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Painting Workshop as a Means of Self-Expression and Emotional Support at J.A.M Palangka Raya Psychiatric Home

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ABSTRACT

Background: Mental health is a fundamental aspect of human quality of life, but people with mental disorders often face verbal communication barriers and social stigma that hinder recovery
Contribution: This study aims to see how painting activities can help patients at the J.A.M Palangka Raya Psychiatric Home express their feelings and receive emotional support.
Method. The study used a descriptive qualitative method by observing, interviewing, and documenting activities with a total of 10 participants who were in the recovery stage.
Results: The results showed that painting activities were very helpful for participants who had difficulty speaking to express their feelings through color and drawing. Participants who were initially quiet became calmer, actively participated in activities, and dared to show their paintings. This activity succeeded in increasing the confidence of participants with 80% of participants wanting to participate again. Painting is not just an ordinary art activity but a therapy that helps the mental and social recovery of participants. Painting workshop activities proved to be a good and humane way to support the ongoing recovery process in psychiatric homes

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1. Introduction

Mental health is one of the fundamental aspects in determining the quality of human life. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2022) emphasizes that individuals with good mental health are those who are able to recognize their potential, face life pressures, work

productively, and contribute positively to society. There are 450 million people suffering from mental and behavioural disorders worldwide, it is estimated that one in four people will suffer from a mental disorder during their lifetime. According to the WHO Asia Pacific region (WHO SEARO), the highest number of cases of depressive disorder in India reached 56,675,969 cases or 4.5% of the total population and the lowest depression in the Maldives reached 12,739 cases or 3.7% of the population. In Indonesia alone, the depression rate reached 9,162,886 cases or 3.7 of the population (Ayuningtyas et al., 2018). The Mental Health Law No. 18 of 2014 states that people with mental disorders, abbreviated as ODGJ, are people who experience disorders in thoughts, behaviors, and feelings that manifest in the form of a set of symptoms in meaningful behavioral changes, and can cause suffering and obstacles in carrying out their functions as human beings (Putri & Nulhaqim, 2023). In addition to people with mental disorders, there are individuals with psychiatric problems (ODMK) who are included in the category of a person's mental health such as someone who has physical, mental, social, growth or developmental problems, and quality of life so that they are at risk of experiencing mental disorders (Ministry of Health, 2019).

Mental disorders can cause various problems in daily life, not only can they damage interactions or relationships with others. Many individuals with mental disorders face social rejection that makes the recovery process more difficult. The Joint Adulam Ministry (J.A.M) Palangkaraya Psychiatric Home is present as a social institution that plays an important role in providing rehabilitation spaces for people with mental disorders. Under the auspices of the Panengan Asie Palangka Raya Foundation (PAPR), this orphanage is a shelter for those who are socially and emotionally abandoned. Based on the results of observations in the field, most of the orphanage residents experienced difficulties in verbal communication. They find it difficult to express emotions, experiences, and thoughts through spoken language. This creates an urgent need for alternative media that can channel self-expression without verbal pressure. In these conditions, painting activities emerged as an effective and humane approach. Painting allows individuals to channel emotions symbolically, through color and shape. This activity can be a form of emotional therapy that helps participants process inner experiences that are difficult to express directly.

This approach is known as art therapy, which is a form of nonverbal therapy that uses the medium of art to help individuals express their feelings. Research (Sarwili et al., 2021), drawing therapy can help patients release pent-up emotions, reduce stress, and act as an effective means of communication for people with mental disorders. Art therapy is not only a recreational activity, but also a reflective process that opens up self-awareness. Through creative activities, Participants can look back at their feelings in visual form, making it easier to understand the dynamics of the emotions experienced. At the J.A.M. Psychiatric Home, the patient's daily activities are generally routine and do not provide space for self-expression. Activities such as eating, medical therapy, or garden work are not enough to channel their emotional needs. This approach is in line with the concept of modern social rehabilitation that places the patient as an actively involved party in the recovery journey. They are no longer considered as objects

that receive only treatment, but as individuals who have the control to determine the direction of their own development. The painting workshop activities adopt the principles of community empowerment as stated by (sitasi), which emphasizes that empowerment provides space for individuals to develop their potential through creative and meaningful activities and active participation. Involving nursing home patients in painting activities means opening up space for them to regain a sense of ownership over their lives. and build new meaning from their experience. This activity also serves to reduce stigma against people with mental disorders. Through this activity, the community can see the humanitarian side of the orphanage residents that they have potential and creativity. This kind of activity is in line with the rehabilitation approach put forward by Rahman & Kurniawati (2024), which emphasizes the importance of integrating art in mental health programs to simultaneously strengthen psychological and social recovery. Therefore, the painting workshop was presented to examine the application of painting activities as a form of therapy to complement the rehabilitation process as well as self-expression for patients with verbal communication barriers. Painting workshops are a safe place for patients to express themselves without fear of being judged. In a calm setting, participants can use colors and shapes as symbols of their deepest emotions, such as sadness, hope, or happiness.

Through the process of painting that is carried out reflectively, a therapeutic effect emerges that allows negative emotions to be channeled into more positive and constructive visual expression. This activity also functions as a social learning process where through interaction between facilitators, students, and residents of the orphanage, a relationship is created that supports and respects each other, which strengthens the social network in the orphanage. With this activity it helps reduce anxiety, lower stress, and rebuild confidence. As well as the problems faced include barriers to verbal communication, the need for non-verbal means of expression, low self-confidence, and the lack of creative activities in the orphanage environment. In this case, it is an important step as well as fostering an empathetic attitude towards individuals with mental health problems. The painting workshop is present as an effort to answer these various obstacles. Painting activities have proven to be a vehicle for channeling self-expression, reducing stress, increasing self-confidence, and strengthening the rehabilitation process for orphanage patients. The main focus of this research program is to see the extent to which this activity provides creative space to express oneself, improve emotional well-being, strengthen a sense of empowerment, and encourage the creation of a more inclusive and supportive social environment for orphanage residents. The painting workshop is an appropriate, humanistic, and effective approach to support the emotional and social recovery of the residents of the J.A.M Palangkaraya Psychiatric Home. This activity made a significant contribution to the development of a service model for the rehabilitation process support of patients living in a continuous psychiatric home.

2. Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach used to describe phenomena in

depth based on qualitative data collected through research data collection techniques(Ul'zikri et al., 2026). Qualitative research is a way in a research that produces data from interviews and documentation that functions to collect data in providing an overview of the form of presentation of research reports (Mehong: 11).

The purpose of descriptive qualitative research is to analyze and display facts systematically and so that they can be easily understood and concluded which aims to enable researchers to know and describe anything in the field clearly, factually, and in detail about the process of painting workshop as a means of self-expression and emotional support for the residents of the J.A.M Palangkaraya Psychiatric Home. The research was conducted at the J.A.M Palangkaraya Psychiatric Home with 10 subjects who were in the stage of mild to moderate rehabilitation and were also recommended by the orphanage. In obtaining data, the research uses several techniques in its collection which aim to make the data obtained more accurate. In obtaining accurate data, the data collection techniques used in this descriptive qualitative research are as follows:

2.1. Observations

It is used to observe the workshop process, participant involvement, emotional expression, and non-verval responses during painting activities. According to Sugiyono (2018:203), the data collection technique uses observations that if the research is related to human behavior, work processes, natural symptoms, and if the respondents experienced are not so large.

2.2. Interview

It is used to find out how the experiences, feelings, and assessments of participants during the painting workshop activities. In addition, the participants who were willing were asked to explain the meaning of their paintings. According to Sugiyono (2018), interviews aim to be a data collection technique if the writer wants to know things about the subject in depth and the number of responses is small.

2.3. Documentation

Such as photos of activities, paintings, and field records are used as supporting data. Documentation is a source of data used to complete research, in written sources, photographs, and works covering everything that provide information for the process in the research (Sugiyono (2018:178).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Field Findings

From the results of the observations made, it is clear that the painting workshop was carried out at the J.A.M Palangka Raya Psychiatric Rehabilitation Center and the

workshop participants participated in the activity in a very relaxed and positive way. The workshop was attended by 10 participants, most of whom had different abilities in the areas of communication, responsiveness, and emotional states. Overall, however, the participants were able to follow the facilitator's instructions and start painting without rejection.

At the beginning of the activity, some participants looked quite quiet, and seemed to have unstable facial and body expressions. But over time, most participants experienced more positive behavioral changes, such as they concentrated attentively on their personal canvases, were free and independent in choosing colors, and were more engaged in the activity. The participants became calmer as they started painting, some of whom were more relaxed and showed more positive facial expressions and even some smiles when looking at the shapes or colors they were making.



Figure 1. Painting Activities
Source: Researcher Documentation (Personal)

These positive findings suggest that participants can contribute without feeling excessive pressure in a controlled and safe environment, and that participants can go through activities at their own pace that allows the emotional adaptation process to occur naturally. In fact, simple interactions between facilitators and participants make them feel more valued, which makes them more confident and confident that they can continue with the activity. In addition, the explanation session at the end of the event showed that some participants began to have the courage to reveal the meaning behind their paintings. Four participants voluntarily came forward to share the drawings they painted. This is a very important finding about the courage to demonstrate increased confidence and the ability to express oneself in a safe social environment. In general, findings in the field show that painting workshops are not only a form of creative activity, but also facilitate positive emotional and social processes such as calmness, engagement, and courage.

3.2. Analysis with sociological theories

This painting workshop activity was carried out to residents of psychiatric homes in expressing their feelings or experiences who faced difficulties in verbal communication due to the psychological disorders they experienced. Psychological conditions

experienced by patients such as being quiet, often daydreaming, and difficulty expressing themselves are often considered personal weaknesses. This is seen from the perspective of C. Wright Mills, we should not blame individuals but look at the social factors that shape these conditions. Through the theory of The Sociological Imagination (1959), Mills explained that individual problems should not be seen only as personal problems but must be understood in relation to the broader social structure. Sociological imagination is the ability to see the relationship between personal experience and the social reality that affects it so that seemingly personal problems are actually part of social issues.

Sociological imagination also teaches us that mental health problems are not only deficiencies in individuals, but there are social conditions that occur around individuals such as poverty, violence, and inner pressure (Sigit, 2005). This is a factor that occurs in individuals related to the structural condition of society. Painting workshops are present as a safe, free, and non-verbal alternative expression medium to channel emotions or anxiety in their minds without fear or judgment from others. This workshop activity not only treats symptoms but also recognizes that there are social problems that need to be improved.

In addition, from the theory of sociological imagination in this workhop activity, there is a theory of Semiotics by Roland Barthes which discusses how the process carried out by the patients of the orphanage gives meaning through the marks on their paintings. Denotatively, painting is simply an artistic activity carried out by participants who have difficulty communicating verbally. But on a connotative level in paintings, the colors, lines, and shapes they create become symbols of emotions such as anxiety, pressure, or hope that they cannot express through words. At the level of myths, this activity builds a new understanding that art can be a means of emotional recovery and refutes the stigma that orphanage patients are incapable of expressing themselves. Thus, Barthes' theory reinforces that painting workshops are not just creative activities but nonverbal communication that reveals the inner meaning of the participants (Shalekhah & Martadi, 2020).

3.3. Non-verbal expression through painting

Based on the observations, there was a lot of information and notes from the participants that showed that the images produced were mostly very simple and were created using very common nature-themed objects, such as houses, coconut trees, flowers, hills, and other natural landscapes. There is no doubt that every simple image is created with great personal meaning from emotional experiences and personal history.

In a descriptive qualitative context, we understand painting as a means of non-verbal expression through which participants can communicate their feelings without words. Participants with communication challenges were able to symbolically express their inner states and past experiences through images. For example, a house painting is

often associated with a longing for home, family, or family memories, while a flower could represent long-held hope, or a love of nature, or a reminder of a good past.

This non-verbal expression is also seen in the choice of colors. Some participants chose yellow, green, and red, while others chose softer, calmer colors to depict calmness or nostalgia, which contributed to the overall emotional tone of the color. Without being asked, participants painted eloquently describing their current feelings, reflecting the participants' emotional state of the artwork they drawed.

In this complex process of analysis, painting becomes a non-judgmental means of communication and does not require verbal skills. Communicating feelings verbally that are not able to be verbally expressed, can be expressed through symbols and colors that can allow participants to construct emotions that are difficult to express. Therefore, participants are able to be accompanied through specific experiences that provide memory, emotions, and visual self-identity through the safe space provided.

3.4. Participation and Enthusiasm of Participants in Workshop Activities

The painting workshop activity at the J.A.M Psychiatric Home received a friendly welcome from the orphanage. Based on observations during the activity, the participants of the painting workshop selected by the orphanage said that they were happy with the painting activity for their patients. None of the participants left the room or refused to participate during the activity. Before the activity started, most participants looked quiet when gathering in the hall. However, as the activity progressed, participants enjoyed the process and focused on drawing on paper and choosing the color they wanted. The enthusiasm seen from the participants created a pleasant atmosphere showing that the painting activity succeeded in providing a safe space for participants to express themselves. The joy of the participants based on the observation of around 80% of the participants said that they would like to participate in painting activities again if there is still this activity

there for the future. Meanwhile, 20% of participants said they did not want to participate anymore because drawing activities were considered less in line with their interests. This difference is natural because each patient has different interests.

3.5. The Emergence of Self-Confidence

One of the things that is clearly visible from this painting workshop activity is the increased confidence of the participants. Based on the observation of the workshop activities, all participants without exception had a positive impact on the workshop activities. The participants said that they felt proud of the paintings they had made themselves and also dared to show their work to other friends. In addition, there is a memorable thing for the participants in this activity, namely the feeling of being appreciated and listened to. When their paintings were finished, the facilitator team gave praise and appreciation without criticism so that participants felt that they and their work

were valuable. In addition, there was a session to tell what the meaning of the paintings they had made, participants felt that they were valuable. When the participants stood in front of their friends telling the meaning of the painting, there was applause as a form of appreciation after the story was finished. They feel that what they make is important and worthy of appreciation. This positive experience becomes a recovery process, as it helps to rebuild self-esteem that may have been damaged for a long time due to stigma in society's view. This workshop activity is also a reflection of the participants that an important step in the journey of mental health whitening because it helps a person understand themselves, recognize emotions, and build better self-awareness. Thus, through painting workshops and also storytelling, participants have the opportunity to grow into more confident individuals and better able to express themselves.

4. Conclusion

Disorders can disrupt social relationships and hinder the recovery process due to societal stigma. The Joint Adulam Ministry (J.A.M) Psychiatric Home in Palangka Raya plays a role in rehabilitating patients. Many patients have difficulty communicating verbally, so painting becomes an effective therapeutic method. Art therapy helps individuals express emotions and reduce stress and deny self-awareness. Painting workshops in the home provide a space for patients to express themselves freely, reduce stigma, and build new meaning from the experience. This program aims to create a more inclusive and supportive social environment for orphanage residents. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method to obtain data from interviews and documentation. The purpose of this study is to analyze and display facts systematically about the process of painting workshops at the J.A.M Palangka Raya Psychiatric Home. Data collection techniques include observation to see the workshop process, interviews to understand the participants' experiences, and documentation that includes photographs and paintings.

From observations during the painting workshop at the J.A.M Palangka Raya Psychiatric Rehabilitation Home, it can be seen that this activity was attended by 10 participants with various communication skills and emotional states. At first, some participants seemed quiet and less excited, but over time they began to become calmer and engaged in activities. These activities help them express themselves without feeling pressured and interaction with the facilitator boosts their confidence. Some participants dared to share the meaning of their paintings and show positive developments in self-expression. Through sociological analysis, the workshop is not only about art, but also about addressing larger social issues affecting mental health. Painting is used as a tool to express emotions that are difficult to express in words. The simple painting has a deep meaning and expresses the feelings of the participants. Most of the participants showed enthusiasm and wanted to continue this activity. In addition, an increase in confidence is seen when they share the meaning of the painting with friends and receive positive

recognition. This experience helps them develop self-identity and emotional awareness in a safe and supportive setting.

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