

## COMMUNITY SERVICE "ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION TRAINING TO ENHANCE ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION AMONG TEENAGERS AT THE PUTERI KERAHIMAN ORPHANAGE IN JAYAPURA"

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### ABSTRACT

*This activity aims to improve assertive communication skills among teenagers at the Putri Kerahiman Jayapura orphanage. Assertive communication is the ability to speak clearly, express opinions, and express needs without causing harm to oneself or others. Teenagers need to improve assertive communication skills so that they can build effective relationships with other people and protect themselves from the temptation of juvenile delinquent behavior. This activity is carried out in the form of assertive communication training using communication games as media. It is hoped that through this activity, teenagers living in orphanages can develop assertive skills, such as having the courage to express their thoughts and feelings clearly and honestly without offending other people's feelings.*

**KEYWORDS** Assertive Communication, Community Service, Teenagers



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### INTRODUCTION

Teenagehood is the stage between childhood and adulthood. The adolescent period is crucial in an individual's life. Many changes occur during adolescence, such as significant physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes. A prominent aspect of this period is seen in its social behavior. During this time, peers play a significant role for adolescents. Adolescents start to join groups, peer groups whose behavior and collective values greatly influence the behavior and values of the individuals who are part of them. This is the process by which individuals form new

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behavioral patterns and values that may replace the values and behaviors learned at home.

Adolescents who join groups or peer groups with positive behavior can also have a positive influence on adolescents. However, for adolescents who join groups with behaviors and values that are contrary to the law or morality, it will have a negative impact on the personal development of adolescents. This is evident in cases of juvenile delinquency, alcohol and drug abuse, violence, and premarital sexual relationships. Research conducted by Evans, Simons, & Simons, 2016 (in Santrock, 2019), reveals that having friends who engage in delinquent behavior is associated with the early onset of delinquent behavior and more persistent delinquency. Other studies also reveal that adolescents adapt smoking and drinking behaviors from their friends (Wang & others, 2016 in Santrock, 2019).

The challenges faced by adolescents are quite difficult. Adolescents need to adapt physically, psychologically, and socially, without abandoning the values they acquire within the family. Adolescents are vulnerable in several aspects. Meanwhile, for adolescents living in orphanages, this vulnerability tends to be greater than for adolescents living with nuclear families. This vulnerability includes economic vulnerability such as financial security to meet basic needs, psychological vulnerability such as social stigma, lack of attachment to caregivers, and physiological or health vulnerability (Thompson et al., 2012). The vulnerabilities experienced by adolescents in orphanages can contribute to problematic behavior in adolescents.

Research conducted by (Setiarini et al., 2021) reveals that adolescents living in orphanages are not open to expressing their personal problems and tend to keep their problems to themselves. The study also reveals that the adolescents surveyed show a tendency to ignore their own problems and do not attempt to solve them. This can cause prolonged stress and disrupt the psychological condition of adolescents.

Adolescent's tendency to withdraw in orphanages can be due to feelings of shame. Shame is a manifestation of social anxiety. Adolescents experiencing social anxiety show excessive worry when in social situations. Anxiety can be considered an adaptive response to certain conditions. However, if anxiety arises excessively, it can develop negatively. Social anxiety arises from fear and embarrassment and fear of receiving negative evaluations from others. Its impact is reflected in individual behaviors such as difficulty speaking in public and reluctance to interact with their social environment (Madani et al., 2024).

Individuals experiencing social anxiety tend to have low assertiveness due to their inability to express feelings, thoughts, and experiences (Rakos, 1991 in (Rizki et al., 2015)). Assertiveness is an individual's ability to express themselves directly, firmly, positively, and persistently, leading to increased equality in interpersonal relationships (Alberti & Emmons, 2017).. Assertive communication also includes the ability to speak clearly, express opinions, and express needs without causing harm to oneself and others (Townend, 2007). Assertive communication skills are not innate but can be trained or honed. Therefore, practicing assertive communication can help individuals improve these skills.

Assertive communication training can help individuals develop their skills in expressing their opinions, listening, and saying no to things that do not suit them. Through assertive communication training, individuals are encouraged to interact effectively with others, thereby increasing their self-confidence. Providing assertiveness training to adolescent girls at the Orphanage of Mercy in Jayapura is also needed to help these adolescents improve their assertive skills.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This activity involves mentoring for adolescents at the Orphanage of Mercy in Jayapura. The mentoring consists of activities that train assertive communication skills. These activities are packaged in the form of games to enhance communication abilities. The games provided aim to stimulate participants to communicate effectively, express their opinions, understand that listening is a form of communication, and practice saying no to unwanted or disliked things. The activities provided to the participants are conducted in groups accompanied by group mentors. The procedures carried out in this assertive communication training activity are as follows:

1. Observation and interviews with caregivers and several adolescents at the Orphanage of Mercy in Jayapura to understand the conditions and issues faced by adolescents at the orphanage.
2. Creating assertive communication training materials and providing information to group mentors about the participants' conditions and the materials to be provided.
3. Assertive communication training conducted at the auditorium of the Orphanage of Mercy in Jayapura on December 16, 2023, from 10:00 to 12:00 WIT, on December 18, and 20, 2023, from 16:00 to 18:00 WIT. The activity schedule is made based on agreement with the orphanage considering the many daily activities and visits from other parties.
4. There are two speakers in this activity, namely Paulus Satyo Istandar Tan and Angela Maturbongs.
5. Assertive communication training is conducted in three meetings. Each meeting is divided into two sessions. Below are explanations for each meeting:

Meeting	Session
1	<b>Session 1:</b> Understanding communication
	<b>Session 2:</b> Assertive communication and its benefits
2	<b>Session 1:</b> Saying "No"
	<b>Session 2:</b> Assertive communication games and practice saying "No"
3	<b>Session 1:</b> Active listening Session
	<b>Session 2:</b> Communication games and listening practice

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Community Service "Assertive Communication Training To Enhance Assertive Communication Among Teenagers At The Puteri Kerahiman Orphanage In Jayapura"

Assertive communication skills are something that can be learned. This ability does not emerge spontaneously or is innate, but is influenced by environmental factors (Aryani, 2022). Having assertive communication skills can help individuals interact effectively with others. According to Dobson & Dobson (in Aryani, 2022), the benefits of assertive communication include improving health, social acceptance, and happiness. Assertive individuals show more initiative by acting directly, honestly, openly, respecting others' rights, and getting what they want (Aryani, 2022). The positive benefits of assertive skills can help adolescents, especially those in orphanages, to adapt to their environment and build effective relationships with others.

Overall, assertive communication training activities were carried out as planned. Participants showed enthusiasm in every activity provided. This was evident in their joyful and comfortable facial expressions when expressing themselves. Participant evaluations also indicated that some expressed happiness because they could interact with friends and play. The materials packaged in the form of games made it easier for participants to understand the content provided. Games in group guidance activities serve to focus activities on the intended goals and also build a more vibrant atmosphere, preventing participants from quickly feeling bored. Games are believed to be effective and can facilitate participants' development according to their potential and needs in communicating with others (Astuti et al., 2013). Furthermore, Astuti et al (2013) stated that there are values in games that are useful for children to develop confidence, responsibility, openness, cooperation, respect for others, honesty, and spontaneity. Based on this, through communication games, participants can develop their assertive communication skills.

Some participants also expressed that concrete examples provided by the mentors in assertive communication could help them understand how to communicate effectively. Some participants conveyed through evaluations that they learned how to politely decline invitations from friends without hurting their feelings, speak to others effectively, and not feel nervous. Therefore, improving skills and understanding a subject by seeing and practicing it firsthand can facilitate the achievement of goals.

Most participants actively engaged in group dynamics processes. Through evaluation results, participants expressed that before participating in this assertive communication training activity, they felt ashamed, lacked confidence, felt nervous, and were afraid to speak to new people and afraid of speaking wrongly. After participating in this series of activities, participants felt that they were more confident in speaking, less nervous, felt slightly more confident, and were enthusiastic about believing in their abilities. This indicates that participants felt positive impacts after participating in assertive communication training activities.

This assertive communication training activity has limitations or shortcomings, namely, not conducting follow-up related to the success of this assertive communication training activity. Additionally, there was no quantitative assessment of participants' assertive communication skills. Qualitative assessment through evaluation questionnaire responses and observation serves as a reference to determine the impact of this activity on participants. The enthusiasm and openness of the

participants towards this series of assertive communication training activities are expected to provide useful information to improve assertive communication skills among adolescents at the Orphanage of Mercy in Jayapura.

## CONCLUSION

Overall, the assertive communication training activities conducted for adolescents at the Orphanage of Mercy in Jayapura went quite well and smoothly. Through these activities, participants gained increased knowledge about communication and practical methods for assertive communication. After participating in this activity, it is hoped that participants will be able to practice and apply assertive communication in their daily lives. This aims to enable participants to build effective interaction relationships with others. Additionally, it is hoped that participants will also be able to express their feelings and opinions openly and honestly to others. Follow-up sessions are also needed to monitor the progress and difficulties encountered by participants in applying assertive communication skills. With that, the impact of this activity can be long-lasting and truly enable the adoption of assertive communication patterns.

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