

Psychoeducation To Strengthen Self-Confidence Among People With Disabilities In Jambi City

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Abstract

Young adults with disabilities frequently face challenges related to low self-confidence as a result of their unique circumstances. Effective self-development strategies are crucial for empowering individuals to navigate their lives with confidence. This community service project, grounded in research and delivered through psychoeducation, aimed to provide strategic guidance to members of the disability community in Jambi City to help boost their self-confidence. A descriptive qualitative design was used, featuring open-ended questionnaires that were administered to participants both before and after the psychoeducation sessions. The changes in participants' perceptions of self-confidence were examined through reflexive thematic analysis (RTA). The results indicated a change in participants' perceptions of self-confidence, along with a greater understanding of practical strategies to enhance it. Three key patterns emerged: the transformation in mindset from avoidance to a proactive and positive self, a shift from anticipating failure to embracing self-exploration, and a reorientation of social interactions through the establishment of adaptive support networks. Psychoeducation can help members of the disability community cultivate a more positive outlook on their self-confidence.

Keywords: disability; self-confidence; early adulthood; psychoeducation

INTRODUCTION

People with disabilities have the same rights to education, employment, access to health services, and social participation. In practice, however, people with disabilities continue to encounter physical, social, and psychological barriers (Belluzzo et al., 2025; Milačić-Vidojević et al., 2020). These barriers do not arise solely from limitations in bodily functioning, but also from social structures that are not yet fully inclusive.

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People with disabilities, particularly those in early adulthood (their twenties to thirties), are expected to become increasingly independent and to live according to their own aspirations (Santrock, 2011). Nevertheless, they continue to face limited accessibility in public facilities, restricted employment opportunities, and low levels of public literacy about disability. These conditions constrain opportunities for social participation and self-development. In many cases, stigma and negative stereotypes about disability also influence how individuals view themselves.

Psychologically, people with disabilities may experience low self-confidence as a consequence of perceived discrimination and unequal treatment in their social environments. Research in Indonesia indicates that social stigma and discrimination experienced by people with disabilities can produce feelings of inferiority, anxiety, and other negative psychological effects that hinder self-confidence and participation in social and public activities (Jumilah et al., 2025). In addition, internalization of negative social views about disability, commonly referred to as self-stigma, can reduce self-evaluation and psychological quality of life, increase anxiety, and affect psychological well-being (Silván-Ferrero et al., 2020).

Self-confidence is an important factor influencing an individual's ability to interact socially, develop personal potential, make decisions, and participate actively in community life (Bandura, 1997). Among people with disabilities, self-confidence is often influenced by social stigma, discrimination, unequal treatment, and limited access to spaces for self-development. These conditions may contribute to feelings of inferiority, social withdrawal, and barriers to self-actualization (Saleh et al., 2025).

Another challenge arises when people with disabilities enter new situations or face public interaction. They may experience higher social anxiety, particularly when social support is insufficient to help them adapt and develop communication skills and self-confidence (Indirawisadi & Supriyadi, 2020). Excessive dependence on family without adequate social support or opportunities for independent development may also hinder autonomy and decision-making, thereby intensifying psychological challenges in everyday life (Lestari & Fajar, 2020).

Statistics from the Jambi City Social Service indicate that there were 1,819 people with disabilities in Jambi City, an increase from 1,406 people recorded in 2024 (Dinas Sosial Kota Jambi, 2025). This increase is accompanied by continuing challenges in creating opportunities for people with disabilities in Jambi City to develop self-confidence. Issues identified in previous work include the tendency to apply self-confidence development strategies to students with disabilities in the same way as to other students and insufficient family support, including expressions of shame regarding a child's disability (Sutresniwati et al., 2024). These findings reinforce the need for self-confidence



development interventions that are adapted to the specific circumstances and needs of people with disabilities.

Against this background, the researchers conducted a community service activity for people with disabilities in early adulthood in Jambi City. The partner in this community service activity was Ambung Harsa, a community/organization engaged in the empowerment and assistance of people with disabilities in Jambi City. Ambung Harsa functions as a space for guidance, capacity strengthening, and social interaction for its members, with a commitment to improving the quality of life of people with disabilities through social and educational programs.

Communication with Ambung Harsa management indicated that some community members continued to demonstrate low self-confidence. This was reflected in: (1) limited courage to speak in public or express opinions; (2) doubts about showing personal potential and abilities; (3) a tendency to compare themselves negatively with nondisabled individuals; and (4) limited understanding of self-acceptance.

At the same time, Ambung Harsa provides a strategic setting for psychoeducation because it has active and organized members, support from its management for psychological capacity development, and regular forums that can be used for educational activities. Therefore, a systematic, participatory, and practical psychoeducational intervention was considered necessary to strengthen self-confidence among people with disabilities in Jambi City through the Ambung Harsa partnership.

METHOD

This activity used a general qualitative research design. The design was selected because of its flexibility in analyzing findings from participant responses and explaining the meanings contained in participants' statements (Yin & Robert K., 2016). The depth of the data was considered more suitable for the purpose of this activity than a quantitative approach focused primarily on numerical significance (Sugiyono, 2013).

The activity was substantively and ethically reviewed and approved by the Institute for Research and Community Service of Universitas Baiturrahim. The community service team distributed invitations to all Ambung Harsa members, and 13 people agreed to participate in the psychoeducation activity. Before the activity began, the researchers explained the procedures to the 13 participants and their Ambung Harsa facilitators. Participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time if they felt uncomfortable, without any consequences. The research team was also prepared to provide assistance if participants experienced discomfort or felt harmed during the activity.

The activity began with a short questionnaire consisting of five open-ended questions about participants' perceptions of self-confidence. The educational materials covered: (1) understanding strengths in diversity; (2) characteristics of confident people;



(3) factors that foster self-confidence; and (4) practical strategies for increasing self-confidence, including cultivating a positive mindset among people with disabilities.

After completing the initial questionnaire, the researchers conducted an interactive psychoeducation session. The final questionnaire was administered before the documentation session. The post-activity questionnaire consisted of five essay questions that were not identical to the initial questions but were related to them.

Table 1. Questionnaire Items

No.	Pre-Activity Question	Post-Activity Question
1	In your opinion, what is self-confidence?	Based on the activity, what are the characteristics of a confident person?
2	What usually makes you feel less confident?	In your opinion, how can self-confidence be improved?
3	What challenges do you face in social interaction?	In your opinion, what helps self-confidence grow?
4	How do you usually cope when you feel less confident?	What do you like most about yourself now?
5	What are the characteristics of a confident person?	What insights did you gain after participating in the activity?

The data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) based on the systematic guidelines of Braun and Clarke (2021). This approach guided the researchers in inductively examining raw participant responses and identifying patterns or relationships among themes that could form broader themes. The analysis was also intended to capture the short trajectory of participants' perceptions of self-confidence before and after the psychoeducation activity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

The psychoeducation activity was attended by 13 members of the Ambung Harsa community. Participant characteristics are presented in Table 2.

Characteristic	Category	N (%)
Gender	Male	7 (55.85%)

Gender	Female	6 (46.15%)
Age	20–25 years	7 (53.85%)
Age	26–30 years	5 (38.46%)
Age	31–35 years	1 (7.69%)

The gender distribution shows that male participants (7; 55.85%) were slightly more numerous than female participants (6; 46.15%). Most participants were 20–25 years old (7; 53.85%), followed by those aged 26–30 years (5; 38.46%), and those aged 31–35 years (1; 7.69%). The participant in the 31–35-year age group was 32 years old.

ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION

The activity began with an introduction to the facilitator and an explanation of the purpose of the psychoeducation session. During the introductory session, attendance was recorded while the pre-activity questionnaire was distributed to all participants. The community service team and the community facilitators jointly ensured that participants understood how to complete the questionnaire and assisted participants who experienced difficulty answering or writing their responses.

After the questionnaire was completed, the facilitator began the psychoeducation with an emotional check-in. The material included examples of inspirational figures with disabilities and invited participants to identify what these figures believed and what characteristics they demonstrated. The session began with an opening question about participants' own definitions of self-confidence. The material emphasized that self-confidence can grow regardless of individual uniqueness or limitations.

The session also emphasized practical strategies that participants could use regularly to reassure themselves, such as positive affirmations, writing down their individual strengths, and developing a personal plan suited to their abilities for achieving their aspirations. At the end of the presentation, the facilitator invited participants to reflect on whether they felt confident in their current circumstances.

After the presentation, the community service team and community facilitator distributed the post-activity questionnaire. Participants were asked about their views of self-confidence after participating in the psychoeducation session.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Based on responses to the two questionnaires, three major themes were identified.

1. Transformation in mindset: from avoidance to a proactive and positive self

This theme shows how participants restructured tendencies to avoid situations that triggered low self-confidence (avoidance coping) into approaches that emphasized active strategies and positive thinking for managing anxiety. For example, in the initial

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questionnaire, one participant described what they did when faced with a situation in which they could not feel confident: "If I am not confident, I just play on my phone and watch YouTube" (P1). The same participant responded differently in the second questionnaire: "It is important to be able to stay confident" (P1).

Developing positive thinking was also a dominant pattern. In the first questionnaire, several participants described fear associated with being confident: "I feel inferior because I am afraid of being bullied" (P3); "I often have miscommunication with people, so I would rather not talk" (P5). After the activity, participants described different ways of responding to situations that challenged their confidence: "I often calm myself first and then think positively" (P3); "Control my breathing, focus on positive thoughts, and accept things as they are" (P5).

These responses suggest that managing low self-confidence among people with disabilities is closely related to positive perceptions of what they can control themselves. This is consistent with the conceptual framework of Lazarus and Folkman (1984), in which participants began to apply self-directed affect regulation strategies, including positive self-talk and structured efforts to replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts. The theme indicates an effort to confront less-than-ideal circumstances by adopting a more positive perspective.

2. From anticipating failure to self-exploration

In addition to changes in thinking patterns and strategies, participants showed changes in how they viewed failure or the possibility of failure, which had often reduced their confidence. Several participants stated: "The fear of failure that comes from lack of experience" (P4); "Failure or criticism makes me feel inferior" (P7). These responses reflected a belief that whatever they did or planned to do might not produce the expected outcome because of physical or social limitations.

The excessive anxiety surrounding failure began to shift toward an orientation of development and self-exploration. The two participants above described new perspectives on what they could do when faced with circumstances that challenged their confidence or when they felt anxious about social acceptance: "Try to socialize more, whether working independently or in a team; we have to be creative and innovative together" (P4); "Learn more about talent development and education. Have experiences of successfully doing something" (P7). These efforts to engage in productive self-development indicate an emerging awareness that confidence can be strengthened by exploring existing potential and developing it through practice.

A sense of empowerment is important for people with disabilities to become more involved in higher-quality interpersonal relationships. This process may emerge from the individual and be facilitated by acceptance and assistance from people around them



(Milačić-Vidojević et al., 2020). Feelings of discrimination and lack of confidence in becoming part of a community may be reduced when individuals are supported in obtaining rich experiences and strengthening mastery experiences (Bandura, 1982).

3. Reorientation of social interaction: building adaptive support networks

Social interaction was initially perceived as a major source of low self-confidence when participants socialized. Most participants indicated that rejection and the lack of accessibility in everyday settings often created anticipatory anxiety. Examples included: "Lack of accessibility structurally widens the social distance" (P9); "The challenge is people, friends" (P11); and "Fear of rejection, difficulty understanding social cues, and differences in background" (P13). These responses reflected participants' concerns about navigating social interaction while recognizing differences in background and unmet accessibility needs in public settings.

After the psychoeducation, participants' new interpretations placed greater emphasis on positive aspects of the social environments that had supported them. The same three participants later reported: "It turns out there is more support from family and friends" (P9); "Focus on joining a disability community" (P11); and "A positive environment, a sense of love" (P13). These narratives suggest that participants began to identify and reorient their attention toward positive forms of support available in their social environments.

Positive social support is often associated with improved psychological well-being among people with disabilities. A qualitative study found that supportive social environments can include friends, family members, caregivers, therapists, and physicians who understand individuals' circumstances while encouraging them in ways that are consistent with their expectations (Reber et al., 2022). Support from close others has also been shown to predict higher self-esteem among people with disabilities (Lestari & Fajar, 2020). Social support, affirmation, and unconditional acceptance may help people with disabilities face life challenges with greater confidence and may help transform challenges into opportunities for self-actualization (Dunn, 2014).

CONCLUSION

The community service activity involving psychoeducation to strengthen self-confidence among people with disabilities in Jambi City was implemented as planned. The activity involved 13 members of the Ambung Harsa community and provided understanding of self-concept, self-acceptance, potential development, assertive communication, and strategies for dealing with stigma and discrimination.

Before the activity, participants demonstrated unstable self-confidence, concerns about negative social evaluation, difficulty identifying personal potential, and tendencies

to depend on family members in decision-making. After the psychoeducation, participants showed qualitative changes. They became more able to recognize their strengths and potential, more willing to express opinions, more positive in their thinking, and more aware of adaptive ways to respond to stigma. Participants also demonstrated increased motivation toward independence.

Overall, the psychoeducation activity can support greater understanding, self-acceptance, self-confidence, and motivation for independence among people with disabilities. However, continued programming is needed so that the positive changes obtained through the activity can be maintained and further developed.

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