

Empathy Communication through Psychosocial Support for Natural Disaster Survivors in Cianjur Regency

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ABSTRACT

An earthquake with a magnitude of 5.6 occurred in Cianjur Regency. Not only having a physical impact, the earthquake that occurred in Cianjur also resulted in deep sorrow for the people of Cianjur. When conducting field surveys and observations, it was found that there was a crisis in Cianjur Regency. Responding to this, the PKM team at Putra Indonesia University and Jayabaya University carried out psychosocial support activities in four location areas consisting of Babakan Village, Sarongge Village, Kuta Village, and PasirChina Village. For psychosocial support to run well and smoothly, an appropriate communication strategy is needed. One of the communication strategies implemented by the PKM team with the survivors of the Cianjur disaster is empathetic communication. Empathetic communication attitudes implemented include active listening, egalitarian, caring, eye contact, smiles, touches, and gentle words. The psychosocial support provided by the PKM team from Putra Indonesia University and Jayabaya University is hoped to be a means for residents and children to deal with stress and form resilience (ability to rise) which will become an asset when they face challenges in life in the future.

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INTRODUCTION

2022 leaves deep sorrow for West Java Province. Cianjur Regency, which is one of the districts in West Java, was hit by an earthquake natural disaster. The earthquake occurred on November 21, 2022, with a magnitude of 5.6 magnitude (Ginanjar, D., & Sari, L. P., 2023). The type of earthquake that occurred in Cianjur Regency is of the type shallow *crustal earthquake* or an earthquake which is then followed by a series of aftershocks.

Because it was categorized as an extraordinary natural disaster, the Indonesian people worked together to assist victims affected by the disaster in Cianjur Regency. Shortly after the disaster occurred, the volunteers assisted in meeting basic needs, starting from clothing needs such as clothing, board needs such as emergency tents, and food needs such as groceries.

Not only having a physical impact, the earthquake that occurred in Cianjur also resulted in deep sorrow for the people of Cianjur. When conducting field surveys and observations, it was found that there was a crisis in Cianjur Regency. According to Indasari (2020), a crisis is an event that is occurring (or is expected to) and leads to an unstable and dangerous situation affecting an individual, group, community, or whole society. Some of the children who were at the point of the disaster site looked stressed which was shown by their emotional expressions of crying and other unadaptive behavior such as aggression or tantrums (excessive anger or emotional outbursts at a certain age because of unmet wants or needs).

In response to this, the PKM team at Putra Indonesia University and Jayabaya University carried out psychosocial support activities. This activity is an implementation of the Tridharma of higher education as stated by Junias, et al (2023) In the word "psychosocial" there are 2 main concepts, namely: "psycho" and "social". Psycho = state of mind and soul of a person. Includes various aspects such as feelings, thoughts, beliefs and beliefs, attitudes, and values they have. Social = one's relationship with other people or the surrounding environment. Psychosocial support is defined as a process to facilitate the building of well-being or *being* to someone by using the resources that are in the individual himself and also the resources that exist in his community or social environment. The objectives of the psychosocial support carried out in Cianjur Regency are:

- Minimizing the physical, psychological, and social impact caused by a disaster or crisis
- Promote individual and societal well-being
- Encouraging the ability of individuals/communities to be able to adapt positively to changes that occur after a disaster or crisis
- Growing the ability of individuals/communities to survive and rise (resilience) with existing values and capacities. The community, in this case, includes all school members, families, the community around the child, the local government, and the media
- Restore/encourage the creation of positive relations in the community (support systems and relations between communities)

The psychosocial support provided by the PKM team from Putra Indonesia University and Jayabaya University is hoped to be a means for residents and children to deal with stress and form resilience (ability to rise) which will become an asset when they face challenges in life in the future.

For psychosocial support to run well and smoothly, an appropriate communication strategy is needed. One of the communication strategies implemented by the PKM team with the survivors

of the Cianjur disaster is empathetic communication. According to Winangsih & Martalena (2021), empathy is an important element in the communication process with others. The counseling process is an assistance through interaction (Amalia, 2019). Zulvianti (2012) states that empathy comes from Latin *in* and *pathos* which means feeling into. Generally, empathy is defined as a condition of how a person can feel himself as another person while remaining objective without including his own emotions. As a public servant, everyone must empathize, and be willing and able to feel the feelings, thoughts, attitudes, and behavior of others, without involving their own emotions. In practice, empathetic communication as expressed by Masturi (2010) must be carried out in an informative and persuasive manner.

METHOD

The method of implementation carried out in the framework of psychosocial support for disaster survivors in Cianjur Regency is carried out as follows:

- Inter-Institutional Cooperation: The Faculty of Communication Sciences, Putra Indonesia University in collaboration with the Jayabaya University Faculty of Psychology carried out a collaboration as outlined in a cooperation agreement between institutions in the implementation of higher education tridharma. One of the derivatives of the cooperation agreement is community service activities in the form of psychosocial assistance for victims of the Cianjur earthquake that occurred on November 21, 2022. In practice, lecturers at each university are accompanied by students as volunteers who assist psychosocial support services in Cianjur.
- Observation: Volunteers make observations in the areas affected by the disaster, especially to points in Cugenang District which are the main areas affected by the disaster. Then, the volunteers carried out an analysis of what psychological needs were needed by residents and children affected by the disaster.
- Planning for the PKM Program: After conducting a site survey and analyzing the psychological needs of the disaster survivors, discussions were then held between the PKM teams at Putra Indonesia University and Jayabaya University to design an appropriate PKM program according to the needs of each location.
- Implementation of the PKM Program: The PKM program plan is then implemented at each location point that has been determined.

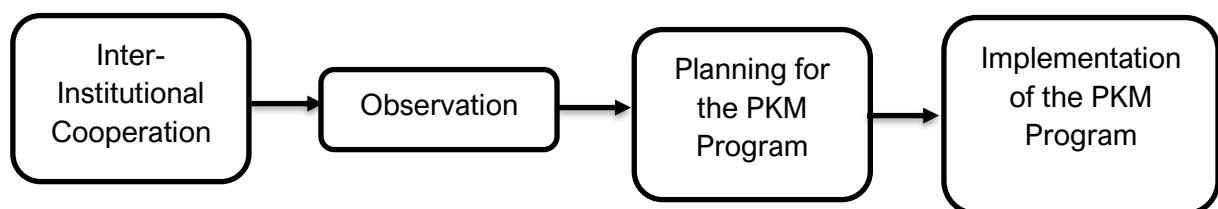


FIGURE 1. Flowchart of metode. Source: Autor's, 2023.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Community service activities (PKM) are carried out for 1 month, starting from December 12 2022 to January 12 2023. These activities are carried out at least in 2 affected sub-districts, namely the Cugenang sub-district and the Pacet sub-district.



FIGURE 2. Volunteers pose with children who have been survivors of a disaster in Cianjur Regency. Source: Author's document, 2023

There were at least four location points visited by the PKM Team, namely: Kp. Babakan, RT 02 RW 03, Nyalindung Village, Cugenang District, Cianjur Regency, with the following details:

TABLE 1. Locations for organizing PKM activities for the Putra Indonesia University Team and Jayabaya University. Source: Author's data processing

Location Point	Number of Refugees
Kp. Babakan, RT 02 RW 03, Nyalindung Village, Cugenang District, Cianjur Regency	100 adults and 20 children with an average age of 1-8 years
Ilmina Sarongge Vocational School Post, RT 3 RW 5, Ciputri Village, Pacet District, Cianjur Regency	100 adults and 21 children with an average age of 1-6 years
Kp. Kuta, RT 03 RW 06, Mangunkerta Village, Cugenang District, Cianjur Regency	70 adults and 30 children of elementary and junior high school age
Kp. Pasir Cina, RT 04/02 Cipendawa Village, Pacet District, Cianjur Regency	200 adults and 145 children with an average age of 3-10 years

The psychosocial support activities carried out for community members and children of disaster survivors vary, starting with PFA or psychological *first aid* or initial assistance in dealing with a disaster or crisis. PFA aims to help fulfill basic needs and reduce stress and psychological pressure experienced by humans in disaster situations by serving with care and sincerity. PFA also provides psychoeducation on how to manage stress reactions in disaster situations. These things will develop a feeling of power in refugees, and in turn, can support the development of crisis management abilities in people affected by disasters.




<p><i>Prepare</i> (Persiapan)</p>	<p>1. • Pelajari krisis/bencana 2. • Pelajari apa saja layanan dan bantuan yang tersedia 3. • Pelajari tentang keamanan lingkungan</p>
<p><i>Look</i> (Lihat)</p> 	<p>• Amati tentang keamanan • Amati korban/pengungsi yang tampak jelas membutuhkan pemenuhan kebutuhan dasar • Amati korban/pengungsi yang menunjukkan reaksi emosional menonjol/stress</p>
<p><i>Listen</i> (Dengar)</p> 	<p>• Buat kontak langsung dengan korban/pengungsi yang tampak membutuhkan bantuan • Tanya korban/pengungsi mengenai apa yang mereka butuhkan dan apa keprihatinan mereka • Dengarkan korban/pengungsi dan bantu mereka merasa tenang</p>
<p><i>Link</i> (Hubungkan)</p> 	<p>• Bantu korban/pengungsi untuk memenuhi kebutuhan dasarnya dan mampu mengakses layanan bantuan • Bantu orang menyelesaikan persoalan yang dihadapinya • Berikan informasi • Hubungkan korban/pengungsi dengan orang-orang yang dikasihani dan mengasihinya</p>

FIGURE 3. WHO PFA Principle: Look, Listen, Link - Look, Listen, Connect
(Source: Kompas.com)

Based on various studies, PFA has been proven to help human recovery after a disaster/crisis/trauma and its effects can be felt in the long term. This can happen because, people affected by disasters will be assisted to achieve:

- Feelings of security, connected to others, calm, and full of hope.
- Have access to social, physical, and emotional assistance.
- A feeling of being able to help oneself, as an individual and as a community.

By achieving these three things, it is hoped that humans can rebuild themselves and return to their lives after natural disasters/crises/trauma. PFA activities carried out by the PKM team at Putra Indonesia University and Jayabaya University include counseling, training, self-healing, cooking tutorials, makeup learning tutorials, and other educational games for children such as drawing, singing, dancing, and others. In implementing PFA, the PKM team at Putra Indonesia University and Jayabaya University implemented an empathetic communication strategy, including the following:

- Active and thorough listening: when interacting with disaster survivors, volunteers engage in listening activities (ie active and thorough listening). This means giving full attention to the communicant (opposite) who is telling the story. For example, by sitting side by side with disaster survivors, leaning forward, focusing on the conversation being held, and avoiding distractions.
- Egalitarian: When interacting with residents, volunteers are in an equal or egalitarian position. The volunteers sat cross-legged in a circle with the residents on a tarpaulin under the shelter of a makeshift tent. This is intended to make communication activities more "fluid" with residents.
- Caring: Volunteers focus their attention on disaster survivors so that disaster survivors feel cared for and valued.
- Eye contact: Eye contact is an important part of communicating. Involving eye contact with the person being spoken to, gives the impression and message to the person that he is serious about something being communicated. This sincerity will encourage survivors to pay

close attention to whatever is communicated. They also believe more because of the sincerity shown so that it will be easier for them to provide support give a "Yes" answer, or do whatever is recommended to them.

- **Smile:** Smile, according to Maxwell, is indeed the most powerful weapon that can be used to open communication. A genuine and warm smile from volunteers can overcome various barriers in communication (eg tension, suspicion, anger, jealousy). A smile is an indication of positive emotions towards the person you are communicating with. If the other person feels he really "likes" communicating with him, then it will be easier for that person to receive input, opinions, or solutions that are given to him.
- **Be neutral:** neutral means that volunteers provide descriptive responses without judging or evaluating
- **Touch:** a warm touch from volunteers to disaster survivors is also part of empathetic communication that provides support to disaster survivors.
- **Weak and Gentle:** The volunteers also spoke weakly and softly using a low intonation when interacting with disaster survivors. Adapting customs to Cianjur culture that is friendly and thick with courtesy.



FIGURE 4. Interaction between PKM volunteers and disaster survivors (Source: Author documentation, 2023)

Apart from interacting with residents affected by the disaster, volunteers from the PKM team at Putra Indonesia University and Jayabaya University also provided psychosocial support to children who were victims of the disaster with various educational games: including playing giant snakes and ladders, games, drawing, singing and dancing. The principles that are carried out by volunteers when playing with children who are survivors of disasters are as follows:

- The preparatory step is carried out by understanding the situation by gathering initial information about the child's psychological condition and building warm and friendly relationships so that the child being assisted feels comfortable and safe.
- Determine a play program that is tailored to the needs and abilities of children (paying attention to protective & inhibiting factors);
- Utilize the resources available to children, involve children's active participation, and do not discriminate against anyone from any background



FIGURE 5. Interaction between PKM volunteers and child survivors of disasters. (Source: Author documentation, 2023)

CONCLUSION

An earthquake with a magnitude of 5.6 occurred in Cianjur Regency resulting in deep sorrow for the people of Cianjur, one of which is a crisis. Responding to this, the PKM team at Putra Indonesia University and Jayabaya University provided psychosocial support by way of empathetic communication. The principles of empathetic communication include active listening, egalitarian, caring, eye contact, smiles, touches, and gentle words.

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