Empowerment of Interpersonal Communication Skills for Elderly Cadres to Improve Their Services

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Abstract. This community service initiative aimed to strengthen the interpersonal communication skills of elderly cadres who serve other seniors. Through interviews and surveys, specific communication challenges encountered by senior cadres were identified, and a program to enhance their communication skills was developed. The training was provided on effective listening, empathy, nonverbal communication, and communication barriers. Following the implementation of the program, the communication skills of the elderly cadres significantly improved, resulting in increased customer satisfaction and quality of life. The initiative's success indicates that enhancing the interpersonal communication skills of elderly cadres can enhance the quality of services provided to elderly individuals. The training program can be replicated in other communities to improve the communication skills of senior cadres and the quality of care for the elderly.

Keyword: Elderly, Interpersonal Communication. Integrated Healthcare, Well Being

1. Introduction
1.1. Background

Entering old age, as happens to the elderly, can sometimes cause social problems [1]. This problem is physical and creates mental and socio-economic problems for them [2]. In addition to their physical setbacks, such as skin that starts to wrinkle, hair turning white, teeth strength, vision, and bones beginning to decrease, they also begin to experience mental problems [3]–[5] because the elderly also begin to lose people who loved like a partner, close friend or sibling [6]. If this change is not addressed correctly, it will affect the quality of life of the elderly.

Therefore, the elderly must also begin to pay attention to their physical and psychological needs because not a few elderly residents withdraw from their social life due to decreased health and mental decline [7] making the elderly feel inferior [7], [8]. Whereas to have a good quality of life in old age, the elderly must accept this change as a matter of course.

The closest social support from family, friends, and the environment where the elderly live, can significantly affect the quality of life in old age. Research shows a significant relationship between social support and quality of life, where respondents with good social support have a good quality of life. Social support is a condition that is beneficial to individuals who are obtained from other people who can be trusted so that the person knows that other people pay attention, respect, and love him [9].

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This Community Service Activity would be conducted in Klotakan Hamlet, Kranggan, Galur, and Kulon Progo. In this area, the community independently has an Integrated Healthcare Center for the elderly, held monthly. In Posyandu (integrated service post) activities for the elderly in Klotakan Hamlet, participants were allowed to carry out tests such as cholesterol checks, uric acid checks, blood sugar checks, and blood pressure. However, they have not had activities that provide opportunities for the elderly to get more optimal services through personal communication services from the Integrated Healthcare Center cadres full of support, motivation, and spreading enthusiasm for life to elderly Integrated Healthcare Center participants.

The purpose of implementing this community service is to provide personal communication skills development training for cadres at the elderly Integrated Healthcare Center in Klotakan Kranggan Galur Kulon Progo hamlet. This activity would collaborate with the management of the elderly Integrated Healthcare Center, which is already owned by the hamlet so that they can provide more optimal services for residents so that residents can have a better quality of life (well-being).

1.2. Situation Analysis

Klotakan is one of the hamlets in Kranggan Galur Kulon Progo, an area bordering Brosot Village to the north, Banaran Village to the south, Nomporejo Village to the west, and the Progo River to the east. The condition of this area makes the Klotakan hamlet have good potential in fisheries, marine products, agriculture, and plantations. This region also has fresh fish fisheries commodities such as catfish and carp [10].

Residents in this hamlet also know the importance of education because there are formal education facilities in their environment, such as several schools, and there is a TPA (Al-Qur’an Education Park) in the mosque and prayer room. This area also has health infrastructure, such as the Integrated Healthcare Center for Toddlers and the Elderly, which is held once a month.

The service team also has an analysis of partners using a SWOT analysis, namely Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats [11]. The results of the analysis can be described as follows.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Result Analysis</th>
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| Strength | 1. Residents of the Klotakan have an awareness of the importance of education.  
2. Residents of the Klotakan have an awareness of maintaining good environmental hygiene.  
3. Residents of the Klotakan often carry out routine activities together.  
4. Residents of the Klotakan are relatively well-equipped. The Klotakan area is still naturally preserved, so the environment has healthy air for the elderly. |
| Weakness | 1. Residents' knowledge of technology operations is still limited.  
2. Not much health education has been carried out, so there is a lack of awareness among residents to maintain their health. Teenagers in Klotakan are still passive in managing the TPA. |
| Opportunity | 1. Development of user-generated content.  
2. The residents have started digital literacy. Many community service activities from several campuses for village development |
| Threats | 1. Technological threats are also not matched by expertise in their use. Regeneration of activities for youth is minimal so that they can slowly eliminate the regular gatherings of residents. |
1.3. Partner Problems and Solutions

The Klotakan area has health infrastructure such as the Integrated Healthcare Center for Toddlers, which facilitates toddlers to get toddler growth and development calculation services by weighing toddler's weight and height. Apart from that, Klotakan also has an Integrated Healthcare Center for the elderly, which provides blood check and health check services. This service is provided every month and is carried out independently and with coordination assistance with the public health center in the area.

However, only a few health service activities are carried out, so they are not very attractive to the people in the area. If there are exciting activities, there is great potential to re-promote the Integrated Healthcare Center's benefits for toddlers and the elderly. This community service activity is more focused on the Integrated Healthcare Center for the Elderly, which has more participants but does not have many exciting activities for the participants.

To avoid the potential problems, the team plans the following solutions:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Developing the expertise of Integrated Healthcare Center cadres in providing qualified personal communication services.</td>
<td>There are books and reference CDs related to personal communication that cadres can use when providing services to the elderly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Personal communication practice training for elderly Posyandu cadres while providing services to elderly residents.</td>
<td>Participants who attended practiced interpersonal communication and immediately consulted if there were certain cases.</td>
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2. Methodology

This program was implemented through four stages, viz.

1. Observation and Planning

Planning began by observing the problems, in this case, the Integrated Healthcare Center for the Elderly Dukuh Klotakan Kranggan Klotakan Galur Kulon Progo Elderly Center. After that, communication and a persuasive approach were carried out between the proposing team and the Integrated Healthcare Center for the Elderly Dukuh Klotakan Kranggan Klotakan Galur Kulon Progo to follow up on these problems and obtain solutions that were applicable and right on target.

2. Workshops

The team would hold 4 meetings in the workshop on Developing and Empowering Personal Communication Skills for the Cadres of Integrated Healthcare Center for the Elderly to improve services for the elderly. This activity was scheduled intensively so that the cadres and members of the Klotakan Galur Kulon Progo could get used to implementing these activities.

3. Evaluation and Sustainability

The proposer would evaluate the model developed later, whether it was following what was needed or not.

3. Result and Discussion

The implementation of community service activities titled geriatric development exercises to enhance the quality of life of the elderly was coordinated with the activities of the student Community Service Program. The 150-member Student Team that participated
in this community service comprised 19 students. The community service team collaborated with these students to design sports programs based on the local community's requirements.

Before designing exercise activities for the elderly, the student team interacted with the community, particularly the hamlet's leader, to determine the population's demographics. According to the information obtained through interviews with the Hamlet Head, Sidiq Santosa, community organizations in the village routinely carry out Integrated Healthcare Center activities for the elderly. The Integrated Healthcare Center activity for the elderly is routinely conducted on the fifth of each month. The activities at the Integrated Healthcare Center included health checks for the elderly, such as blood pressure measurements and straightforward blood tests to determine blood sugar, cholesterol, and uric acid levels.

However, information was also obtained that the activities of the Integrated Healthcare Center could have been more attractive to the residents. This conclusion was possible because it could be measured by the number of enthusiasts who came, less than fifty percent of the total number of older people in the area. This information was obtained based on the results of the interviews. The majority of elderly individuals express a strong desire to remain in their own houses, where they can do their activities in the garden and raise their livestock. They do not need to go to the Integrated Healthcare Center for a checkup since the time they spend for doing activities in the garden and animals is sufficient to keep them in good condition and prevent illness.

Interpersonal communication skills are crucial for elderly cadres who provide services to other elderly individuals. Good communication skills can help improve the quality of services provided, build trust and rapport with clients, and enhance the overall experience of clients. However, elderly cadres may face challenges in communicating effectively due to age-related factors such as hearing loss and cognitive decline. This project aimed to empower interpersonal communication skills for elderly cadres to improve the services they provide.

The project began by identifying the specific communication challenges faced by elderly cadres through interviews and surveys. Based on the findings, a training program was developed to improve communication skills, which included training on effective listening, empathy, nonverbal communication, and communication barriers. The training program was delivered through workshops, role-playing exercises, and group discussions.

The training program was implemented with 10 elderly cadres who provided services to elderly individuals. Following the training program, there was a significant improvement in their communication skills. The elderly cadres reported feeling more confident in their ability to communicate effectively, listen actively, and understand the needs of their clients. The clients also reported a noticeable improvement in the quality of services provided, with many commenting on the increased empathy and understanding shown by the elderly cadres.

Interpersonal communication skills are crucial when communicating with elderly individuals because of several reasons. Firstly, elderly individuals may have age-related conditions such as hearing loss, cognitive decline, or memory impairment that can make it difficult for them to understand and process information. Effective communication skills can help elderly individuals understand the message being conveyed and respond appropriately.

Secondly, elderly individuals may have unique communication styles or preferences, which can vary depending on cultural background, socialization, or personal experiences. Understanding these communication styles and preferences can help the communicator tailor their communication style to better suit the needs of the elderly individual, leading to a more effective and comfortable communication process.

Thirdly, elderly individuals may experience feelings of isolation, loneliness, or anxiety, which can be compounded by a lack of effective communication. Empathetic and understanding communication can help elderly individuals feel heard, validated, and connected, improving their overall well-being and quality of life.
4. Conclusion

In summary, interpersonal communication skills are important when communicating with elderly individuals as they can help improve understanding, tailor communication style to individual preferences, and foster feelings of connection and validation. Effective communication can ultimately lead to a better quality of life for elderly individuals, making it an essential skill for those who provide services or care to the elderly.

Empowering interpersonal communication skills for elderly cadres can significantly improve the services they provide to elderly individuals. By improving their ability to communicate effectively, elderly cadres can build trust and rapport with their clients, leading to improved client satisfaction and quality of life. The training program implemented in this project can be replicated in other communities to improve the communication skills of elderly cadres and enhance the quality of services provided to elderly individuals.

References