# Peer counseling as providing assistance to overcome inferiority in persons with lower extremity disabilities who are members of DSM Slawi

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## Abstract

This study focuses on overcoming the inferiority complex associated with incumbency disabilities through peer counseling. Inferioritas group penyandang disabilities tuna daksa frequently impair their participation in various social and economic spheres, necessitating effective interventions. The sample used in this study is qualitative, with six respondents using the phenomenological method. Data is collected by fieldwork, observation, and documentation. The study subjects consist of a few disabled tuna daksa people who have already participated in a sebaya counseling session. Triangulation analysis is used to ensure data validity and reliability. The research findings indicate that sebaya counseling is effective in increasing self-awareness and decreasing self-reproach in cases of disability. Participants report significant improvements in psychological well-being and self-esteem after group counseling. Peer counseling also assists in fostering positive social bonds between individuals with disabilities. Peer counseling is considered an effective intervention to alleviate the inferiority complex and increase self-awareness in tuna daksa disabilities penyandang. This method provides emotional support and enhances social integration and better self-respect within their community. In this way, counseling for disabilities can be implemented in a comprehensive way as a psychological support strategy for those who are disabled.

Keywords: Inferiority Disability Tuna Daksa, Peer counseling

## 1  INTRODUCTION

Individuals with physical disabilities and psychological challenges that can affect their well-being. In the context of Indonesia, Law No.8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities affirms that people with disabilities have the right to participate equally in society. However, despite regulations supporting this equality, many individuals with physical disabilities still struggle with social acceptance and self-acceptance.

According to Soemantri (2006), Physical disabilities (Tuna Daksa) are conditions where the normal functions of bones, muscles, and joints are disrupted, which can stem from congenital abnormalities, diseases, or accidents. In this condition, individuals with disabilities require assistive devices to move or walk. Their social interactions tend to be limited due to restricted mobility and are sometimes marked by intense emotional expressions, such as anger without a clear reason. The direct impact of physical injuries can create low self-esteem, lack of initiative, or hinder creativity. Disabilities in individuals with physical impairments can be categorized into different levels, namely low, medium, and high. Damage can occur before birth (antenatal), during birth, and after birth (postnatal) (Soemantri, 2006: Megasari,2016).

Individuals with disabilities often experience feelings of low self-confidence due to their condition. This lack of self-acceptance can be a barrier to their interactions with society and their social environment. They may feel uncertain about being accepted by their surroundings or by non-disabled friends. A fundamental problem for individuals with physical disabilities is evident in their behavior during various activities within the community. Sometimes, they feel insecure, and their actions are unfortunately influenced by their physical condition. Individuals with disabilities should not feel inferior about their physical imperfections. If a person with a disability harbors feelings of inferiority, it can make it difficult for them to accept themselves and interact with others around them. The general understanding of inferiority, according to the Indonesian dictionary, equates it with self-criticism. According to Adler, inferiority is the feelings that arise from weaknesses or physical disabilities that are felt subjectively. These

feelings stem from psychological or social deficiencies, resulting in a lack of clarity or purity in various aspects of daily life.

Feelings of inferiority are one of the main physiological issues faced by individuals with physical disabilities. Inferiority can be defined as a sense of being less valuable or lower than others, often exacerbated by social stigma, discrimination, and physical barriers encountered daily. Alfred Adler, in his theory of individual psychology, emphasized that feelings of inferiority are something commonly experienced by everyone, but for individuals with physical disabilities, these feelings can be more profound and harder to overcome.

One way to overcome feelings of inferiority in individuals with disabilities is by fostering self-acceptance in their surroundings. Peer support for individuals with physical limitations is a crucial step in addressing feelings of inferiority. Peer support or groups that can provide inspiration, motivation, and positive social relationships are beneficial for individuals with disabilities. The role of peer support is not only to provide emotional support but also to play a significant role in boosting self-confidence and social integration for these individuals. In this context, peer support becomes a vital element in overcoming inferiority among individuals with physical disabilities. Individuals with disabilities must have self-acceptance. According to Maryam & Ifdil (2019), this is demonstrated by the individual's ability to adapt to their environment, thus providing them with a sense of pleasure. This involves the ability of individuals with disabilities to communicate, interact socially, and integrate well within their surroundings, creating a pleasant and satisfying atmosphere. According to Febriani (2021), as cited in Masiun et al. (2020), individuals with strong physical abilities will better overcome obstacles and learn how to enhance their self-esteem. They will also become more aware of their abilities and motivation.

In addition to external factors such as social stigma, individuals with physical disabilities often face internal barriers, including low self-esteem and lack of self-acceptance. This can hinder them from reaching their full potential and actively participating in society. Previous research has shown that interventions based on social support can play a significant role in addressing these issues.

Peer counseling is a form of intervention that has shown promising results in supporting individuals with physical disabilities. Peer counseling involves individuals with similar experiences providing support and guidance to one another. It is based on the principle that people who have faced the same challenges are more likely to understand and offer relevant support. Peer counseling not only provides emotional support but also empowers individuals to develop effective coping strategies and enhance their self-acceptance.

This study was conducted within the Difabel Slawi Mandiri (DSM) community in Tegal, Indonesia, to explore how peer counseling can function as an effective intervention in overcoming feelings of inferiority among individuals with physical disabilities. The DSM community is an organization established by and for individuals with physical disabilities, aiming to improve the quality of life of its members through various programs and activities.

Based on observations at Difabel Mandiri Slawi, it was found that 6 individuals with disabilities were still lacking motivation, not fully open, and had not fully accepted themselves. To address these issues, it is necessary to implement an intervention through peer counseling. Through this process, individuals with disabilities can gradually open up, improve self-acceptance, reduce feelings of inferiority, provide mutual motivation, better understand themselves, and live their lives similarly to individuals without disabilities. According to Topping (2022), as cited in the research by Sesya et al. (2023), this forms the foundation for the practice of peer counseling, where individuals with disabilities provide counseling to their peers with disabilities. In an environment with fellow individuals with disabilities., they become more open and slightly reduce feelings of inferiority. Feelings of inferiority can be gradually overcome if individuals with disabilities have a strong desire to recover from difficult situations.

## 2  METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach to deeply understand how peer counseling can help alleviate feelings of inferiority among individuals with physical disabilities. The study was conducted within the Difabel Slawi Mandiri (DSM) community in Tegal, Indonesia, an organization founded by and for individuals with physical disabilities.

A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore subjective experiences and perceptions more deeply. The main focus of this study is to understand the processes and impacts of peer counseling in the context of participants' daily lives.

This study aims to describe the research subjects by focusing on phenomena perceived by respondents based on actual conditions and real realities to achieve the desired naturalistic impressions of phenomenology. Using a qualitative approach, the data collected will be more comprehensive, thorough, and reliable, as well as provide deeper and more significant information. All aspects of human life, along with factors influenced by humans, are the focus of qualitative research, which is described according to the actual situation, such as economic conditions, culture, and so on. The main characteristic of qualitative research is the natural environment that matches the real situation.

The study participants are members of the DSM community who have physical disabilities and are willing to participate in peer counseling sessions. Participants were selected purposively to ensure they had relevant experiences with the research topic.

Data were collected through the following methods, in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The purpose of the interviews is to delve into ways to help overcome inferiority among individuals with physical disabilities. Additionally, the interviews aim to understand the factors causing inferiority in individuals with physical disabilities at DSM. This research uses data obtained through in-depth interviews to acquire more detailed and comprehensive data, which is used as primary data. This is related to the research objective of discussing efforts to assist in overcoming feelings of inferiority among respondents with physical disabilities. Who are divided into 3 groups: genetic, illness (polio), and work-related accidents, all of whom experience physical limitations or disabilities in the Difabel Slawi Mandiri (DSM) Community.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, method triangulation was conducted by combining interviews, observations, and documentation. Additionally, member checking was done by providing participants the opportunity to review and give feedback on the interview transcripts and initial findings.

## 3  RESULTS

### 3.1  interview result

#### *3.1.1  Disabilities*

From the results of interviews with 6 respondents of various criteria, researchers asked about the causes of disabilities. Respondents reported diverse causes, including genetic factors, diseases (such as polio), and work accidents. This indicates that disabilities can occur for various reasons, whether from birth or due to events in adulthood.

Of every 6 respondents experiencing limited formal education, all respondents have limited formal education, mostly only up to junior high school or elementary school due to economic constraints or health conditions. Skill training, all respondents undergo skill training, especially in sewing or other technical skills. The limitations in formal education are compensated for by skill training that helps them earn a living and adapt to their disabilities.

Social support, all respondents receive support from friends (support from friends is crucial in helping respondents feel accepted and valued), family (all respondents receive emotional support from the family although some feel that understanding of their specific needs could be

improved), or social organizations like DSM (very helpful in reducing inferiority and boosting self-confidence). Use of assistive devices, some respondents use mobility aids (three-wheeled scooters and prosthetic legs) which provide significant benefits for people with disabilities, although some challenges need to be addressed to enhance their effectiveness and comfort. Adaptation and adjustment are facilitated by significant social support and the use of assistive devices that help them in their daily activities

### 3.1.2  Inferiority

Psychological Support, all respondents receive psychological support from family, friends, and organizations (very helpful in reducing feelings of low self-esteem often experienced by people with disabilities. Social Activities, involvement in social and community activities helps overcome feelings of inferiority and builds self-confidence. Overcoming inferiority is a process supported by psychological assistance and active involvement in social activities.

Contributions to Others, community activities, all respondents are involved in activities that benefit the community, whether through training, motivation, or participation in social projects. They contribute to empowering fellow disabled individuals through various means, including skill training and moral support. Contributing to others is an important aspect of their lives, showing how they give back to the community and support the empowerment of disabled individuals.

### 3.2  Discussions

In this discussion, which is part of the previous data processing results by the researcher, referring to the research problems or research questions that have been established, the researcher can conclude that the feelings of inferiority in persons with physical disabilities when participating in peer counseling can be significantly reduced. The feelings of inferiority experienced by SW, such as feeling undervalued and often ignored by the surrounding community and lacking support, were effectively reduced through peer counseling. Through emotional support, solidarity, positive reinforcement, and practical strategies obtained during peer counseling, SW experienced a significant increase in self-confidence and self-acceptance. Peer counseling helped SW feel more valued and accepted by both themselves and others.

Furthermore, SE experienced significant feelings of inferiority due to social stigma related to their disability. While participating in peer counseling, SE felt solidarity and camaraderie with other participants. Peer counseling helped SE achieve a higher level of self-acceptance.

The feelings of inferiority experienced by NH, such as low self-esteem and social stigma towards their disability, made them feel undervalued and often underestimated by others around them. The lack of social support also caused feelings of isolation and non-acceptance in the environment. During peer counseling, NH received positive reinforcement from other group members, which helped boost their self-esteem. This support was crucial for rebuilding their self-confidence.

Similarly, MA experienced deep feelings of low self-esteem due to their disability, which caused difficulties in working and social interactions. During peer counseling, MA received practical strategies for overcoming daily challenges faced as a person with a disability and received advice and support from those with similar experiences.

D experienced deep feelings of low self-esteem. A work accident that caused the disability made them feel undervalued and unable to meet others' expectations. During peer counseling, D received emotional support, which allowed them to share experiences and listen to stories from others in similar situations.

IB experienced feelings of low self-esteem caused by a work accident, which made them feel undervalued and difficult to adapt to their new condition. During peer counseling, IB received

positive reinforcement from peer group members, which was very important in rebuilding long-lost self-confidence.

This refers to conditions where a person experiences impairment or loss of physical function that affects mobility and independence. Persons with physical disabilities often face feelings of inferiority triggered by physical limitations, social stigma, and discrimination. Limitations in performing daily activities without assistance often make persons with physical disabilities feel inferior or undervalued. Dependency on assistive devices or others can cause feelings of low self-esteem, as they feel unable to do things that people without disabilities can do. Society often views persons with physical disabilities with condescension or pity, which can exacerbate feelings of low self-esteem. Mockery, discrimination, and social rejection experienced by persons with disabilities can reinforce feelings of inferiority and social isolation.

The role of peer counseling in overcoming feelings of inferiority is significant. Peer counseling provides a safe and supportive space where persons with disabilities can share their feelings and experiences without fear of judgment. Receiving emotional support from fellow persons with disabilities who understand the challenges they face can help reduce feelings of inferiority. Through interaction with other persons with disabilities who have successfully overcome their challenges, individuals can be motivated and confident to try new things. Peer counseling often involves activities and training that help enhance skills and independence, contributing to increased self-confidence. Feeling accepted and supported in a community that understands and appreciates their condition helps persons with disabilities feel more valued and less isolated. The solidarity formed in peer counseling helps individuals see that they are not alone in their struggles and that many others face similar challenges and can overcome them.

Peer counseling often involves skill training designed to enhance the independence of persons with disabilities, such as job training, life skills, and assistive technology. With new skills, individuals feel more capable and empowered, reducing feelings of inferiority and increasing their participation in society. The increase in self-confidence after receiving peer counseling services is significant. Peer counseling has a positive impact on increasing SW's self-confidence. Through emotional support, solidarity, positive reinforcement, and practical strategies obtained during sessions, SW experienced a significant increase in self-confidence and self-acceptance. Peer counseling has a positive impact on increasing self-confidence. SE began to realize that they had abilities and values equal to others, regardless of their disability.

Furthermore, peer counseling provided NH with an increase in self-confidence and higher self-acceptance, allowing them to interact better with their surroundings, and feel more valued and accepted. Peer counseling provided MA with a better increase in self-confidence, similar to respondent NH, allowing them to interact better with their surroundings in social and professional activities.

Peer counseling provided D with an increase in self-confidence; support and positive reinforcement from peer counseling helped increase self-confidence. They began to see themselves as valuable individuals with abilities and potential equal to others. Peer counseling provided IB with an increase in self-confidence. IB began to experience an increase in self-confidence. They began to realize that they had abilities and values equal to others, despite their disability.

All respondents showed an increase in self-confidence after participating in peer counseling. Peer counseling provided emotional support that helped respondents overcome feelings of inferiority and low self-esteem. The increase in self-confidence allowed respondents to participate more actively in social and community activities. They began to take on larger roles and become more confident in social interactions. The increase in self-confidence did not happen instantly. This process was gradual, with continuous support from peer counseling helping respondents feel more valued and capable. Peer counseling provided emotional support and a sense of togetherness that was crucial for respondents to overcome feelings of inferiority. Support from fellow persons with disabilities gave them a sense that they were not alone and that they had abilities and values equal to others. With increased self-confidence,

respondents' quality of life also improved. They felt more valued and capable of contributing to their communities and work environments.

The results of providing peer counseling to persons with physical disabilities in increasing self-confidence showed that all respondents experienced an increase in self-confidence through the emotional and social support provided by peer counseling. Skill training and participation in positive activities helped increase their self-confidence. Through peer counseling, respondents felt more accepted and supported in their social environment. Peer counseling helped reduce the social stigma they faced, improving positive interactions with their surroundings. Overall, peer counseling proved effective in increasing self-confidence and acceptance in the environment for persons with physical disabilities. Emotional, social, and skill development support were key factors in helping them overcome challenges and achieve independence and social acceptance.

## 4   CONCLUSIONS

Six respondents experienced feelings of inferiority and low self-esteem due to social stigma related to their disabilities. This made them feel neglected, undervalued, and isolated. The researcher concluded that peer counseling plays a crucial role in reducing feelings of inferiority and enhancing self-confidence in individuals with physical disabilities. Emotional support from fellow individuals with disabilities provides a sense of togetherness and eliminates feelings of isolation.

Regarding the feelings of inferiority among individuals with disabilities after attending peer counseling sessions, all respondents reported increased self-confidence and social acceptance. They felt more valued and capable of contributing to their community and work environment. Emotional support from peer counseling helped improve the overall quality of life for the respondents. They felt happier, more satisfied with themselves, and better able to face daily challenges.

The results of providing peer counseling show that counseling is highly effective in improving the emotional and social well-being of individuals with physical disabilities. Support from fellow individuals with disabilities fosters a sense of togetherness, reduces feelings of isolation, and helps rebuild self-confidence.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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