



## The effect of assertiveness training in reducing adolescent violence among high school students

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### Abstract

Violent behavior by adolescents is a problem that must be resolved soon because the impact is very detrimental to all parties. One of the nursing interventions that can be given in order to achieve optimal adolescent mental health is to provide assertiveness training therapy. This study aimed to determine the effect assertiveness training on violent behavior of adolescent studying in a private high school of Palembang, Indonesia. This study was a quasi-experimental pre post-test with control group with a sample of 60 students. The 30 student in control group was given a generalist therapy violent behavior and the 30 student in intervention group was given assertiveness training therapy. The data collection is using questionnaires and the data was analysed with paired t-Test. The results showed that there is a significant decrease to the response of violent behavior with mean 11.46 before given assertiveness training therapy and 9.46 after give assertiveness training therapy in the intervention group. This research also showed that violent behavior in response to behavioral, cognitive, social and physical decreased significantly. Assertiveness training is able to reduce violent behavior in adolescents and recommended to the teachers, friends and family.

**Keywords:** violence behavior, adolescent, assertiveness training

### 1. Introduction

Adolescence is a critical period in the development cycle of a person that marked by the rapid development of biological, psychological, and social aspects. These conditions resulted in various changes that require the ability of adolescent to adjust in order to achieve growth and developmental task at this stage that is to achieve a strong self-identity purpose in life which more purposeful so that they can be successful through this phase with optimally<sup>[1]</sup>.

The adolescent who have mistaken doing the adjustment of themselves sometimes perform impulsive actions such as fights, brawls, thefts and consuming alcoholic beverages until it reaches the level of dependence of drug abuse and addictive substances<sup>[2]</sup>.

The National Narcotics Agency of the Republic of Indonesia reported on the 2008, student using drug and illegal drugs w as many as 83,000 students while from college students there are 1.3 million people<sup>[3]</sup>.

Violations against children in the greater Jakarta area rising as much as 98% from 1,234 cases in 2010 become 2,380 cases in 2011<sup>[4]</sup>. The findings of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, the data of 16 prisons in all over Indonesia found 6,505 children in conflict with the law and submitted to the court as much as 4,622 of them in jail<sup>[5]</sup>. Juvenile delinquency in the city of Palembang also increased in 2012, amounting to 15%<sup>[7]</sup>.

This shows that adolescent are vulnerable to do violent behavior: an attitude or rude behavior or words that describe the behavior of amuck, hostility and a potential which causing physical damage<sup>[2]</sup>. Violent behavior is a condition in which a person doing an action that can harm physically for themselves, others and the environment. The factors which affect the incidence of violent behavior in adolescent are

identity, self-control, age, sex, hope to education, recognition of peers, the economy and the process of family<sup>[8]</sup>. Violent behavior in adolescent occurs due to biological factors, temperament, social influence, drugs and exposure to violent behavior<sup>[6]</sup>.

Based on interviews that have been conducted against teachers and several students at Senior High School Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang in January 2015, it is known that there are still student who often play truant during school hours, often fight among classes and violent behavior verbally that often expressed both peers and to parents and teachers.

Teachers and parents have done a lot of things to overcome this, but it still student's behavior at this time is very risky become violent behavior that would be very detrimental to themselves, their families, their school and communities. For this reason, effort must be taken to overcome the violent behavior of adolescent and distributes their activities into positive activities. This activity consisted of assertive behavior training contained in assertiveness training therapy. Assertiveness training is given by giving examples, models and exercises to improve the ability of adolescent to behave assertively, especially in expressing thoughts and feelings as required, build up an open communication, direct and honest so that the violent behavior is minimized<sup>[9]</sup>.

Giving assertiveness training aims to increase the self-assessment, improving self-esteem, reduce anxiety, improve the ability to make life decisions, express something verbally and nonverbally, to express the needs and rights and to train skills of basic interpersonal of someone cognitively, affectively and behavior and help individuals understand that aggressive behavior is a form of behavior that must be understood, modified and controlled, angry expression for one situation is not necessarily right for other situations and

methods to overcome the aggressive behavior can be used to decrease aggressive behavior become better <sup>[10]</sup>.

Research that have been done by Wahyuningsih showed that assertiveness training and generalist therapy has influence significantly lowered response behavioral, social, cognitive and physical of violent behavior <sup>[11]</sup>. It is also appropriate with research that have been done by Novianti who reported there were an increase of assertive communication skills of mother in the group that receive assertiveness training increased significantly <sup>[12]</sup>. Thus, assertiveness training therapy is one form of therapy that can be used as one form of activities and programs for health workers especially, families and society in general in order to improve the quality and ability of teenagers in the future by changing the violent behavior of adolescent into the assertive behavior.

**2. Materials and Methods**

The design in this research is quasi experimental pre post-test with control group. The intervention group had given Assertive training therapy which divided into five sessions, there are session 1 is to identify an incident that make angered or annoyed and attitudes that appear when there are incident that make angered or annoyed, session 2 is to express wishes and needs and how to fulfil it, session 3 is to train the ability of assertive attitude in expressing needs and wishes, session 4 is to train the ability to say no to requests of others who are not rational and submit the reason, session 5 is an exercise in maintaining assertive attitude in expressing needs and desires and to say no to request of other people who are not rational <sup>[12]</sup>.

The control group was given generalist therapy violent behavior as much as four sessions. Each session conducted twice meeting. The research sample is using purposive sampling technique based on the predefined inclusion criteria, namely teenage boys, aged 14-19 years, a history of violent behavior, and willing to become respondents. This research conducted to know the effect of assertiveness training on the response of cognitive, behavioral, social and emotional teenagers in Senior High School Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang.

The research samples as many as 60 people with 30 respondents of intervention group and 30 respondents of control group. The data collection is using questionnaires and the data analysis with univariate and bivariate. The bivariate analysis using statistical calculations, statistical test paired t-test.

**3. Results & Discussion**

The main finding is depicted in the following tables.

**Table 1:** The distribution of adolescent violent behavior based on age and frequency

	The intervention group	The control group	Total
Characteristics	n %	n %	n %
Age			
1. 14 -16	15 30%	21 67.7%	36.60%
2. 17- 19	15 30%	9 29.0%	24.40%
Frequency of violence			
1. ≤ 5	19 63%	14 45,2%	33 55%
2. ≥ 6	11 36.7%	16 51.5%	27 45%

**Table 2:** The differences of violent behavior in adolescent before and after assertiveness training in the intervention group

The Intervention Group	n	Mean	SD	SE	p- value
Behavioral Response					
1. Before	30	11.46	2.11	0.38	0.000
2. After	30	9.46	1.67	0.30	
3. Difference		2.00			
Cognitive Response					
1. Before	30	13.26			0.003
2. After	30	11.03	1.99	0.36	
3. Difference		2.23	2.10	0.38	
Social Response					
1. Before	30	9.63	2.53	0.46	0.000
2. After	30	7.73	2.01	0.36	
3. Difference		1.90			
Physical Response					
1. Before	30	7.83	1.48	0.27	0.000
2. After	30	6.78	1.16	0.21	
3. Difference		1.05			

**Table 3:** The differences of violent behavior in adolescent before and after assertiveness training in the control group

The Control Group	N	Mean	SD	SE	p value
Behavioral response					
1. Before	30	11.43	2.11	0.38	0.000
2. After	30	9.40	1.63	0.29	
3. Difference		2.03			
Cognitive response					
1. Before	30	13.06	2.04	0.37	0.004
2. After	30	10.96	1.12	0.38	
3. Difference		2.10			
Social response					
1. Before	30	9.56	2.29	0.41	0.002
2. After	30	7.80	2.34	0.42	
3. Difference		1.76			
Physical response					
1. Before	30	7.93	1.48	0.27	0.000
2. After	30	6.70	1.14	0.20	
3. Difference		1.23			

The results of the research showed that there is a significant decrease to the response of violent behavior before and after given assertiveness training therapy in the intervention group with p -value = 0.000. It means that there is an influence of assertiveness training therapy on response behavioral of adolescent with violent behavior in the form of physical violence against other people and the environment.

Violent behavior is a response to the anger that is in the range of maladaptive which includes cognitive, affective, physiological, behavioral and social response. Behavioral responses which appear in someone with violent behavior are hostile, behavior that can harm their self, others and the environment <sup>[8]</sup>. Behavioral responses can be either an inability to sit calmly, fistted hand and encroach on personal space when interacting <sup>[9]</sup>.

Assertive attitude is an action taken in accordance with the choice, express expression honestly, feel comfortable without feeling anxious. Assertive behavior trained in teenagers with violent behavior will help them to behave in accordance with the duties of adolescent development 10. Adolescent are taught new behaviors where they will be learning, practicing

and doing role play with friends and expected to be able to apply them in real life everyday either in school and society [9].

Violent behavior of adolescent can be reduced by taking anger management program which contributed as much as 6% to the decline in aggressive behavior of adolescent. This program is also beneficial in helping teenagers control their behavior to maximize the abilities they possess [6]. Other programs which can reduce violent behavior of adolescent is a program proven to be effective in lowering aggressive behavior of teenagers by providing training for 10 weeks (20 sessions). This activity is given by playing of percussion instruments as a means of diverting an angry expression and to train adolescent to look for other alternatives response against angry other than negative behavior [13].

The results of the research showed that there is a significant decrease to the cognitive response of violent behavior in adolescent before and after given assertiveness training to the intervention group with p- value = 0.003. It means that there are an influence of assertiveness training therapy to the cognitive response of adolescent with violent behavior namely inability to think calmly when upset and can't find a solution to the problem that is being faced. A cognitive response in individuals with violent behavior is such as having an irrational thinking and lacking of confidence, assessing and criticizing others behavior and losing control [14].

Violent behavior occurs because of there are an unpleasant situation and individual factors. The existence of interaction from the aspect of affective, cognitive and arousal of the stimulus a cause a negative feelings and the role of cognitive factors which determine the behavior that appears. Aggressive behavior also occurs because of the process that accepted cognitive. The appearance of anger on someone as a result of their negative thoughts, both in the form of the negative view towards their self, others and the environment and the negative view towards the future [15].

The results of the research showed that there is a significant decrease to the social response of violent behavior in adolescent before and after given assertiveness training to the intervention group with p value 0,000. It means that there are an influence of assertiveness training therapy to the social response of teenagers with violent behavior in the form of blaming others for the problems that are going on, speak loudly and rudely, insulting and belittling the others opinions. The social response of violent behavior in someone is interpersonal relationships that less harmonious and tend to hurt other people [14].

The period of growth and development of adolescent are often experiencing conflicts during the adjustment period of themselves. The pattern of their social development becomes annoyed so that their development tasks can't be achieved well. Social relationships can also have problems even though at the same time they actually need other people to help them in solving the problems they faced. Because of that adolescent should have the skills to manage emotions and anger or reduce the occurrence of aggressive behavior that is very detrimental to adolescent. Adolescent who have good interpersonal intelligence tend to be easily accepted by their environment, they can express their self well and satisfied in life [15].

Assertiveness is a person's ability to maintain their personal

rights and is able to express their feelings, ideas and thoughts and beliefs openly, honestly and with honoring and respecting the rights of others. Teenagers who do not assertive usually not be able to convey the desire, the confidence and the feeling such as fear, shame and even they can't afford to respect their own rights [16].

Adolescent should train their self to behave assertively. Assertiveness or behave assertively is an interpersonal behavior that includes aspects of honesty and openness of mind and feelings. Assertive behavior will help a person establish a good interaction between individuals, because in it there is mutual respect behavior and respect for one another and uphold the values of honesty [17].

The results of the research showed that there is a significant decrease to the physical response of violent behavior in adolescent before and after given assertiveness training to the intervention group with p value 0,000. It means that there is an influence of assertiveness training therapy to the physical response of teenagers with violent behavior that appears in the form of sharp eyes and bulging, head up to the top and flushed face when angry. Physical response of individuals with violent behavior includes increased blood pressure, heart rate and breathing, dilated pupils, strained face and jaw hardened [14].

Assertive behavior is the ability to require what is be your rights or what do you want from a situation and maintain it as well not violate the rights of others [18]. Individuals who can't apply assertiveness in life may result in unhealthy relationships, not harmonious; lacking a sense of kinship even it can occurs a dispute [17].

Research shows that there is a relationship between assertive behavior with a tendency to become a victim of bullying, the higher the assertive behavior of students, the lower the tendency to become victims of bullying, and vice versa the lower the assertive behavior, the higher tendency of being bullied. Teenagers who are able to behave assertively will not get any physical violence, because they are able to fight or escape from bullying experienced. They also do not get non-physical violence because they were able to report to the school principal or teacher [18].

#### 4. Conclusions

There is a decrease in violent behavior both the response of behavioral, cognitive, social and physical of adolescent in Senior High School of Muhammadiyah II in Palembang, Indonesia. The decrease is greater in the group that receiving generalist therapy and assertiveness training rather than the group that only receive the general therapy.

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