

## **SOCIALIZATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH FOR CHILDREN IN ORPHANAGES**

**Likdanawati<sup>1</sup>, Irada Sinta<sup>2</sup>, Rico Nur Ilham<sup>3</sup>, Muammar Khaddafi<sup>4</sup>,  
Muttaqien<sup>5</sup>, Reza Juanda<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup> Universitas Malikussaleh

Corresponding Email: [likdanawati@unimal.ac.id](mailto:likdanawati@unimal.ac.id)

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### **Abstract**

Mental health is an important aspect of a child's development, especially for those living in foster care. These children often face significant emotional challenges due to the loss of a parent, trauma, or difficult life experiences. Socialization about the importance of mental health aims to raise awareness and provide the necessary support for children in foster care. This article discusses the importance of mental health, socialization strategies, and the roles of various parties in supporting the mental health of children in foster care, supported by current references.

**Keywords : *Socialization, Children's Mental Health, Orphanages***

### **Introduction**

Mental health is one of the main pillars in supporting optimal child growth and development. Mental health is an important aspect of child development that often receives less attention, especially for children living in orphanages. Life in an orphanage can be a challenge in itself due to the lack of emotional support from the nuclear family, which can affect the child's psychological well-being. Therefore, efforts are needed to increase awareness of the importance of mental health for children in orphanages through structured socialization programs. The mental health of children in foster care is a particularly important aspect to consider, given the unique challenges they face in an environment that is often different from their biological family. Children living in foster care often experience trauma due to the loss of a parent or separation from their family, which can have a negative impact on their mental well-being (Stein et al., 2017). Such situations can hinder their social and emotional development, requiring special attention in providing appropriate support.

A study by the World Health Organization (2023) shows that children with good mental health are better able to cope with stress, establish healthy social relationships, and excel in education. However, children living in orphanages have different conditions compared to children in general. Loss of parents, trauma due to neglect, and limited emotional support are often factors that worsen their mental health. In Indonesia, orphanages are a place of refuge for thousands of children who have lost their families. However, these facilities often face challenges such as a lack of caregivers trained in supporting children's mental health, limited access to psychological services, and community stigma against mental health issues. Therefore, socialization about the importance of children's mental health in orphanages is an urgent need to ensure that every child has the opportunity to grow and develop healthily.

The socialization of the importance of mental health for children in orphanages aims to raise awareness of the importance of providing ongoing support, including counseling services, activities that promote emotional balance, and strengthening healthy social skills (Jensen & Shaw, 2018). This process also involves collaboration with various parties, such as educators, foster families, and the community, to create a safe, inclusive, and loving environment. In order to realize optimal mental well-being for children, this socialization is expected to provide a better understanding to all related parties, so that they are able to provide better attention to the mental needs of children in orphanages.

## Literature Review

Previous studies have shown that children in orphanages are at higher risk of mental health disorders compared to children who grow up in families. According to Smith and Lee (2022), as many as 60% of children in orphanages show symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) due to previous traumatic experiences. This is in line with UNICEF's findings (2023) which highlight that a less supportive environment in orphanages can worsen children's psychological conditions.

Studies have shown that children who grow up in foster care are at higher risk of developing mental health disorders than children who live with their families (Johnson et al., 2010). Factors such as parental loss, limited social interaction, and lack of personal attention can trigger stress and psychological disorders. Community-based intervention programs, including socialization and training, have been shown to be effective in increasing understanding and support for mental health (Geldard & Geldard, 2019). Several studies have also highlighted the importance of intervention programs to support children's mental health. The trauma-informed care approach, for example, has been shown to be effective in reducing anxiety levels and improving emotional well-being in children in foster care (Smith & Lee, 2022).

In addition, training caregivers in recognizing signs of mental illness and providing emotional support can significantly improve children's quality of life (APA, 2022). Public awareness campaigns are also considered important to reduce the stigma associated with mental health. A study by NAMI (2023) showed that public education can increase their involvement in supporting mental health programs in foster care. Thus, previous literature provides a strong basis for the importance of socialization and structured interventions to support children's mental health in foster care.

## Methodology

This article uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study method to analyze the implementation of mental health socialization in orphanages. Data were collected through interviews with orphanage managers, caregivers, and mental health workers involved in the socialization program. In addition, direct observation of the implementation of socialization activities was carried out to understand the effectiveness of the program. Literature studies from scientific journals, international organization reports, and relevant articles were also used as supporting data sources. The data analysis process involves the following steps:

1. Identify key themes from interviews and observations.
2. Grouping data based on socialization strategies, the roles of various parties, and the impact on children's mental health.
3. Drawing conclusions by comparing field results with existing literature.

## Results and Discussion

The socialization of the importance of mental health for children in orphanages was delivered by a lecturer from FEB Unimal, namely Hamdiah, SE, M.Si. She greeted the children at the orphanage warmly and enthusiastically in providing education. Good morning/afternoon wonderful children. How are you today? I hope everyone is healthy and in high spirits. Today, we will discuss a very important topic, which is mental health. Mental health is no less important than physical health. Both are interrelated and support each other.

Why is Mental Health Important?

Mental health is a state where we feel comfortable with ourselves, are able to face challenges, and can live our days with enthusiasm. If our minds are healthy, we can learn, play, and work better. On the other hand, if we feel sad, stressed, or anxious for a long time, it can affect our daily lives. You are all great and strong children. However, there are times when we feel tired, sad, or confused. That's normal, because everyone must have felt like that. What's important is how we recognize our feelings and find the right way to deal with them.

## Signs of Good Mental Health

- Feeling happy and optimistic.
- Able to control emotions, both when happy and sad.
- Have a passion for learning and playing.
- Able to face problems patiently and not give up.

### How to Maintain Mental Health

1. **Talking to Others**
2. If you feel sad or confused, don't hesitate to talk to someone you trust, such as a caregiver, friend, or older sibling here. By telling, your heart will feel lighter.
3. **Doing Things You Love**
4. Find activities that make you happy, such as playing, drawing, or listening to music. Doing things you enjoy can improve your mood.
5. **Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle**
6. Eating nutritious foods, getting enough sleep, and exercising are easy ways to maintain physical and mental health.
7. **Pray and Get Closer to Allah**
8. Don't forget to always pray and remember Allah. A calm heart is one of the keys to good mental health.

Great kids, remember that you are never alone. Many people care and want to see you grow into happy and successful people. If you feel something is bothering your mind or feelings, don't hesitate to share. Together, we can support each other and maintain our mental health. Thank you for listening carefully. Hopefully what we learned today is useful. Stay enthusiastic and always take care of your health, both physically and mentally.



Figure 1

**Conclusion**

Socialization about the mental health of children in orphanages is a crucial step to ensure their well-being. With close cooperation between the government, the community, and related institutions, children in orphanages can receive the support they need to grow and develop optimally. This effort not only improves the quality of life of children, but also creates a generation that is mentally healthier and more prepared to face future challenges. Children's mental health must be seen as a priority, because they are a valuable national asset.

With a supportive environment and access to adequate mental health services, children in orphanages can reach their full potential, regardless of their background. This socialization is also a real manifestation of humanity and collective responsibility, while reflecting a shared commitment to creating an inclusive society that cares about children's rights. Through this socialization, it is hoped that a deeper understanding can be created about the importance of the role of all parties in supporting children's mental health. Thus, we are not only trying to prevent mental health problems among children, but also building a brighter and more hopeful future for them.

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