

Is the Super Skills for Life (SSL) Program a Suitable Mental Health Intervention in Female Detention Centres? A Qualitative Study

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Introduction

In Malaysia, studies reveal higher rates of mental health issues amongst institutionalised youths compared to non-institutionalised youths. The SSL Program, a locally adapted mental health intervention was deployed as an interventional study to evaluate its effectiveness in improving the mental wellbeing of institutionalized young females. This qualitative study was the final phase of a dual phase study to explore the practicality of the implementation and content of the intervention from the perspective of the young female participants.

Findings

A total of 15 female participants were interviewed. Their ages ranged between 12 to 22 years old. Three main themes emerged; Relevance, Practicality, and Acceptance. Aini quoted "The lessons were taught in a fun way and helped me improve my self-confidence."

Three main themes

Relevance

Practicality

Acceptance

Methodology

A semi-structured interview approach was employed for this qualitative study. Purposive sampling was done to form focus groups. Focus group discussions were conducted within the institution settings. Sessions were carried out until a point of data saturation was reached to elicit rich data pertaining to the SSL program in its entirety. Sessions were conducted by the researcher using an interview guide developed and endorsed by an expert panel. The colour coding technique was used to identify themes from the transcribed interviews.

I wish we could have these sessions more frequently
- Khaira

I have learnt how to manage my stress and avoid my negative thoughts from making me sad
- Nurul

I am at a low point in my life. But attending these sessions made me feel happy again and more confident about myself. Thank you!
- Isa

"The lessons were taught in a fun way and helped me improve my self-confidence."
- Aini

Discussion

The SSL program was easily understood and accepted by the participants. It was quoted that the educational materials and knowledge was delivered in a way that kept participants engaged and entertained.

Conclusion

The SSL Program is a suitable intervention to promote social skills and mental wellbeing among institutionalized female youths.



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