

Strengthening women's psychosocial support through psychoeducation in the Former Argorejo Localisation Area

Pradipta Christy Pratiwi¹, Lukki Lukitawati², Moh. Farizqo Irvan³, Chamilul Hikam Al Karim¹, Fikrotul Hanifah¹

¹Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education and Psychology

²Department of Communication Sciences, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences

³Department of Elementary School Teacher Education, Faculty of Education and Psychology
Universitas Negeri Semarang

Jl. Raya Banaran, Sekaran, Kec. Gn. Pati, Kota Semarang, Jawa Tengah 50229

ARTICLE INFO:

Received: 2025-09-10
Revised: 2025-10-14
Accepted: 2025-03-03
Published: 2025-11-30

Keywords:

Localization area,
Psychoeducation,
Psychosocial support,
Women

ABSTRACT

The Argorejo karaoke district has become a popular destination for night-time leisure activities in Semarang. A study was conducted in collaboration with the Argorejo Karaoke Association (PAKAR). It was determined that specific programmes, including those utilising psychological principles, is necessary. The challenges experienced by these individuals frequently pertain to a lack of support from their social networks, profound emotional distress, and an inability to effectively cope with adversity. The psychoeducation approach was employed in a study involving 49 females who were employed as lady companions. Initially, the participants were provided with psychosocial support material. Secondly, focus groups were convened and facilitated using "we-ness" cards. The quantitative findings demonstrated that the mean score for the perception of social support received by individuals increased. Participants are able to recognise emotions and comprehend when they require different types of support from others, which was a qualitative finding. Participants develop an understanding of their own needs and provide psychological support to others for ensuring optimal well-being in the long term. Further research is required to ascertain the efficacy of the "we-ness" card in a range of community service contexts, particularly those most in need, it is imperative that diverse groups collaborate.

©2025 Abdimas: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Universitas Merdeka Malang
This is an open access article distributed under the CC BY-SA 4.0 license
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)

How to cite: Pratiwi, P. C., Lukitawati, L., Irvan, M. F., Al Karim, C. H., & Hanifah, F. (2025). Strengthening women's psychosocial support through psychoeducation in the Former Argorejo Localisation Area. *Abdimas: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Universitas Merdeka Malang*, 10(4), xxx-xxx. <https://doi.org/10.26905/abdimas.v10i4.15885>

1. INTRODUCTION

Prostitution is one of the topics studied in social pathology, meaning it is a psychosocial issue categorized as a form of personal social pathology that must be addressed systematically (Niemiec & Górska-Rożej; Perdue et al., 2012). Indonesia ranks 8th among the 10 countries with the highest levels of prostitution (CNN Indonesia, 2022). Data from the Indonesian National Police show that the number of prostitution cases tends to increase each year (Pusiknas Bareskrim Polri, 2020). In 2019, at least 230,000 women were recorded as commercial sex workers (Agregasi Solopos, 2021). Central Java is one of the

regions with the highest number of prostitution sites in Indonesia, following West Java and East Java (Praditya, 2025).

The issue of prostitution creates extensive and long-term impacts, including increased crime, disruption of public order, rising divorce cases, and deteriorating psychological conditions among children in the surrounding environment (Hamdan, 2012). Other data show that Indonesia has a very high prevalence of HIV/AIDS among commercial sex workers, more than 4.9 percent of the population according to 2023 data. This includes both male and female sex workers, some of whom are under 25 years old (Magnani et al., 2010; UNAIDS Asia-Pacific, 2024). Discrimination and gender-based personal violence, intolerance, and economic inequality are also prolonged consequences of prostitution (Niemiec & Górska-Rozej; Yasin & Namoco, 2021; Zeglin, 2014). Therefore, the government has chosen to shut down prostitution areas as an effort to address this issue (Dewantary et al., 2023; Hidayat Sardini & Mukti, 2021).

The closure does not mark the end of the journey in addressing this social pathology issue, because continuous monitoring is still required (KOMNAS HAM Republik Indonesia, 2019; Mukti & Hidayat, 2021). When large prostitution areas are closed, smaller and harder to reach prostitution spots tend to emerge. In addition, prostitution will continue to exist even if localization sites are shut down (KOMNAS HAM Republik Indonesia, 2019), and the lack of clear criminalization policies for commercial sex workers may actually create opportunities for new criminal activities (Amrianto et al., 2023). Evidence of this can be seen from the rise of online prostitution (Anzani et al., 2018; Cunningham & Kendall, 2011; Widman et al., 2021). This situation further increases the risk of psychological issues such as stress, sexual addiction, suicidal ideation, insomnia, trauma, depression, and others (Turban et al., 2017; Van Ouytsel et al., 2019; Vandenbosch & van Oosten, 2017; Weiser et al., 2018), affecting not only sex workers but also their clients.

As a result of stigma and discrimination, former commercial sex workers experience difficulties in accessing physical and psychological health services (Rayson & Alba, 2019). Several psychological intervention approaches have been implemented in the context of former commercial sex workers, including resilience programs (Wong et al., 2019), women's health education (Murnan et al., 2017), reinforcement-based interventions (Surratt et al., 2014), peer support and HIV prevention (Deering et al., 2011), and community-based psychosocial support services (Decker et al., 2017; Janssen et al., 2009; Ward & Roe-Sepowitz, 2009).

The Semarang City Government officially closed the Sunan Kuning prostitution area on October 18, 2019 (Liputan6.com, 2019; Superman, 2019; Purbaya, 2019). Hundreds of female commercial sex workers declared their commitment to leave this profession. Another consequence of this policy was that 117 karaoke businesses were required to reapply for karaoke operation permits, along with efforts to free women from sexual exploitation and trafficking (Purbaya, 2019). Until now, monitoring of the area continues, including supervision related to health, social, economic, and moral conditions.

The partner's problems are presented in the form of quantitative and qualitative data. The data described here are based on three need-assessment meetings with the partner, the Argorejo Karaoke Association (PAKAR). These discussions took place on December 20, 2024, January 6, 2025, and January 14, 2025. Discussions with the chairperson, board members, and leaders of related NGOs indicated that PAKAR currently serves as an association providing assistance to more than 600 former commercial sex workers spread across Argorejo and its surrounding areas.

The discussions also revealed that the main factor driving former commercial sex workers to return to the activity is the need to support their family's economy. Many former commercial sex workers

Strengthening women's psychosocial support through psychoeducation in the Former Argorejo Localisation Area

Pradipta Christy Pratiwi, Lukki Lukitawati, Moh. Farizqo Irvan, Chamilul Hikam Al Karim, Fikrotul Hanifah

feel that their limited educational background prevents them from earning a sufficient salary from their primary jobs, so they choose to supplement their income by working as entertainment workers.

Additional information gathered from the discussions relates to the existing assistance programs. Current support includes guidance from the Health Office and several NGOs that voluntarily monitor the health of former sex workers in Argorejo, with particular attention to HIV-AIDS prevention and the provision of job-skills training. At present, however, there are no psychological services available for them, even though such support is needed because they do not receive psychosocial support from their families, they experience discrimination and stigma, and some who decide to work as lady companions experience stress because they must hide their work from their families. In fact, based on interviews conducted by the service team with PAKAR, it was found that some families are unaware that their family members work as entertainment workers, since entertainment workers often have other side jobs. The team has also approached families and close community members, but they are not yet ready to participate in psychoeducation. Therefore, this program focuses on the well-being of former commercial sex workers who currently work as entertainment workers.

For the third need-assessment meeting, the service team distributed the Brief Inventory of Social Functioning (B-ISF) to 15 former commercial sex workers on December 14, 2025. The results showed that 60 percent of them experienced problems related to a lack of social support in romantic relationships involving partners/spouses, followed by family-related issues involving children/parents/siblings, and one person reported issues related to education.

Based on a review of the needs-analysis activities, which consisted of two discussion meetings and one direct field assessment with former commercial sex workers, three main problems were identified that need to be addressed together with the partner through this program: (1) Limited knowledge among former commercial sex workers about the importance of community-based psychosocial support; (2) Limited perception of acceptance regarding psychosocial support received from their families and close communities; and (3) Low active involvement of former commercial sex workers in providing reciprocal support to their social environment, for example low motivation to participate in health services and skills training. These three main problems are important to address as a form of prevention toward psychosocial vulnerability. Therefore, the service team developed a community-based psychosocial support program for women in the post-localization area of Argorejo, Semarang. This program is designed to strengthen social networks and community capacity so they can sustainably support one another in facing various psychosocial challenges. The problem-solving framework of this program can be illustrated in the Figure 1.

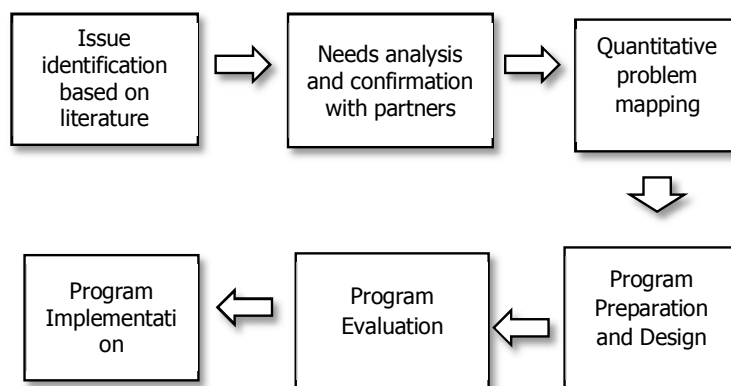


Figure 1. Problem solving framework

Figure 1 presents an overview of the implementation of the community service program. The identification of problems begins with a literature review, which provides a general understanding of the issues and their impacts. This initial overview serves as the basis for identifying the problems in greater depth. A needs analysis is then carried out directly on-site to determine whether the findings from the literature review align with the actual conditions in the field. Based on the field analysis, several issues were found to be consistent with the literature. The design of the community service program is developed based on this analysis. The program plan is then discussed, covering the implementation process, required tools and materials, number of sessions, and the program’s evaluation methods. Once the plan is deemed suitable for the participants’ needs and context, the community service program is ready to be implemented.

2. METHODS

Activity Methods

The psychoeducational approach was chosen because it has been proven effective in improving psychosocial literacy, self-awareness, and reflective capacity through participatory group learning. In the context of post-localization women who face social stigma and limited access to formal psychological services, this community-based approach is relevant for fostering empathy, mutual support, and sustainable psychosocial independence.

To apply this approach, the community service initiative was designed as a psychosocial support program grounded in psychoeducation, involving 49 post-localization women together with the administrators of the Paguyuban Karaoke Argorejo (PAKAR) Semarang. The activities were held across two meetings, combining educational and group reflective activities. The demographic distribution of participants can be seen in the Figure 2 and Figure 3.

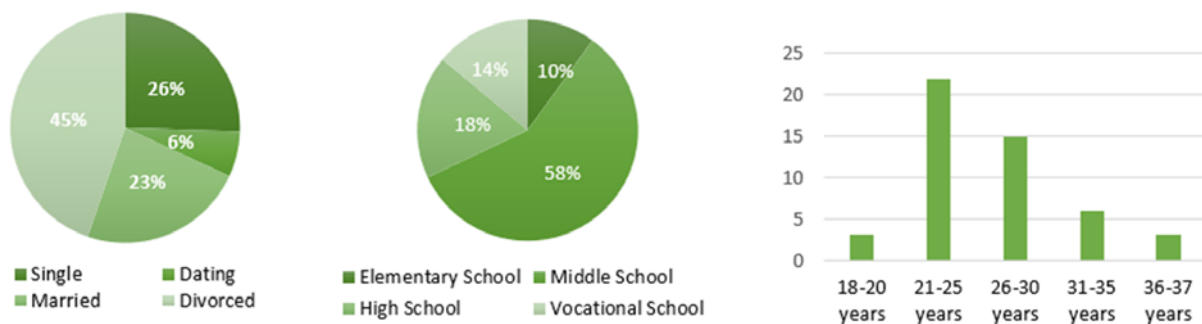


Figure 2. Proportion of community service participant status

Figure 3. Proportion of the last education level of community service participants

The data in Figure 2 show that the majority of participants, or 44.7 percent, are divorced, followed by 25 percent who are unmarried, 23.4 percent who are married, and 6.4 percent who are in a relationship. Referring to Figure 3, most participants have a junior high school education, accounting for 58 percent. Based on the age range shown in Figure 2, most participants are in late adolescence and early adulthood. These data help the community service team design methods and program approaches that align with the participants’ characteristics.

Strengthening women's psychosocial support through psychoeducation in the Former Argorejo Localisation Area

Pradipta Christy Pratiwi, Lukki Lukitawati, Moh. Farizqo Irvan, Chamilul Hikam Al Karim, Fikrotul Hanifah

Community-based psychosocial support is an intervention approach that places the community at the center of activities, designed to provide support to individuals and the community as they face psychosocial stressors. The goals of community-based psychosocial support include accelerating social functioning within the family and community, enabling social adjustment to resume daily activities, increasing mutual support, and strengthening resilience in social life (Im et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2022).

The implementation of community-based psychosocial support programs is guided by several principles (Horn et al., 2016). These principles include: (1) Being locally contextualized or aligned with the community's needs; (2) Ensuring community involvement in program implementation; (3) Emphasizing empowerment that strengthens both individuals and the community; (4) Adopting a holistic perspective by integrating psychological, social, and cultural aspects; and (5) Being relationally driven as a means of fostering mutual support among participants.

Community-based psychosocial support is particularly effective in healing trauma and helping survivors reintegrate into their social environment without feelings of inferiority or low self-worth. According to Astuti et al. (2022), community-based psychosocial support can accelerate trauma recovery for individuals. In addition, Yudanegara et al. (2025) state that psychosocial support can equip communities with the knowledge needed to better prepare themselves psychologically during crisis situations. Interventions using a psychoeducational approach aim to raise awareness of psychosocial support.

Through psychoeducation, participants are expected to develop the ability to provide psychosocial support by utilizing group interventions to create vicarious experiences, or indirect learning through the experiences of others (Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan, 2004). Psychoeducation is one approach that can enhance understanding, awareness, and therapeutic strategies, thereby improving an individual's quality of life (Bhattacharjee et al., 2011). This approach is suitable for adolescents and young adults, and has been shown to alleviate psychological distress and improve mental health (Savell et al., 2024). One key advantage of psychoeducation is its ability to increase individual awareness of the materials delivered during the intervention (Medellu et al., 2022). The program was implemented using five methods, namely:

Presentation of material and questions and answers

This method is used to explain the purpose and objectives of the program and to introduce participants to psychosocial support. Delivering material followed by a question-and-answer session is highly effective in adult learning because it aligns with the principles of andragogy, which emphasize approaches tailored to the needs and characteristics of adult learners. This process involves adults' metacognitive skills in acquiring and retaining information, including observing themselves based on their daily experiences related to the material provided. On the other hand, when adults evaluate that they have not yet applied the information given, they tend to initiate new behaviors (Metcalfe & Shimamura, 1994; Schneider et al., 2022). In this context, the question-and-answer session allows active participation, clarification of information, and the exchange of experiences that enrich the learning process. Additionally, the interaction during the question-and-answer session helps create a collaborative and reflective learning environment, which is essential for building meaning and supporting the practical application of the material delivered (Merriam & Bierema, 2014).

"We-ness" card

During observations in the field needs-assessment phase, the service team discussed psychoeducation methods that would be suitable for the context and target participants. Therefore,

the team designed an activity using psychoeducational cards to help participants grasp the essence of psychosocial support in an enjoyable way. Card-based media have been used in previous psychoeducation activities to improve specific types of knowledge, such as quartet cards for increasing high school students' knowledge about the dangers of drugs (Nisa et al., 2024), flashcards to enhance speaking skills in children with special needs (Flibex & Salsabiil, 2024), and case-cards to optimize parenting among marginalized families (Pratiwi et al., 2024).

The "we-ness" cards consist of 36 cards containing specific questions about psychosocial support. These cards were developed based on participant needs and the context of the community engagement program for women in the post-localization area. Even so, the questions are simple and relate to everyday experiences, allowing participants to feel comfortable and gain a realistic understanding of the psychosocial support they may receive in daily life. Examples of several questions included in the "we-ness" cards is in Figure 4.

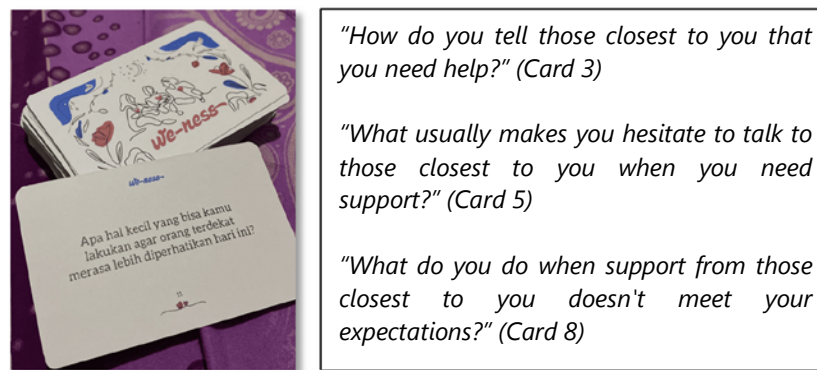


Figure 4. "We-ness" psychoeducation card

The "we-ness" cards, as shown in Figure 4, help participants become more aware of the psychosocial needs and support they have previously received. The way to use the cards is very simple. Similar to playing in a small group, participants take turns drawing a card and answering the question written on it. After that, other group members respond by sharing similar experiences or offering alternative perspectives based on what was shared.

Using these cards also creates a symbolic space for participants to voice experiences that were previously internalized or considered taboo. The small-group discussion process becomes a safe space for validating experiences and fostering social learning, which implicitly strengthens reflective functioning and self-meaning making as part of psychosocial recovery.

Evaluation Design

This psychosocial support program has two criteria used as benchmarks for determining its success, namely: (1) The program is considered successful if it is implemented according to the scheduled timeline and participants demonstrate active engagement throughout the activities. This is measured through observations and documentation by the implementation team, including attendance records of the program participants; and (2) Next, success is evaluated through quantitative and qualitative analyses of the participants. The quantitative analysis involves a t-test comparing participants' pre-test and post-test scores (presented in the Results subsection) using a simple psychosocial support knowledge questionnaire developed by the implementation team. The questionnaire consists of five

general multiple-choice questions related to psychosocial support. The qualitative analysis includes identifying thematic findings derived from participants’ experiences shared during the “We-ness” Card session.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The implementation of this community service program represents the fifth stage of a series of community engagement activities that have been carried out. After the team completed the program design and prepared the psychoeducational media, the implementation was scheduled across two meetings that included several activities: introductions and trust-building, pre-test, delivery of psychosocial support material, the “we-ness” card session, and post-test. The descriptions of these activities are as follows:

Implementation

Introduction and building trust

At this stage, the implementation team introduced themselves to the program participants. This step was taken to ensure that participants felt psychologically comfortable and able to interact openly. In social contexts, individuals need to recognize the people they are interacting with, especially when no prior interaction has occurred (Mayer et al., 1995; Wu et al., 2022). The impressions or feelings that emerge depend on their perception of the attributes displayed by others, which also shapes their expectations toward them. Other studies note that trust-building is a dynamic process consisting of three stages: initial trust formation, trust maintenance, and trust decline (Ba, 2001; McKnight et al., 2002; Walczuch & Lundgren, 2004). Based on these perspectives, the implementation team aimed to introduce themselves in a manner that conveyed equality with the participants, helping them feel connected and fostering shared expectations regarding empowerment within the program.

Presentation of psychosocial support material

Psychosocial support in this community engagement program is defined as an individual’s perception of the acceptance of various forms of assistance received from people around them. Such assistance helps individuals manage the pressure or stress they encounter in daily life (Lane, 2024). Psychosocial support is often followed by additional mental health programs, such as counseling or access to other services that enhance their psychological well-being (Gulliver et al., 2012). When adequate psychosocial support is available, beginning with awareness of the need to receive such support, it helps individuals build resilience and maintain long-term mental well-being (Rice et al., 2016). This is particularly important for vulnerable groups such as women in post-localization contexts, who are at greater risk of experiencing social stigma, resulting in negative judgments or difficulties in establishing future careers.

Presentation of the “We-ness” card

This stage aims to help participants become more aware of and recognize the psychosocial support they have previously received, or even become inspired by other participants in understanding whether they have received such support in their daily lives. This stage also encourages them to learn

from others' experiences about how to respond to, accept, or request simple assistance from people close to them, whether physical or psychological support. In the context of women in post-localization settings, they often have low literacy regarding the importance of psychosocial support (Kelly et al., 2007; Putri & Hamidah, 2018). Additionally, they may hold negative perceptions of themselves, have had unpleasant experiences with people around them, or feel ashamed (Koentjoro, 1999). During the presentation of the "we-ness" cards, the community engagement team conducts qualitative analysis, taking field notes on the relevance of the card questions and the responses provided by participants.

Implementation of pre-test and post-test

The pre-test and post-test questions were prepared by the community engagement team. The test consisted of five simple questions, and participants were required to choose the single most accurate answer from four available options. The questions were aligned with the needs analysis conducted in the early stages with the partner organization and were based on the material prepared for the session. The purpose of administering the pre-test and post-test was to evaluate whether there was an increase in knowledge regarding psychosocial support among women in post-localization settings.

Activity material

The relevance of the preliminary study, the material, and the questions in the pre-test and post-test can be explained as follows. The community engagement team conducted a needs analysis using the Brief Inventory of Social Functioning (B-IPF) with 15 women in post-localization settings as the second stage of this program. This was followed by the preparation of presentation materials about the importance and forms of social support for vulnerable groups. The development of the "we-ness" cards further strengthened the team's efforts to help women in post-localization settings evaluate their daily lives in a concrete way regarding the same topic. During implementation, the team first administered the pre-test followed by scoring and tabulation, delivered the material, and then administered the post-test followed by scoring and tabulation on the second day.

Table 1. Community service activity meeting schedule

1st Meeting	
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introductions and building trust - Pre-test - Presentation of psychosocial support material - Question-and-answer session
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building trust and comfort between the service team and female participants after the localization - Identifying participants' knowledge of psychosocial support - Increasing participants' knowledge of psychosocial support and providing opportunities for discussion/questions and answers regarding the material presented
2nd Meeting	
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opening session and refreshment on the first day - Presentation of 'we-ness' cards - Post-test and closing
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The opening session and refreshment aimed to explore participants' focus and interest in the first day's implementation and preparations for the second day. - The 'we-ness' cards helped participants share and evaluate the psychosocial support they received and listen to the experiences of others. - Re-identifying participants' knowledge of psychosocial support

Strengthening women's psychosocial support through psychoeducation in the Former Argorejo Localisation Area

Pradipta Christy Pratiwi, Lukki Lukitawati, Moh. Farizqo Irvan, Chamilul Hikam Al Karim, Fikrotul Hanifah

The psychosocial support material was adjusted to the context and field conditions at the time of implementation, as well as to the number of participants, which was 49 individuals who voluntarily joined the program. The presentation was not delivered in a one-way format but actively involved participants through discussion and question-and-answer sessions. The schedule for the program meetings is in Table 1.

The first day of implementation (as shown in Figure 5) began with the introduction of each member of the community engagement team. This was followed by interactions aimed at building rapport so that trust and comfort could be optimized throughout the program. During the process of gathering participants and preparing the venue, the team was assisted by the Paguyuban Karaoke Argorejo (PAKAR) of Semarang City.

The next activity was the pre-test. Each participant was given a question sheet and writing tools. They filled in their personal information and completed the questions provided. All participants were able to work independently and submitted their answers in an orderly manner after finishing. After the pre-test, the next activity was the presentation of psychosocial support material. The material was designed to be practical, using clear and easy-to-understand language.



Figure 5. Activities on the first day of implementation

The second day's activities, as shown in Figure 6, began with an opening from the service team, who asked several questions related to the psychosocial support material delivered on the first day. This aimed to check the participants' readiness and focus as they entered the second day of activities. Next, the 'we-ness' card discussion was conducted. The discussion was enjoyable, indicated by the smiles and laughter that appeared when participants opened the questions on the cards they received. At first, they seemed shy to answer, but the service team then encouraged them to be open, emphasizing that any response was acceptable and that there were no wrong answers. This encouragement helped the participants open up and respond to one another's answers.



Figure 6. Activities on the second day of implementation

After the 'we-ness' cards, the activity continued with the post-test. Participants were given sufficient time to complete it. They worked on the post-test in an orderly manner and submitted it once finished. The service team ended the event by expressing their gratitude to all participants and to PAKAR Semarang City for supporting this psychosocial support program.

Based on the outcome evaluation design, the service team assessed success through participants' active engagement during the activities, quantitative calculations, and qualitative analysis. First, the program was considered successful because participants actively took part in the two-day activities. They joined the program voluntarily and followed each process provided. Then, quantitative analysis was carried out by comparing the pre-test and post-test scores of the simple social support questionnaire developed by the service team for 49 participants. Statistical calculations using the Jamovi application produced in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive data

	Pre-test	Post-test
N	49	49
Missing	0	0
Mean	3.69	4.00
Median	4	4
Standard deviation	0.871	0.957
Minimum	1	1
Maximum	5	5
Shapiro-Wilk W	0.825	0.797
Shapiro-Wilk p	<.001	<.001

The descriptive data calculation in Table 2 above shows that there is no missing data, calculated from all participants who completed both the pre-test and post-test. The normality test shows a value of <.001 ($p > .05$), this means that the data obtained is not normal so that testing changes in pre-test and post-test scores uses the Wilcoxon difference test as a non-parametric alternative.

Table 3. Paired samples t-test

			Statistic	df	p
Pre-test	Post-test	Student's t	-2.89	48.0	0.006
		Wilcoxon W	33.5		0.009

Based on the Wilcoxon statistical test data in Table 3, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the program's pre-test and post-test scores ($p < .009$; $p < .05$). Therefore, it can be concluded that there has been an increase in women's knowledge of social support after the red-light district in Semarang City (mean pre-test < mean post-test = 3.69 < 4.00). The qualitative analysis of the "we-ness" card yields findings that can be illustrated in the Figure 7.

Based on the analysis results in Figure 5, it was found that in general there are both obstacles and impacts related to psychosocial support. Psychosocial support is felt more strongly when it comes from someone close. Participants experienced comfort when they received support in the form of being

Strengthening women's psychosocial support through psychoeducation in the Former Argorejo Localisation Area

Pradipta Christy Pratiwi, Lukki Lukitawati, Moh. Farizqo Irvan, Chamilul Hikam Al Karim, Fikrotul Hanifah

listened to. Instead of only passively receiving support, participants were also able to recognize and provide psychosocial support to others. The obstacles they experienced included difficulty in expressing their feelings and the concern that sharing their feelings might burden others.

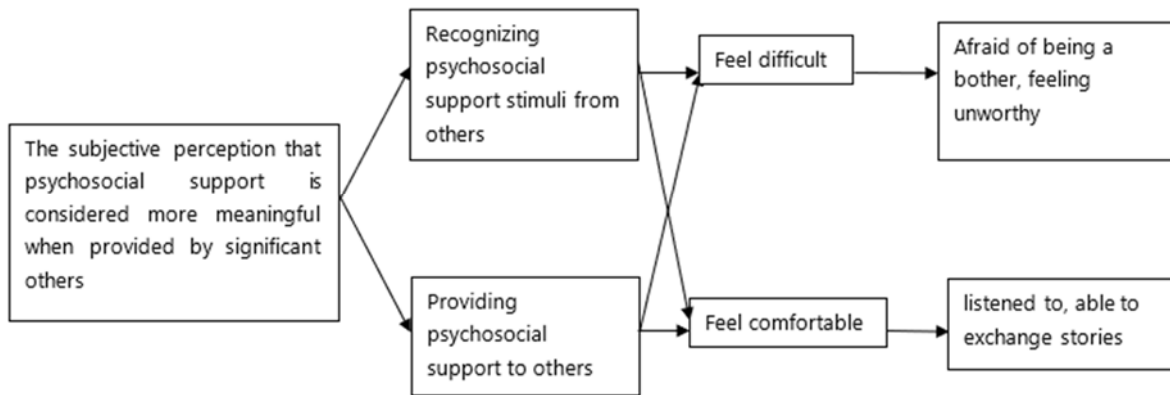


Figure 7. Conclusion of qualitative thematic analysis

As a follow-up to the findings of this assistance activity and to ensure that the psychosocial support process does not stop here, concrete actions are needed to support the success of the program. This may include continued mentoring that directly involves community managers so that this assistance program can become a regular community activity. In addition, periodic monitoring is needed to ensure the program continues to run as intended. Some participants may also be involved as cadres in implementing psychosocial assistance by using the materials and media that were previously provided.

Discussion

Community service activities were carried out in the form of a psychosocial support program. This program is relevant to the participants' needs based on the results of the preliminary study and discussions with the partner. The implementation of this community service program, which took the form of psychoeducation, aimed to improve participants' knowledge regarding the recognition, acceptance, and provision of psychosocial support. Therefore, based on the characteristics of the target participants who are former commercial sex workers, have at least a junior high school education, and have diverse relational statuses, this psychoeducation approach can help them prepare for a sustainable life transformation both in terms of social relationships and starting a new career.

Based on the evaluation results of this psychosocial support psychoeducation program, the following findings were obtained: (1) participants were actively involved throughout the program, as indicated by their voluntary participation and willingness to discuss, ask questions, and respond during the activities; (2) quantitative evaluation results showed differences between the pre-test and post-test. Based on the mean scores, there was an indication of increased knowledge about psychosocial support; (3) thematic reflections from the qualitative findings indicated that participants had subjective perceptions that meaningful psychosocial support primarily comes from people closest to them. They also felt comfortable receiving or providing support when they were listened to and could openly share stories. Conversely, they found it difficult to give or receive support when they felt afraid of burdening others or felt unworthy of giving or receiving psychosocial support.

In implementing this community service program, several supporting factors contributed to the successful execution of the activities. These included: (1) The approval for collaboration and the permission granted by the Paguyuban Karaoke Argorejo (PAKAR) Semarang as the partner; (2) The availability of facilities, such as the venue and media that could be used throughout the program; (3) The sequencing of the schedule with the partner's regular activities, which helped prepare participants for the planned program time; (4) The absence of other activities taking place at the same time, which prevented attendance issues among participants.

There were also factors that hindered the implementation of the community service program, including: (1) Adjustments to the starting time because some participants arrived later than the agreed schedule; (2) During the sharing session about experiences with psychosocial support in the "we-ness" card phase, some participants felt shy about sharing their experiences, but other participants offered encouragement and examples.

The increase in knowledge about psychosocial support in this community service program for women after localization helps them recognize the types of supportive stimuli they have previously received. It also illustrates that support is not limited to material or physical assistance. At the same time, it reinforces that they, too, can provide psychological support to one another. In principle, psychosocial support emphasizes providing protection and strengthening psychosocial well-being, which is also beneficial for preventing the development of mental health problems in certain groups (Soğancı & Duyan, 2025). Psychosocial support is also a comprehensive empowerment process that aims not only to address current crises but also to enhance the capacity of individuals or groups to better cope with potential future crises (Cronin & Jones, 2015). In addition, it can increase their ability to adapt to new situations and improve their quality of life (Cassanet et al., 2023).

Several models of psychosocial support include psychoeducation, psychological first aid, crisis intervention and counseling, as well as family care and other activities that serve as relevant responses to addressing psychological crises in specific contexts and populations (Bauwens & Naturale, 2017). This program for women after localization applies a form of support based on community-based psychoeducation through material presentations and the use of "we-ness" cards. The activities are contextually aligned with the needs of women after localization in Argorejo, involve the PAKAR community in their implementation, focus on empowerment and relational group strengthening, and are holistic in nature because they integrate psychological, social, and local cultural approaches (Horn et al., 2016; Im et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2022).

The psychoeducation mechanism has also been used in previous studies, such as those involving marginalized families (Pratiwi et al., 2024), where card-based media were similarly applied in community service activities. Using cards helps participants explore their experiences more easily. In the context of this community service program, women after localization are able to recognize the comfort they feel when they are being listened to, and they also become more open when others are willing to share with them as well, creating a reciprocal response. On the other hand, feelings such as fear of being a burden and a sense of unworthiness to help others can hinder them from being willing to provide psychological support to others. These findings reinforce the importance of educational approaches that can reduce shame and stigma while fostering a community that offers mutual emotional support.

Implementing the program through small groups or peer group support is considered appropriate to enhance a sense of togetherness and serves as a strategy to support program sustainability. The study by Khamida et al. (2020) showed that peer group support can effectively increase self-efficacy. This improvement occurs because support from peers can strengthen an individual's belief in their own ability to face challenges, especially when they receive positive feedback and share successful

experiences. These findings align with the Health Promotion Model, which emphasizes the importance of interpersonal factors, such as social support, in influencing a person's perceived benefits of action and their self-efficacy.

In line with these findings, the study by [Jeanmougin et al. \(2024\)](#) emphasizes that interactions between individuals in peer mentoring contexts can foster a sense of belonging. Through reciprocal guidance and support, participants develop stronger social connectedness and increased confidence within the learning environment. This suggests that peer-based support not only contributes to higher self-efficacy but also promotes the development of a positive social identity and enhances individuals' psychological well-being.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The psychoeducational program on psychosocial support, implemented as a form of community service, aims to provide community-based psychosocial support services for women in the post-localization area of Argorejo, Semarang. The program seeks to achieve several targets, active participation in the psychoeducation activities, increased knowledge about the importance of psychosocial support, and enhanced awareness of the psychosocial support they have received or provided to others through reflective questions drawn from their daily lives. This service also carries long-term goals to help participants prepare for their next life transitions, including resocialization within the community and building new businesses or careers. The empowerment program has been shown, both quantitatively and qualitatively, to improve knowledge, awareness, and the ability to provide psychosocial support.

Paguyuban Karaoke Argorejo (PAKAR) has served as a community that supports women, including lady companions. However, having one large community alone is not always enough to meet their emotional and social support needs. In this context, forming peer groups becomes important because these smaller groups allow members, especially lady companions, to interact more closely, share experiences, and provide mutual encouragement and practical help in facing daily challenges. Such groups can strengthen their sense of togetherness, increase resilience, and create a safe space for women to express their needs and aspirations. This ensures that support is not only structural, but also active, continuous, and grounded in the real experiences of its members. Therefore, combining a large community like PAKAR with smaller peer groups can create a more holistic and empowering support ecosystem for women, especially lady companions.

There needs to be consistent and ongoing effort to continue similar programs within this community. This can be done by preparing several community leaders to become facilitators who can independently use the materials and the "we-ness" cards. Continuous monitoring is also necessary to ensure the consistency of implementation. Collaboration with other partners is needed to further develop the program based on the context and needs of the target community. In addition, the "we-ness" cards need to undergo efficacy and effectiveness testing through applied research in the future. Cooperation among various parties is expected to support comprehensive empowerment from physical, psychological, social, and spiritual perspectives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The service team would like to express their gratitude to the partner in this program, the Paguyuban Karaoke Argorejo (PAKAR) in Semarang City, for their willingness to collaborate in this initiative. We also extend our sincere appreciation to all participants who voluntarily took part in this program. Lastly, we thank Universitas Negeri Semarang for approving and providing the grant that enabled this community service program to be carried out successfully.

REFERENCES

- Agregasi Solopos. (2021, 22 Desember). *Ternyata segini jumlah PSK di Indonesia, Angkanya Mencengangkan!*. Okezone News.
- Amrianto, A. D., Putri, M. K. A., Yusup, A., & Putra, I. P. A. D. (2023). Kriminalisasi dan reformulasi perbuatan prostitusi dalam hukum pidana: Catatan kritis atas minimnya pengaturan perbuatan prostitusi di Indonesia. *Jurnal Penegakan Hukum Dan Keadilan*, 4(2), 123-143. <https://doi.org/10.18196/jphk.v4i2.18091>
- Anzani, A., Di Sarno, M., & Prunas, A. (2018). Using smartphone apps to find sexual partners: A review of the literature. *Sexologies*, 27(3), 61-65. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sexol.2018.05.001>
- Astuti, N. L. S., Saifudin, I. M. M. Y., Firdaus, A., Nancy, M. Y., Sudarmi, S., & Andriana, H. T. (2022). Efektivitas intervensi berbasis psikososial terhadap penanggulangan trauma pasca bencana: A systematic literature review. *Jurnal Keperawatan*, 14(4), 1069-1080.
- Bauwens, J., & Naturale, A. (2017). The role of social work in the aftermath of disasters and traumatic events. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 45(2), 99-101. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10615-017-0623-8>
- Bhattacharjee, D., Rai, A. K., Singh, N. K., Kumar, P., Munda, S. K., & Das, B. (2011). Psychoeducation: A measure to strengthen psychiatric treatment. *Delhi Psychiatry Journal*, 14(1), 33-39.
- Cassanet, A., McKenzie, W. A., & McLean, L. A. (2023). Psychosocial interventions to support retirement well-being and adjustment: a systematic review. *Educational and Developmental Psychologist*, 40(2), 214-231. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20590776.2022.2161360>
- CNN Indonesia. (2022, October 19). *10 Negara dengan pekerja seks terbanyak di dunia, ada Indonesia?* CNN Indonesia.
- Cronin, M., & Jones, D. N. (2015). Social work and disasters. *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences (Second Edition)*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.28026-4>
- Cunningham, S., & Kendall, T. D. (2011). Prostitution 2.0: The changing face of sex work. *Journal of urban economics*, 69(3), 273-287. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jue.2010.12.001>
- Decker, M. R., Tomko, C., Wingo, E., Sawyer, A., Peitzmeier, S., Glass, N., & Sherman, S. G. (2017). A brief, trauma-informed intervention increases safety behavior and reduces HIV risk for drug-involved women who trade sex. *BMC Public Health*, 18(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-017-4709-6>
- Deering, K. N., Kerr, T., Tyndall, M. W., Montaner, J. S., Gibson, K., Irons, L., & Shannon, K. (2011). A peer-led mobile outreach program and increased utilization of detoxification and residential drug treatment among female sex workers who use drugs in a Canadian setting. *Drug and alcohol dependence*, 113(1), 46-54. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2010.07.007>
- Dewantary, Z. R., Citra, A., & Prameshwary, N. L. L. P. (2023). Disbanding prostitution localization is violating female sex workers' rights: A case of indonesia. *IJCLS (Indonesian Journal of Criminal Law Studies)*, 8(1), 107-134. <https://doi.org/10.15294/ijcls.v8i1.39679>
- Flibex, A., & Salsabiil, M. (2024). Psikoedukasi media flashcard untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara pada anak autisme di SLB C Karya Ibu Palembang. *Jurnal Pengabdian Inovasi Masyarakat Indonesia*, 3(1), 47-50. <https://doi.org/10.29303/jpimi.v3i1.3664>
- Gulliver, A., Griffiths, K. M., & Christensen, H. (2012). Barriers and facilitators to mental health help-seeking for young elite athletes: A qualitative study. *BMC psychiatry*, 12(1), 157. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-244X-12-157>

Strengthening women's psychosocial support through psychoeducation in the Former Argorejo Localisation Area

Pradipta Christy Pratiwi, Lukki Lukitawati, Moh. Farizqo Irvan, Chamilul Hikam Al Karim, Fikrotul Hanifah

- Hamdan, H. (2012). Dampak prostitusi liar terhadap kehidupan sosial masyarakat. *Psikostudia: Jurnal Psikologi*, 1(2), 91-101. <http://doi.org/10.30872/psikostudia.v1i2.2196>
- HIV & AIDS Datahub for Asia Pacific. (2023). *Sex Work & HIV Indonesia*.
- Horn, R., Waade, M., & Kalisky, M. (2016). Not doing more, but doing differently: Integrating a community based psychosocial approach into other sectors. *Intervention Journal of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Conflict Affected Areas*, 14(3), 245-256.
- Im, H., Verbillis-Kolp, S., Atiyeh, S., Bonz, A. G., Eadeh, S., George, N., & Malluwa Wadu, A. (2023). Implementation evaluation of community based mental health and psychosocial support intervention for refugee newcomers in the United States. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 2023(1). <https://doi.org/10.1155/2023/6696415>
- Janssen, P. A., Gibson, K., Bowen, R., Spittal, P. M., & Petersen, K. L. (2009). Peer support using a mobile access van promotes safety and harm reduction strategies among sex trade workers in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. *Journal of Urban Health*, 86(5), 804-809. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-009-9376-1>
- Jeanmougin, C., Cole, B., Zwilling, E., & Cooper, R. (2024). Cultivating a sense of belonging through peer mentoring. *Teaching and Learning in Nursing*, 19(3), 265-268. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.teln.2024.04.004>
- Kelly, C. M., Jorm, A. F., & Wright, A. (2007). Improving mental health literacy as a strategy to facilitate early intervention for mental disorders. *Medical Journal of Australia*, 187(S7), S26-S30. <https://doi.org/10.5694/j.1326-5377.2007.tb01332.x>
- Khamida, K., Budury, S., Nurjanah, S., Ainiyah, N., & Zahroh, C. (2020). Peer group support practice using health promotion model approach to increase perceived benefit of action and perceived self efficacy. *Jurnal Ners dan Kebidanan Indonesia*, 8(1), 52-57. [http://doi.org/10.21927/jnki.2020.8\(1\).52-57](http://doi.org/10.21927/jnki.2020.8(1).52-57)
- Koentjoro, K. (1999). Pelacur dan resosialisasi antara patologi dan rehabilitasi sosial. *Indigenous: Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi*.
- Komnas HAM Republik Indonesia. (2019, September 24). *Menyoal dampak penutupan lokalisasi di Indonesia*.
- Lane, S. (2024). "It's the people that make the difference": Understanding the significance of psychosocial support for professional athletes. *Mental Health and Prevention*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mhp.2024.200364>
- Lee, C., Schojan, M., Myo, K., Doe, G. H., San, L. H., & Bass, J. (2022). Implementation of a community-based psychosocial support focal point response for internally displaced persons in Myanmar during COVID-19. *Frontiers in public health*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2022.854490>
- Liputan6.com. (2019, October 18). *Lokalisasi Sunan Kuning ditutup, Wali Kota Semarang: Ini saatnya kita insaf*. Liputan6.
- Magnani, R., Riono, P., Nurhayati, N., Saputro, E., Mustikawati, D., Anartati, A., Prabawanti, C., Majid, N., & Morineau, G. (2010). Sexual risk behaviours, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections among female sex workers in Indonesia. *Sexually transmitted infections*, 86(5), 393-399. <https://doi.org/10.1136/sti.2009.038059>
- Mayer, R. C., Davis, J. H., & Schoorman, F. D. (1995). An integrative model of organizational trust. *Academy of management review*, 20(3), 709-734. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1995.9508080335>

- McKnight, D. H., Choudhury, V., & Kacmar, C. (2002). Developing and validating trust measures for e-commerce: An integrative typology. *Information systems research*, 13(3), 334-359.
<https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.13.3.334.81>
- Medellu, G. I. R., Issom, F. L., & Sy, V. R. (2022). The role of psychoeducation in raising awareness about gifted children towards teachers. *Jurnal Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Madani (JPMM)*, 6(1), 151-163
<https://doi.org/10.21009/JPMM.006.1.10>
- Merriam, S. B., & Bierema, L. L. (2014). *Adult learning: Linking theory and practice* (1st Ed.). Jossey Bass.
- Metcalf, J. & Shimamura, A. P. (1994). *Metacognition: Knowing about knowing*. MIT Press.
- Mukti, A. & Hidayat, N. (2021). Kebijakan penutupan lokalisasi Sunan Kuning Kota Semarang tahun 2019. *Journal of Politic and Government Studies*, 11(1), 300-317.
- Murnan, A., Wu, Q., & Slesnick, N. (2018). Effects of ecologically based family therapy with substance using, prostituting mothers. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 40(4), 557-583.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6427.12187>
- Niemiec, M., & Górska-Rózej, K. (2021). Analysis of social pathology in the opinion of community inhabitants to increase threat resilience in communities at the local level. *European Research Studies Journal*, 24(3B), 563-575.
- Nisa, I. Z., Ramadhanny, C., & Kusumawati, H. (2024). Pengaruh psikoedukasi media kartu kuartet terhadap pengetahuan siswa SMA Negeri 10 Samarinda mengenai bahaya penggunaan napza jenis sabu dan ganja. *Jurnal Ilmu Kedokteran dan Kesehatan*, 11(7), 1321-1326.
- Perdue, T. R., Williamson, C., Ventura, L. A., Hairston, T. R., Osborne, L. T. C., Laux, J. M., ... & Nathan, V. M. (2012). Offenders who are mothers with and without experience in prostitution: Differences in historical trauma, current stressors, and physical and mental health differences. *Women's health issues*, 22(2). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.whi.2011.08.010>
- Praditya, I. I. (2025, Februari 12). *15 Provinsi punya lokasi PSK terbanyak versi BPS, Jawa Barat Juaranya*. Liputan6.
- Pratiwi, P. C., Nuzulia, S., Undarwati, A., Lukitawati, L., & Nurhayati, I. (2024). Family connections programme: Optimising parenting in marginalised families efforts. *Abdimas: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Universitas Merdeka Malang*, 9(4), 1087-1101.
<https://doi.org/10.26905/abdimas.v9i4.14347>
- Purbaya, A. A. (2019, June 18). *Lokalisasi Sunan Kuning Semarang ditutup, begini curahan hati pengelola*. Detik News.
- Pusiknas Bareskrim Polri. (2023, October 31). *Kasus pornografi, prostitusi dan eksploitasi cenderung meningkat*.
- Putri, D. K., & Hamidah. (2018). Gambaran makna hidup pada perempuan usia dewasa awal mantan Pekerja Seks Komersial (PSK) binaan yayasan gerakan melukis harapan. *Jurnal Psikologi Klinis dan Kesehatan Mental*, 7(4), 1-11.
- Rayson, J., & Alba, B. (2019). Experiences of stigma and discrimination as predictors of mental health help-seeking among sex workers. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, 34(3), 277-289.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14681994.2019.1628488>
- Rice, S. M., Purcell, R., De Silva, S., Mawren, D., McGorry, P. D., & Parker, A. G. (2016). The mental health of elite athletes: A narrative systematic review. *Sports medicine*, 46(9), 1333-1353.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40279-016-0492-2>

Strengthening women's psychosocial support through psychoeducation in the Former Argorejo Localisation Area

Pradipta Christy Pratiwi, Lukki Lukitawati, Moh. Farizqo Irvan, Chamilul Hikam Al Karim, Fikrotul Hanifah

- Savell, S. M., Lee, J., Stern, J. A., & Wilson, M. N. (2024). Exploring the benefits of psychoeducation on college students' mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of American College Health*, 72(9), 3546-3555. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2023.2180996>
- Schneider, W., Tibken, C., & Richter, T. (2022). The development of metacognitive knowledge from childhood to young adulthood: Major trends and educational implications. *Advances in Child Development and Behavior*, 63, 273-307. <https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.acdb.2022.04.006>
- Soğancı, E., & Duyan, V. (2025). A qualitative research on the evaluation of psychosocial support services by those affected by the flood disaster: "Okay, but this is my hometown". *Social Work in Public Health*, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19371918.2025.2515052>
- Somers-Flanagan, J., & Somers-Flanagan, R. (2004). *Counseling and psychotherapy theories in context and practice*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Superman. (2019, October 18). *Pemkot Semarang Prostitusi Sunan Kuning resmi tutup total*. Diskominfo Kota Semarang.
- Surratt, H. L., O'Grady, C., Kurtz, S. P., Levi-Minzi, M. A., & Chen, M. (2014). Outcomes of a behavioral intervention to reduce HIV risk among drug-involved female sex workers. *AIDS and Behavior*, 18(4), 726-739. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-014-0723-1>
- Turban, J. L., Potenza, M. N., Hoff, R. A., Martino, S., & Kraus, S. W. (2017). Psychiatric disorders, suicidal ideation, and sexually transmitted infections among post-deployment veterans who utilize digital social media for sexual partner seeking. *Addictive Behaviors*, 66, 96-100. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2016.11.015>
- UNAIDS Asia-Pacific. (2024, July 22). *HIV and sex workers — Thematic briefing note — 2024 global AIDS update The Urgency of Now: AIDS at a Crossroads*.
- Vandenbosch, L., & Van Oosten, J. M. (2017). The relationship between online pornography and the sexual objectification of women: The attenuating role of porn literacy education. *Journal of Communication*, 67(6), 1015-1036. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12341>
- Van Ouytsel, J., Lu, Y., Ponnet, K., Walrave, M., & Temple, J. R. (2019). Longitudinal associations between sexting, cyberbullying, and bullying among adolescents: Cross-lagged panel analysis. *Journal of Adolescence*, 73, 36-41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2019.03.008>
- Walczuch, R., & Lundgren, H. (2004). Psychological antecedents of institution-based consumer trust in e-retailing. *Information & Management*, 42(1), 159-177. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2003.12.009>
- Ward, A., & Roe-Sepowitz, D. (2009). Assessing the effectiveness of a trauma-oriented approach to treating prostituted women in a prison and a community exiting program. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 18(3), 293-312. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926770902809837>
- Weiser, D. A., Niehuis, S., Flora, J., Punyanunt-Carter, N. M., Arias, V. S., & Baird, R. H. (2018). Swiping right: Sociosexuality, intentions to engage in infidelity, and infidelity experiences on Tinder. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 133, 29-33. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2017.10.025>
- Widman, L., Javidi, H., Maheux, A. J., Evans, R., Nesi, J., & Choukas-Bradley, S. (2021). Sexual communication in the digital age: Adolescent sexual communication with parents and friends about sexting, pornography, and starting relationships online. *Sexuality & Culture*, 25(6), 2092-2109. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-021-09866-1>
- Wong, W. C. W., Yuen, W. W. Y., Tang, C. S. K., Holroyd, E., & Fong, D. Y. T. (2019). Evaluation and mechanism analysis of HIV prevention programme using resilience framework among female sex workers: a randomised controlled trial. *Preventive medicine reports*, 13, 229-237. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmedr.2018.12.007>

- Wu, H., Deng, Z., & Evans, R. (2022). Building patients' trust in psychologists in online mental health communities. *Data Science and Management*, 5(1), 21-27.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dsm.2022.03.001>
- Yasin, R., & Namoco, S. I. O. (2021). Prostitution: a new dynamic of discrimination. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 36(4), 553-567.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-07-2020-0205>
- Yudanagara, B. B. H., Putri, A. A., Annisa, N. S. N., Dewabrata, L. M., & Sosialita, T. D. (2025). Pelatihan kesehatan mental dan dukungan psikososial pada situasi krisis di Kelurahan Tangguh Bencana Kota Probolinggo. *Idea Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 5(01), 33-40.
<https://doi.org/10.53690/ipm.v5i01.336>
- Zeglin, R. J. (2014). Participation in prostitution: Associated outcomes within familial relationships. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 11(1), 50-62.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-013-0143-4>
-