

**EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO EMBRACE SELF-LOVE AND BUILD
HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH MORNING ADVISORY**

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Published: 08 May 2024	<i>This study highlights the importance of morning advisory as a method to support students' character education, particularly in enhancing their understanding of the importance of self-love in building healthy relationships both at school and in social situations. The research method involved observation and structured interviews with junior high school students in Jakarta. The results indicate that students tend to prioritize social demands and friendships over their personal needs. Therefore, it is recommended for teachers to conduct morning guidance sessions by presenting relevant case studies without touching on overly personal matters. This way, students can learn to prioritize their sense of safety and comfort in their social circle, rather than solely focusing on being accepted by others.</i>
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INTRODUCTION

The phenomena of bullying, teenage depression, and suicide cases often highlighted by the media shed light on the complexities of challenges faced by children and adolescents in building healthy social relationships. As children and teenagers grow up in environments that encourage them to follow a specific social demands and peer pressure for acceptance, they tend to overlook the importance of self-acceptance, especially self-love. Adolescents, unlike any other age group, rely heavily on friendships and social contacts, and peer interactions play a key role in the development of their identity, personality, and perspective taking (Berndt, 2022; Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011).

Building healthy relationships is a universal challenge. Not only teenagers but also adults face similar obstacles in establishing social relationships where they feel safe and accepted. Particularly in the teenage years, which are synonymous with emotional and social issues, behaviors that violate social or religious norms and values are common. These problems arise because teenagers feel the need to conform to social demands to be accepted within a circle of friends, disregarding their own safety. The condition in which they also seek validation from these peer groups also plays a significant role in the decisions they make.

In many cases, pressure to follow the social norms or expectations of groups can result in grave consequences. Teenagers may feel the need to suppress aspects of themselves that being deemed as unacceptable by prevailing standards, sacrificing their emotional and psychological needs to be accepted by others. Consequently, they may fail to build healthy

and authentic relationships with themselves and with those around them and start feeling stress from the uncertainty followed. Moreover, stated by Janssen et al. (2020) the ability to deal with uncertainty varies widely. While some people can tolerate uncertainty very well, others have difficulties tolerating uncertainty and try to avoid it at best (Janssen et al., 2020).

Especially after the strike of Covid 19 as stated by Chen et al. (2021) that the outbreak of Covid-19 in 2019 has had a massive impact on people's lives, affecting their work, study, and travel. The pandemic has been a global health emergency, and it may have a serious impact on public health, including mental health. The Covid-19 pandemic has also changed how we interact. In many countries, people were recommended or required to socially distance. This means people were asked to either physically distance when meeting in-person (i.e., stay at least six feet apart) or stay at home (i.e., leave their home only for essential activities) (Chen et al., 2021). Martinsone et al added that over the last two years of Covid-19, adolescents have been heavily confronted with social isolation, online learning, and routine disruptions for extended periods. Increased internalizing problems, such as anxiety and depression, and externalizing problems, such as anger, and reduced life satisfaction have been reported in school-aged children Children and adolescents who experienced pre-pandemic vulnerabilities, namely lower socio-economic status, lower family support, and lower social emotional skills, experienced more significant mental health problems due to a reduction in the family income, problems with connectivity for online schooling, family conflicts, and neglect (Martinsone et al., 2022). That, being added Branje and Morris (2021) The peer context is another crucial domain to consider in understanding the effects of the pandemic on youth adjustment and well-being (Branje & Morris, 2021).

It is crucial for society, especially for educational institutions and families, to recognize the importance of helping children and teenagers to accept and love themselves especially the one whose being affected by the Covid-19. This can be achieved by promoting positive self-awareness, encouraging healthy self-confidence, and providing consistent emotional support. In this way, it is hoped that children and teenagers can build a solid foundation for healthy and meaningful relationships with themselves and with others around them.

With the proliferation of technology and information today, teenagers are exposed to information they deem cool and acceptable to certain environments without understanding the good and bad of such information. Stated by Fadila R et. al. (2021), education are the way for nation to reshaped and develop knowledge of younger generation that not just intelligence but capable of facing and solving the life challenge (Fadila et al., 2021). Embedded in Undang-Undang no 20 Tahun 2003 Pasal 1 Ayat 1 tahun 2003 concerning Pendidikan Nasional in Indonesia is the notion that education is a conscious and planned effort to create an atmosphere and learning process so that learners actively develop their potential to have spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills needed for themselves, society, nation, and state (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003, 2023). Therefore, educational institutions should not only focus on academic sciences but also need to create space for continuous character education in shaping individuals with character, morality, and the ability to build healthy relationships for themselves and others. Character education offered by the government is not a "quick fix" for solving these problems. Rather, character education is an approach to the moral, ethical, and educational issues emerging today. Character education is expected to educate children to make wise decisions and practice them in everyday life, positively influencing their environment.

Based on the above description, a research question can be posed: how can students be empowered to love themselves and build healthy relationships? Thus, the aim of this research is how teachers need to provide opportunities for students to learn how to 1) love themselves, and 2) build healthy relationships.

METHOD

The research methodology employed is qualitative research, involving the collection of data through interviews and observations. Subsequently, the data are selected as samples to draw conclusions and findings from the conducted research.

The stages of activities involved in this study include discussion sessions where students are asked to provide objective opinions and solutions to the issues, with the teacher acting as a facilitator who draws final conclusions. The discussion was conducted with 18 seventh-grade students from a junior high school in Jakarta. Students were given sheets of paper to write down the problems they face or are aware of in their surroundings. Afterward, the papers were collected, and each issue was read aloud, inviting opinions from other students without mentioning who wrote the problem. One by one, students provided their perspectives on the reasons behind the issues and viable solutions. It is hoped that through this activity, students will learn how to make wise and safe decisions for themselves and others. Besides discussions, students are also introduced to methods that can help them understand themselves and the steps they can take to protect themselves.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

For the whole week, each morning the students and teacher sat together and talk about random and various things to share about. Teacher usually giving the topic that easy to talk about like, "what you like?", "if you have unlimited money, how you will spend it?", "what movie you watch recently?", and various other to set the mood for the students that the things being shared will not be shared outside and them growing more comfortable.

Once the habit of students proactively sharing grew, students then being given discussion topic on "how they see their current relationship with others and how the ideal conditions supposed to be". Most students answered that they play and joke around each other, as well as having fun together in general. This show that he more time children spend time with peers the more similar they become to one another in interests, behaviours, and interactional styles (Ramasamy et al., 2020). Although, after the discussion shifted with them writing on paper anonymously, some students did answer that they feel uncomfortable when their friends start to use bad and vulgar words and keep joking to the point of teasing. The joke not even stop verbally but sometimes, there's students that said physical joke are a norm as well. Thus, it proves that children entering middle adolescent in life become aware for the first time of the other people around them and realize the importance of perception in their interactions. Peer conformity in young people is most pronounced with respect to style, taste, appearance, ideology, and values (Ramasamy et al., 2020). This contradictory show that teenager tend to yield onto peer pressure rather than what they feel comfortable about.

Following the result of the first discussion, the next morning advisory topic, students being asked to list down all the bad and vulgar words they know by groups. At first, students look hesitate, but as the teacher convince them that they will not say anything and just wanted to know, they start to list everything up to more than three pages being filled with the said

words. Upon being asked where they learn, students start to answer they learn from 1) the video on internet, 2) their own parents, grandparents, or nanny at home, and 3) based on what their friends said at school. This aligns with Schwartz (1977) that notes there is an overlap between social norms and, given that people acquire personal norms through social interactions (Mwagwabi & Jiow, 2021). The more being asked; the more students did admit that they use those words because they feel it something 'cool' and everything they have done like teasing and joking around are because 'their friends did it'. So, the topic for next discussion centre around "how to be cool" and "different between teasing vs joking".



Picture 1. Discussion result from students based on the topic being given.

As teenager tend to follow what his peer things of them, teacher can give everyone a set of paper and put their names on top of the paper. The paper then being shifted around to their friends where their friends need to write down the positive and good things about the person that have their name being written down. The result show how the students were happy with what being write down about them and feel more confident that they managed to write down good things about themselves that keep focusing on their negative or things they are bad. Young people need to ensure that they excel in various aspects of life, such as in academics, employability skills, personal development, and other qualities which are essential for enhancing their capabilities and potential as future leaders (Zakaria et al., 2022) and that reassurance will be more effective when it comes from their peers.

CONCLUSION

From the data and results, we can see that every student tries to understand themselves, then they can understand others. Some students that have difficulties in socialization get the opportunity to mingle with other students, because the class environment is conducive for each student to interact with each other.

The discussion keeps being shifted and change daily between the light-hearted topic to something where the students lead to think about their relationship with other. Thus, the students feel more comfortable and did not mind sharing about what they feel and thought about certain topics. This will give teacher more insight on how the students thought and what kind of things teacher need to do for the students to be able to put on boundaries between them and their peers.

With these activities, students start to build an understanding together on how to build healthy relationships and how to take care of loving themselves. But as it is still on the starting point, it is best to periodically repeat the discussion topic in morning advisory based on student needs to give reinforcement. It is best to do it constantly not just based on what happens around students, but on another problem in the real world. This done so students did not associate this discussion as another set of conferences or them just being bad or having some problems.

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