with the school to conduct a peer counseling bootcamp aimed at enhancing emotional well-being in a riverbank school. The objective of this program was to train OSIS (students' council) members in basic counseling skills to promote emotional well-being and help prevent bullying in school. Additionally, emotional well-being pocketbooks were distributed for OSIS members who participated in the bootcamp to share with other students who did not take part in the activity.

METHODS

The method of the Mandatory Lecturer Service Program was Participatory Action Research (PAR). PAR is a community service approach where researchers and participants work together as partners to understand a problem, take action to improve it, and reflect on the results ([Afandi et al., 2022](#)). Participatory action research consists of several stages, namely identification, planning, implementation, evaluation, and reflection ([Zunaidi, 2024](#)).

1. Identification

During the identification phase, the team met with school counselors to discuss the issues students face at Riverbank School. The finding showed that bullying occurs frequently, contributing to low emotional well-being among students.

2. Planning

The team organized a peer counseling bootcamp to enhance emotional well-being at Riverbank School. After receiving approval from the principal, the team began preparing for the bootcamp.

3. Implementation

The peer counseling bootcamp aimed at enhancing emotional well-being was held on Wednesday, September 3rd, 2025, from 08.30 to 15.15 at SMP Negeri 24 Banjarmasin. Ten members of OSIS participated in this bootcamp. The peer counseling bootcamp was implemented through the following steps:

a. Pretest

The team distributed emotional well-being questionnaires to OSIS members and

requested that they complete them. The purpose of the pretest was to assess students' emotional well-being prior to their participation in the peer counseling bootcamp.

b. Presentation

The team presented on emotional well-being, covering its definition, aspects, factors, impacts, and strategies for improvement. Afterward, the team discussed peer counseling, including its definition and basic counseling skills.

c. Simulation

OSIS members practiced basic counseling skills in pairs, assuming the roles of peer counselors and counselees.

d. Posttest

Members of OSIS completed emotional well-being questionnaires after participating in the peer counseling bootcamp.

4. Evaluation

OSIS members completed satisfaction evaluation questionnaires to assess students' contentment with the peer counseling bootcamp aimed at enhancing emotional well-being at Riverbank School. The team then rewarded participants for their involvement in the bootcamp.

5. Reflection

The team conducted a reflection session with OSIS members regarding the peer counseling bootcamp. After the boot camp, OSIS members distributed emotional well-being pocketbooks to their peers at Riverbank School.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A peer counseling bootcamp focused on enhancing emotional well-being in Riverbank School took place at SMP Negeri 24 Banjarmasin. Ten members of the student council (OSIS) participated in the bootcamp, where they received training in basic counseling skills and educational materials related to emotional well-being.

The peer counseling bootcamp began with a pretest that involved distributing emotional well-being questionnaires to ten members of the student council (OSIS). The purpose of the pretest was to assess the student's understanding of their emotional well-being before presenting the educational materials. Following the pretest, the participants received information about emotional well-being, which included its definition, key aspects, influencing factors, positive impacts, and strategies for improvement. The students were trained to recognize their emotions and learned relaxation and grounding techniques to enhance their emotional well-being. Documentation when the team presented the material is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Presentation of emotional well-being and peer counseling

The next topic presented was peer counseling. The presentation explained what peer counseling is, highlighted the characteristics of effective peer counselors, and outlined ten essential counseling skills: attending, questioning, active listening, empathy, acceptance,

paraphrasing, clarification, confrontation, problem-solving, and summarizing. After the presentation, students were encouraged to practice these fundamental counseling skills. They were paired up to role-play as peer counselors and individuals who had experienced bullying. The simulation of peer counseling and distribution of pocket books is shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2 Simulation of peer counseling and distribution of pocketbooks

The final step of the peer counseling bootcamp, which focused on enhancing emotional well-being, was the post-test. Students were asked to complete the emotional well-being questionnaires again to assess their emotional well-being after the boot camp. The analysis of pre-test and post-test scores revealed that the mean pre-test score was 40.4, while the mean post-test score increased to 43.4. This indicates an improvement of 3 points, representing a 7.42% increase in the students' emotional well-being. The pretest and posttest scores for emotional well-being are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Pretest and posttest scores of emotional well-being

Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Pretest Min	Pretest Max	Posttest Min	Posttest Max	Difference	Percentage
40.4	43.4	26	48	31	50	3	7.42%

The satisfaction evaluation scores for peer counseling training are shown in Figure 3.

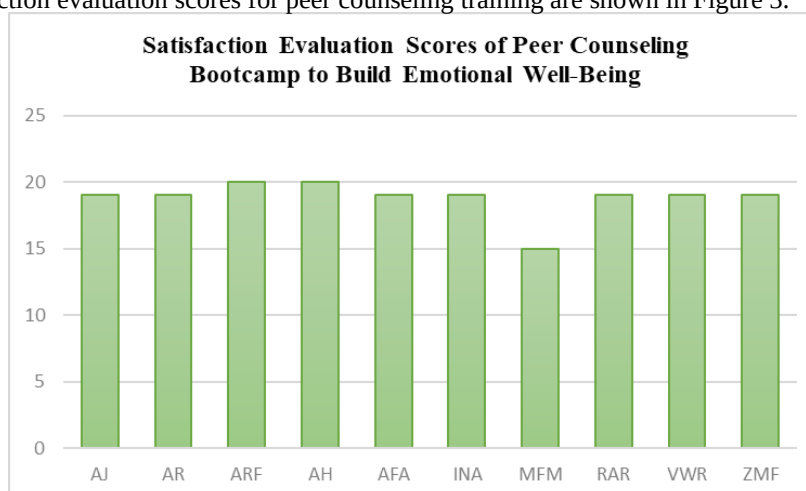


Figure 3 Satisfaction evaluation scores of peer counseling bootcamp

During the evaluation stage, students filled out satisfaction questionnaires to assess their experience with the peer counseling bootcamp, which aimed to enhance emotional well-being at Riverbank School. As a reward for their participation, students received an

incentive for attending the bootcamp. The mean satisfaction score was 18.8, out of a possible 20, representing 94% of the maximum score. This high score indicates that the peer counseling bootcamp was beneficial for the students.

During the reflection stage, students shared their experiences after participating in a peer counseling bootcamp. They reported feeling more capable of recognizing their emotions, learning effective strategies to enhance emotional well-being, and applying basic counseling skills.

The follow-up to the peer counseling bootcamp involved students who became peer counselors to prevent bullying and distribute emotional well-being pocketbooks. Peer counselor students can be role models for their peers to prevent bullying at school by not insulting and fighting with friends. Peer counselor students shared emotional well-being pocketbooks with their peers as a means to build emotional well-being in Riverbank School.

The results indicated that students' emotional well-being improved through the peer counseling bootcamp. The peer counseling bootcamp aimed to empower students as partners with school counselors to prevent bullying at Riverbank School ([Rifani et al., 2023](#)). Through the peer counseling bootcamp, students were equipped with knowledge of emotional well-being and basic counseling skills. Students can be good listeners for their peers and provide emotional support to peers who are being bullied ([Dewi et al., 2023](#)).

One important factor that influences students' emotional well-being is self-regulation. Self-regulation is an individual's ability to manage emotion, thought, and behavior to achieve goals ([Ramadhan et al., 2025](#)). Students who can regulate themselves tend to feel happy, satisfied, meaningful, and focused on pursuing their goals. These positive feelings can reduce conflict among students and help prevent bullying at Riverbank School ([Safarina et al., 2024](#)). Enhancing students' emotional well-being according to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's guidelines to create safe and violence-free school environments ([Abid & Sabarina, 2025](#)).

CONCLUSION

The findings from the Mandatory Lecturer Service Program indicated that students' emotional well-being improved through the peer counseling bootcamp. This boot camp also provides valuable opportunities for students to learn about emotional well-being and develop basic counseling skills. As a result, students were better able to understand the material on emotional well-being and effectively apply their newly acquired counseling skills. This peer counseling bootcamp becomes an effort to enhance students' emotional well-being and prevent bullying at Riverbank School.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

The author's contributions to this article are PDWA Implementation Presenters, RRJ, ANZ, NH, and RA; Draft Article, RRJ, ANZ, and SS; Article Revision, RRJ, ANZ, and SS.

AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The author used Gemini AI during the preparation of this work for language refinement and improvement of academic clarity. After using the tool/service, the author thoroughly reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the publication. The authors declare that this research was prepared, researched, written,

and edited without the substantive aid of artificial intelligence (AI) techniques in data analysis, interpretation, and conclusion drawing.

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