

# A Review of Mindfulness Therapy to Improve Psychological Well-being During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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**Abstract.** The existence of Covid-19 is a stressor for individuals which results in psychological problems such as anxiety, fear, and stress. These various psychological problems can affect the body's immunity to fight diseases caused by Covid-19, so it is very important to create a community order that can achieve psychological well-being so that it is tough in facing Covid-19. Efforts to develop psychological well-being in dealing with Covid-19 can be done by utilizing Mindfulness Therapy. The writing of this article uses a literature study. Using mindfulness therapy can effectively develop psychological well-being in dealing with Covid-19.

**Keywords :** Covid-19 Pandemic, Mindfulness Therapy, Psychological Wellbeing.

**Abbreviations :** MBSR (Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction), MBCT (Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy), DBT (Dialectical Behavior Therapy), ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy), LOC (Locus of Control).

## INTRODUCTION

SARS-CoV-2, known as Covid-19, continues to spread rapidly throughout the world, including in Indonesia. Covid-19 has had various impacts on human life. Some of the impacts, such as appalling economic conditions, a tendency to increase in crime, an increase in cases of domestic violence, and social stigma experienced by individuals and the general public. These conditions cause feelings of fear and anxiety in society. In addition, Covid-19 also has an impact on human psychological well-being. Research conducted by Wang et. al. (in Sumakul et al., 2020) show that in the early phase of the Covid-19 pandemic in China, more than half of the study participants experienced psychological effects in the form of stress, anxiety and depression which were felt at moderate to severe levels. In addition, research conducted by Luo et al. (2020) regarding the psychological and mental impact of Covid-19 on medical workers and the general public, found that the psychological impact caused by Covid-19 was mostly anxiety and depression problems experienced by both medical workers and the general public.

During this pandemic, a person can experience double stress, namely fear of infection or death, while simultaneously experiencing stress due to financial conditions, children studying at home, getting a lot of negative information from sources that are not credible, working at home, to restrictions on doing activities outside the home. Before the pandemic, children studied at school but when the pandemic took place, parents played the role of teachers at home. Parents play an important role in the learning process of children at home, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. The role of parents during the learning process from home is to maintain children's motivation, facilitate children's learning, foster children's creativity, supervise children in learning, and evaluate children's learning outcomes. All parents, especially mothers, have to

adjust to be teachers for their children at home. Working mothers must also carry out their duties and responsibilities as workers and also carry out duties as housewives. Coupled with the feelings that have arisen regarding Covid-19.

It is understood that the Covid-19 pandemic and the conditions it causes interfere with human psychological well-being. Psychological well-being is an individual's evaluation of the events/ situations they experience. Human welfare is not only related to the aspect of pleasure but is more complex with regard to the functioning of the individual as a whole. For that, we need a step to build psychological well-being through mindfulness therapy. With mindfulness therapy can help increase individual awareness so that it helps a person to achieve psychological well-being. Based on the description above, the author will discuss mindfulness therapy to improve psychological well-being during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper is prepared using the library research method. This library research is carried out by collecting various reading references that are relevant to the problem under study, then a careful and careful understanding is carried out so as to obtain research findings (Rahmat & Alawiyah, 2020). The author conducted an in-depth literature study to support this research. Literature study is a literature study by utilizing library references by collecting materials in accordance with the object of research (Zed, 2003). These references can be found in books, journals, research report articles and internet sites. The output of this literature study is the collection of references relevant to problem formulation. The aim is to strengthen the problem, as well as as a theoretical basis for conducting studies on mindfulness therapy to improve psychological wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Concept of Mindfulness Therapy

Mindfulness is the ability of an individual to be aware of and pay attention to every detail of events that occur at that time (Brown & Ryan, 2003). According to Kabat Zinn (in Chris, 2008), mindfulness is also defined as the ability to give attention or awareness to oneself as it is without giving judgment and accepting without judging all experiences that arise today. In simple terms, in the context of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, mindfulness is defined as paying attention to everything that is experienced (sensory perception, thoughts, and feelings) and allowing all the experiences that occur to enter the mind (analyzing, planning, fantasizing, judging, reasoning), behavior, and behavioral encouragement. There are several definitions depending on the context of use: as a meditation technique, as a concentration of mind, as a skill, and as a method of specific treatment (Vreeswijk et al., 2014).

According to Toneatto (in Triman, et al., 2017) mindfulness meditation training can help increase individual awareness. This is indicated by a decrease in a person's anxiety because in mindfulness meditation practice a person is asked to always be aware of his/ her breathing. Mindfulness interventions include core components including fostering awareness, enhancing the moment of experience in the moment, fostering responsiveness to responsiveness, and increasing tolerance (Wasson et al., 2020).

Mace (2008) explains in his book "Mindfulness and Mental Health" related to the methods used in Mindfulness Therapy are as follows.

- a. MBSR (Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction) was pioneered by Kabat-Zinn in 1990 as an optional addition to the standard medical care of people visiting public hospitals, suffering from chronic paralysis and life-threatening illnesses. MBSR involves an intensive awareness training program consisting of eight weeks of weekly three-hour sessions, where patients learn a variety of meditation techniques as well as yoga exercises.
- b. MBCT (Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy). Teasdale (1995) integrated MBSR and cognitive behavioral therapy techniques to help prevent relapse in people with a history of depression. Usually given to small groups of 30 or more which have been common in several places. In MBCT it places little emphasis on body movement and has incorporated breathing space into its practice.
- c. DBT (Dialectical Behavior Therapy). For many experts, DBT is the only mindfulness based drawing therapy but not meditation based therapy. Aim to repeat the overdose behavior in self-harm. DBT is targeted more for people with a history of repeated self-harm, and is recommended as a treatment for someone with BPD (Borderline Personality Disorder). There are four mechanisms of effectiveness in DBT are follows: exposure to new behaviors and learning responses, regulation of emotions, curating self-image damaging beliefs, and attention control.
- d. ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) It is based on a radical behavioral analysis of patients' differences. From this, a selection of appropriate therapeutic strategies is made from a full and varied menu. They fall under six main headings, four of which are acknowledged to be mindfulness functions, that is, contact with the present moment, acceptance, cognitive defusion, and self as context. In practice, it would be followed by a detailed examination of the client's experience by the therapist to underline the intended lesson.

### Introduction to Concept of Psychological Well-being

Psychological well-being is a theoretical concept that refers to an individual's state of psychological equilibrium. Brim (in Rodman & Fry, 2009) explain that psychological well-being is also known as mental health, subjective, well-being, self-reported happiness, psychological well-being has been the subject of scientific study for more than a century. Psychological well-being refers to inter- and intraindividual levels of positive functioning that can include one's relatedness with others and self-referent attitudes that include one's sense of mastery and personal growth. Subjective well-being reflects the dimensions of affect judgments of life satisfaction (Burns, 2016).

Besides that, psychological well-being is an individual's ability to face challenges in order to struggle to function himself fully and realize his unique talents (Erpiana & Fourianalistyawati, 2018). Ryff (in Syaiful & Syarifah, 2018) explains that psychological well-being is a broad understanding of well-being including positive evaluation of oneself and the lives of others, a sense of growth and development as a person, the belief that life has meaning and purpose, has a good relationships with others, have the ability to manage one's life and the environment effectively. Psychological well-being is defined as the psychological condition of every individual who functions well and positively, individuals who have psychological well-being have a positive attitude towards themselves and others, have a purpose in their life, control over their environment, have a positive and supportive circle. and can develop himself (Ramadhani et al., 2016).

Individuals who have psychological well-being have a positive attitude towards themselves with others, have a meaningful purpose in life, have the ability to regulate the environment, have positive relationships with others and try to explore and develop themselves as much as possible (Ramadhani et al., 2016). Fajrina (in Awaliyah & Listiyandini, 2017) explained that to have good psychological well-being, a person needs full involvement and is aware of the various things he gets, including perceiving positive relationships with others, and being aware of something that the parties others give. This state of consciousness is related to a psychological concept called Mindfulness.

Ryff in (Burns, 2016) mention that through interviews with young, middleaged, and older people members of the general public, Ryff argued that the six key dimension are consistently identified as indications of good life and well-being, these six dimension are:

- a. Self Acceptance: have a positive attitude towards yourself, are willing and accept all aspects of yourself including quality from the good and the bad, and also feel positive about life in the past.
- b. Positive relations with others: There is a warm and there relationship trust in others. Actualization in this dimension is described by having a sense of empathy, compassion, and having a relationship deep friendship.
- c. Autonomy: have yourself independently self-regulation
- d. Environmental Mastery: individual ability to choose or create an environment in accordance with their personal conditions. This dimension emphasizes the individual's ability to manipulate and controlling complex environments. Apart from that, individuals are also capable to develop himself creatively through physical activity as well mentally mastery of the environment
- e. Purpose in Live: Clear understanding of the purpose of life and a sense of direction in life. Like being creative and productive for achieve integrity the day after.
- f. Personal Growth: Existence sees self growing and developing, open to new experiences, aware of their existence potential in him and improve from time to time

Ryff & Singer (1996) mentioned several factors that influence a person's Psychological Well-Being, including:

- a. Demographic factors include gender, age, socioeconomic status, and culture.
- b. Social support, which means a feeling of comfort and respect by the individual who is obtained from the surrounding environment (family, spouses, co-workers, etc.).
- c. Evaluation of life experiences.
- d. Locus of Control (LOC) is defined as a measure of a person's general expectations regarding control of reinforcement that follows certain behaviors, which can provide predictions of psychological well-being.

### **Using of Mindfulness Therapy to Improve Psychological Well-being During Covid-19 Pandemic**

Mindfulness therapy can facilitate individuals to learn to face each experience more openly and without judgment. The mindfulness method uses a series of exercises designed to train the mind to stay focused and open to everyday conditions including stressful conditions. The stages of mindfulness therapy according to McGehee (2017) are as follows.

- a. Session 1 is a welcome session, introducing the participants to the course and to one another. Session 1 also provides a conceptual introduction to self-compassion with informal practices that can be practiced during the week.

- b. Session 2 anchors the program in mindfulness. Formal and informal mindfulness practices are taught to participants as well as the rationale for mindfulness in MSC. Participants learn about backdraft when self-compassion activates difficult emotions and how to manage backdraft with mindfulness practice. Sessions 1 and 2 include more didactic material than subsequent sessions to establish a conceptual foundation for practice.
- c. Session 3 introduces loving-kindness and the intentional practice of warming up awareness. Loving-kindness is cultivated before compassion because it is less challenging. Participants get a chance to discover their own loving-kindness and compassion phrases for use in meditation. An interpersonal exercise helps develop safety and trust in the group.
- d. Session 4 broadens loving-kindness meditation into a compassionate conversation with ourselves, especially how to motivate ourselves with kindness rather than self-criticism. By session 4, many participants discovered that self-compassion is more challenging than expected so we explore what progress means and encourage participants to practice compassion when they stumble or feel like a failure during the course.
- e. Session 5 focuses on core values and the skill of compassionate listening. These topics and practices are less emotionally challenging than others, and are introduced in the middle of the program to give participants an emotional break while still deepening the practice of self-compassion. The retreat comes after Session 5. It is a chance for students to immerse themselves in the practices already learned and apply them to whatever arises in the mind during 4 hour of silence. Some new practices that require more activity are also introduced during the retreat walking, stretching out on the floor, and going outside.
- f. Session 6 gives students an opportunity to test and refine their skills by applying them to difficult emotions. Students also learn a new informal practice softens allow that specific addresses difficult emotions. The emotion of shame is described and demystified in this session because shame is so often associated with self-criticism and is entangled with sticky emotions such as guilt and anger.
- g. Session 7 addresses challenging relationships. Relationships are the source of most of our emotional pain. This is the most emotionally activating session in the course, but most students are ready for it after practicing mindfulness and self-compassion for 6–7 weeks. Themes of Session 7 are anger in relationships, caregiver fatigue, and forgiveness. Rather than trying to repair old relationships, students learn to meet and hold their emotional needs, and themselves, in a new way.
- h. Session 8 brings the course to a close with positive psychology and the practices of savoring, gratitude, and self-appreciation three ways to embrace the good in our lives. To sustain self-compassion practice, we

need to recognize and enjoy positive experiences as well. At the end of the course, students are invited to review what they have learned, what they would like to remember, and what they would like to practice after the course has ended.

Through the Mindfulness Therapy procedure described above, it can be seen clearly that efforts to improve psychological well-being during the Covid-19 pandemic are very possible.

### CONCLUSIONS

The good psychological well-being of individuals during the Covid-19 pandemic is very important because psychological well-being helps individuals to reduce stress due to problems caused by Covid-19. One of the steps that can be taken to improve psychological well-being with mindfulness therapy. Through mindfulness therapy, individuals are able to cultivate awareness, increase current moments of experience, foster responsiveness to responses, and increase tolerance during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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