

## **The importance of counseling centers for the mental health of statistical employees**

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### *Abstract*

This research examines the importance of counseling centers for the mental health of employees at the Central Statistics Agency (BPS). The increase in the number of employees experiencing mental health problems shows that counseling facilities are an important need in the work environment. Based on a survey conducted, more than 24% of BPS employees in eastern Indonesia reported having mental health problems. This research uses a literature study methodology to explore the relationship between counseling centers and employee mental health, as well as its impact on work productivity. The literature study includes analysis of journals, articles and research reports related to mental health in the workplace, counseling interventions, as well as policies implemented in similar organizations. In 30 April 2024, BPS launched a counseling center which can be accessed by all BPS employees from all over Indonesia. The counseling center has several experts from applied psychology graduates who will become counselors for employees who need psychological counseling assistance for their mental health.

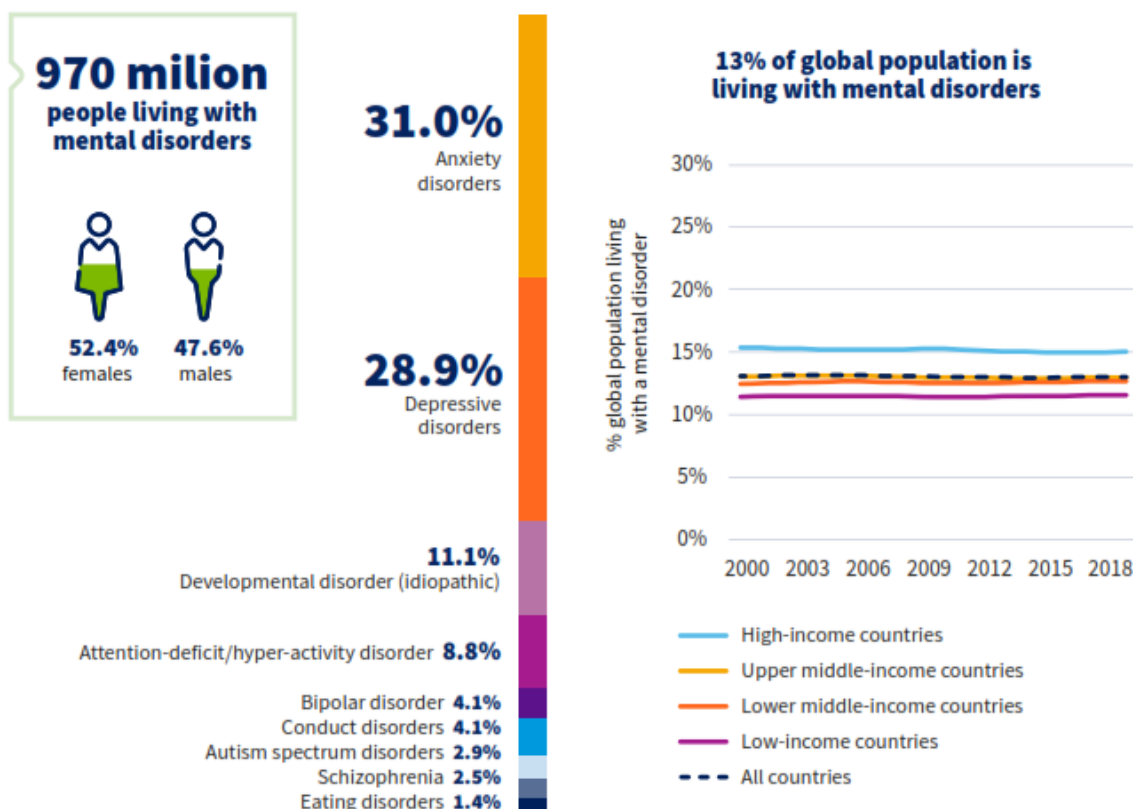
**Keywords:** mental health, counseling, psychology, NSO

## I. Introduction

Mental health issues are becoming a concern for many people today. A person's mental health greatly affects their life/ A person with good mental health will be able to face their life well, but a person with disturbed mental health will face many problems in their life such as reduced productivity, difficulty in interacting, and even the worst risk is death. A person's mental disorders can be influenced by many things, be it work, relationships, health, environment, and so on. How to maintain mental health is a problem that continues to be studied by many parties to this day.

WHO (2022), in 2019 before the Covid-19 pandemic, estimated that 970 million people in the world were living with mental disorders, 82% of whom were in Low Middle Income Countries. 13% of the global population is living with mental disorders. Although from year to year the percentage is around 13%, the increasing population means that the number of people living with mental disorders is also increasing from year to year. Detailed information can be seen in Figure 1. Of the total population experiencing mental disorders, 31% experience anxiety disorders, 28.9% depressive disorders, 11.1% developmental disorders, 8.8% hyper-activity disorders, and several other types of disorders with smaller percentages as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The Global Prevalence of mental disorder in 2019



Source : WHO (2022)

Mental health in the workplace is also a crucial issue that is getting more attention these days, especially in government offices that have a fairly large workload such as the Central Statistics Agency (BPS). As an institution responsible for collecting and analyzing national data, BPS requires mentally healthy employees to function optimally, accurately and productively. Understanding the mental health conditions of employees at BPS is very important because stress, anxiety, and depression can interfere with productivity and the quality of the data

produced. In the long term, this can affect the quality of public policies based on the data. Therefore, attention to mental health in the BPS office is not only about individual well-being, but also about the efficiency, productivity, and operational reliability of the institution. Based on a Preliminary Study conducted by the HR Bureau in January 2024, as many as 24% of employees stated that they needed personal counseling.

The importance of attention to mental health in the workplace is also in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) initiated by the United Nations, especially goal number 3: "Healthy Lives and Well-Being." Sub-goal 3.4 targets to reduce by one third premature deaths from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment, and promote mental health and well-being. By creating a work environment that supports mental health, BPS offices can directly contribute to achieving this goal. Implementing programs and policies that support mental health in the workplace will not only improve employee well-being but also strengthen the institution's capabilities in supporting sustainable national development.

## **II. Concept in Mental Health**

Based on WHO (2022) mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, to realize their abilities, to learn well and work well, and to contribute to their communities. Mental health is an integral component of health and well-being and is more than the absence of mental disorder.

Mental health condition is a broad term covering mental disorder and psychosocial disabilities. It also covers other mental states associated with significant distress, impairment in functioning, or risk of self-harm. To bring together and speak to the widest group of stakeholders possible, the term "mental health condition" is used throughout this report except when describing data that rely on defined categories of mental disorder.

Mental disorder defined by the International Classification of Diseases 11<sup>th</sup> revision (ICD-11). A mental disorder is a syndrome characterized by clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotional regulation, or behavior that reflects a dysfunction in the psychological, biological, or development processes that underlie mental and behavioural functioning. These disturbances are usually associated with distress or impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. This report uses the term "mental disorder" when discussing data that rely on defined categories of mental disorder.

Based on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, psychosocial disabilities is disability that arises when someone with a long-term mental impairment interacts with various barriers that may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. Examples of barriers are discrimination, stigma, and exclusion.

## **III. Addressing Mental Health Issues**

According to World Mental Health Report 2022, WHO explained based on the evidence, experience, and expertise, there are three key paths to transformation that can accelerate progress against the global action plan for mental health.

### **1. Deepen the value and commitment**

We must deepen the value and commitment we give to mental health as individuals, communities, and government; and match that value with more commitment, engagement and investment by all stakeholders, across all sectors.

## 2. Reshape the Physical, Social, and Economic Characteristics of Environments

We must reshape the physical, social, and economic characteristics of environments-in homes, schools, workplace and the wider community – to better protect mental health conditions.

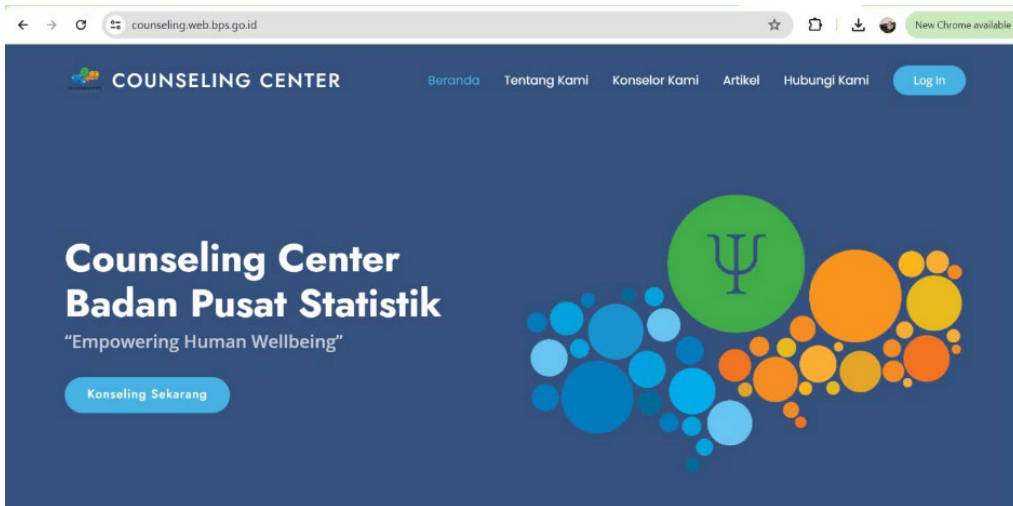
## 3. Strengthen Mental Health Care

We must strengthen mental health care so that the full spectrum of mental health needs is met through a community-based network of accessible, affordable and quality services and support. Individuals, government, organizations, even a NSO, all have a part to play. It will take the combined efforts of us all to transform mental health.

## IV. Counseling Center for Mental Health in BPS

Based on WHO recommendations, BPS strives to create a work environment that can support its employees in maintaining mental health. In addition to increasing employee awareness of mental health and illness, BPS has initiated the formation of a Counseling Center.

Figure 2. Counseling Center BPS website



Since 2024, BPS has inaugurated the Counseling Center which opens consultation facilities for employees who need counseling for their mental health. BPS has employees who have a background in practical psychology who become counselors who provide counseling for employees who register through the Counseling Center system.

#### 4.1. Facility

The Counseling Center of BPS has a room on a separate floor in one of the buildings in the BPS center, Jakarta, precisely in building 1, floor 9. When arriving at that floor, employees will find a receptionist at the front who will direct employees who will do or may ask about counseling. There is a waiting room for employees who are waiting for their turn to do counseling. There are three counseling rooms available, all designed to be very comfortable for employees to talk about their problems. For employees both at the center and from the provincial or district BPS who cannot come in person, they can consult online.

figure 3. Counseling room



Figure 4. Counseling room 2



## 4.2. Services

### 4.2.1. Curative Services

Individual employees will undergo Counseling through the Counseling Center registration system. Each employee has unique and different problems with different treatments. One of them is an employee who is referred by his/her supervisor. The referral indicates the urgency for the referred employee to receive counseling. Then employees who feel they have psychological problems. Employees who feel they have psychological health problems can apply for Counseling. The last is employees with low performance. The expected output is that employees can have good mental health and be productive again.

### 4.2.2. Preventive Services

In addition to Counseling per employee, there are collective services to provide a positive impact on a group or all employees at BPS. The first program is sharing knowledge related to mental health to employees on a regular basis. It is important to increase employee awareness of mental health because preventing mental disorders will be more effective than treating them. BPS has more than 14,000 employees working at BPS. Increasing understanding of mental health will be more effective than having to counsel all employees with different cases.

The second program is Preventive Services. Awareness about mental health alone is not enough, it is also necessary to build an understanding of how to maintain the mental health of employees themselves. Understanding mental health forms a good perspective in dealing with these problems, but understanding 'what to do' when facing and maintaining mental health is an important part of maintaining mental health for both employees themselves and their fellow employees where they work. This is what continues to be built periodically by the team at the Counseling Center

## 4.3. Confidentiality

The counseling process is a very personal experience and often involves highly confidential information. Therefore, the principle of confidentiality is the main foundation in maintaining trust. The counseling center wants to provide a sense of security and comfort for employees who want to talk about their mental health problems.

## 4.4. Application Procedure

There are several steps in submitting Counseling at BPS:

1. The first step is to apply for counseling via the following link: <https://counseling.web.bps.go.id>
2. **Filling out the Registration Form.** In the registration form, employees will choose the counselor they want, the preferred day of counseling, and initial information related to the problem being faced.
3. **Counselor Confirmation.** The admin will then confirm to the counselor.
4. Counseling Schedule. Employees will then receive notification of the counseling schedule via email.
5. Counseling Session. Employees receive counseling sessions with counselors.

Services will be provided on weekdays, namely Monday to Friday from 8am-4pm.

## 4.5. Counseling Methodology

### 1. Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is a psychological approach that explores the connections between neurological processes (neuro), language (linguistic), and behavioral patterns (programming) learned through experience. In the context of psychological consultation, NLP focuses on understanding how individuals perceive the world and how their perceptions influence their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. It is based on the idea that people can achieve personal goals and overcome psychological challenges by altering their mental strategies and language patterns.

NLP is often used in therapy to help individuals break negative thought cycles, develop more constructive mental frameworks, and improve their communication skills. One key component of NLP is the use of "modeling," where individuals observe successful behaviors and adopt them to bring about desired changes in their lives. Another important aspect of NLP is the focus on how language influences thought, and by changing language patterns, individuals can reshape their thinking and behavior in positive ways. NLP is commonly applied in settings such as coaching, personal development, and psychological counseling to improve emotional well-being and foster personal growth.

NLP has garnered mixed opinions from experts in the field of psychology. Proponents like Richard Bandler, one of the co-founders of NLP, argue that NLP provides powerful tools for personal transformation, enabling individuals to change limiting beliefs and develop a more empowering mental framework. Bandler (1985) emphasizes that NLP's focus on how language influences thought and behavior is key to its effectiveness in therapy and self-improvement.

However, some psychologists have expressed skepticism about NLP, particularly regarding its scientific validity. Sharpley (1987) conducted a meta-analysis on the efficacy of NLP and found that there is limited empirical support for its effectiveness in clinical settings. Other critics, such as Sturt et al. (2012), argue that while NLP may offer some benefits in terms of self-awareness and communication skills, it lacks a solid evidence base compared to other well-established therapeutic approaches like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). Despite these criticisms, NLP continues to be used in various therapeutic contexts, with many practitioners reporting positive outcomes.

The strengths of NLP lie in its flexible and adaptable approach, which allows individuals to tailor techniques to their specific needs. It also emphasizes the importance of language and communication, helping individuals become more aware of how their thoughts are shaped by their words. However, one of the limitations of NLP is the lack of rigorous scientific evidence supporting its effectiveness, leading to questions about its reliability in psychological counseling. Critics suggest that more empirical research is needed to establish NLP as a valid therapeutic method.

### 2. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a therapeutic approach that focuses on changing an individual's thought patterns (cognitive) and behaviors. It is based on the idea that thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are interconnected, and that by altering irrational or maladaptive thoughts, one can change their behaviors, which in turn influences their emotions. CBT is widely used to treat various disorders such as depression, anxiety, phobias, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and eating disorders.

The core principles of CBT include identifying negative thoughts, where patients are taught to recognize irrational thought patterns or cognitive distortions that contribute to negative emotions. Therapists help patients reframe these negative thoughts into more realistic and positive ones. Another key aspect is behavior modification, in which patients develop strategies to face challenging situations and reduce unhealthy habits or responses. Finally, CBT involves practicing and applying these techniques in everyday life, enabling patients to manage psychological challenges outside of therapy sessions.

Experts have widely acknowledged the effectiveness of CBT. Aaron T. Beck (2011), a key pioneer of CBT, asserts that the therapy empowers patients by providing them with tools to identify and alter automatic negative thoughts, which are often the root cause of emotional problems. Beck emphasizes the importance of an evidence-based approach, noting that CBT enables patients to acquire long-lasting skills after therapy ends. Dobson and Dozois (2019) also highlight that CBT consistently demonstrates effectiveness across a wide range of psychological conditions, particularly in reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression. They emphasize that CBT's structured, short-term, and practical problem-solving approach is one of its key strengths.

However, some experts have raised concerns about the limitations of CBT. Fenn and Byrne (2013) point out that while CBT is highly effective, it may be less efficient in addressing more complex or chronic problems. They note that more intensive therapies, such as psychodynamic therapy, might be necessary to achieve deeper, long-lasting change in cases where there are unresolved childhood traumas or complex psychological issues.

The strengths of CBT include its structured nature and short-term focus, making it more accessible than other forms of therapy. It emphasizes practical solutions to current problems and equips patients with tools to manage their psychological challenges independently. However, one of the limitations is that CBT may be overly focused on an individual's cognitive and behavioral aspects, without fully considering the social or emotional contexts influencing their problems. Critics also argue that CBT may not be suitable for all patients, particularly those with more complex or deeply rooted psychological issues.

## **V. Discussion**

There is still an assumption that someone with a mental disorder is a disgrace and this makes someone hide their mental problems from others because they don't want to be the subject of conversation and gossip. This makes employees with mental problems reluctant to register for counseling because they are afraid of being found out even though it is kept secret. However, public understanding of mental health is still very lacking.

Counseling centers have several limitations in dealing with employee mental health problems, one of which is the limitation in providing pharmacological therapy. Counselors at BPS do not have a special license to provide certain medical assistance even though it may be very much needed. If the level of the problem is at the level of requiring medical assistance, the Counseling Center will refer to a hospital or professional psychiatrist.

There is much debate about the existence of counseling centers not eliminating the problems and main reasons that employees may face that disrupt their mental health. Maybe the source of the problem could be financial, poor work management, or family problems. Even so, Counseling centers treat the 'wounds' that employees get from these problems in the process of solving the main source of the problem.



## VI. Conclusion

The National Statistical Office is one of the government offices that has many responsibilities and work to do. Often employees face fatigue both physically and mentally. Continuous fatigue will sometimes interfere with the mental health of employees and reduce their productivity. When mental health is disturbed, employees need help from others to deal with it. Coming to a psychologist will certainly burden them with costs that will reduce their welfare. Having your own Counseling Center will greatly help employees in dealing with their mental problems so that they can continue to live well and remain productive employees in the statistics office.

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