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Contribution of Counseling in Building Clients' Ability to Adapt to the Community in Correctional Centers

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze the contribution of counseling services at the Correctional Center (Bapas) in supporting the social reintegration process of clients. As an institution that plays a crucial role in guiding inmates after their release from prison, Bapas has a responsibility to ensure that clients are able to function socially, psychologically, and economically in society. Counseling programs at Bapas are aimed at helping clients understand the social and legal consequences of criminal acts, change their life orientation, and improve the social skills necessary to adapt to their new environment. This study uses a literature review method with secondary data as the primary basis. Secondary data were obtained from various written sources, such as books, scientific journals, research reports, census results, and articles. An evaluation of the program's effectiveness indicates that the success of the service is strongly influenced by internal and external factors, such as client readiness, family support, the competence of the community counselor, the availability of facilities, and the responsiveness of the social environment. The study also reveals that structured, professional, and ongoing counseling and supervision can reduce the risk of recidivism and increase the chances of successful social reintegration. Thus, Bapas services play a strategic role in rebuilding clients' lives and strengthening social security in the community.

Keywords: Counseling, Ability, Clients', Adaptation, Community

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, detention does not solely address legal violations. Community correctional institutions also provide rehabilitation services to enable former inmates to participate in society. At this point, the correctional subsystem, namely "Bapas" (Correctional Hall) or Community-Based Services, Defense, and Justice, is crucial as the primary institution facilitating the mentoring, supervision, and integration of correctional clients into society. Through structured assessments, counseling, and guidance, Bapas helps clients develop new mindsets, a better understanding and appreciation of social norms, and the ability to face societal challenges.

As a nation governed by the rule of law, Indonesia recognizes a system known as the Integrated Criminal Justice System. This system implements its functions and duties by integrating with existing legal institutions in Indonesia through several steps. There are at least four interconnected institutions in law enforcement: the police, the prosecutor's office, the courts, and correctional institutions. All four have their respective roles and responsibilities, but they collaborate to achieve justice, legal certainty, and the benefit of the law for the nation (Asmawati, 2022). In this regard, Bapas (Penitentiary Correctional Institution) is a unit of the correctional subsystem that becomes active after completing the formal criminal justice process, when clients participate in integration programs such as parole, conditional permits, and special parole programs for children.

As an institution focused on rehabilitation outside of prison, Bapas organizes several activities aimed at helping clients transition to life after detention. One important program is counseling, which aims to influence mindsets, increase social awareness, and motivate behavioral change. Counseling is also a communication process that helps clients understand their social roles and address potential stigma and social pressures. Social relationships between the community and offenders, along with social support from the government and family, play a crucial role in the diverse social rehabilitation process. Thus, the social environment is a benchmark for the success of the social rehabilitation process.

According to Hernawanti (2020) in the Sari Journal (2021), the correctional system in Indonesia has three main objectives: 1) Clients realize their mistakes; 2) Introspection on attitudes containing negative values; 3) Refrain from relapse so that inmates can integrate socially, live normally, and play an active role in development. The objectives of social rehabilitation, as outlined in Law Number 12 of 1995 regarding the Correctional System in Indonesia, emphasize the relationship between inmates and their social and economic lives, as well as their overall quality of life (Sari, 2021).

From a sociological perspective, counseling at Bapas is part of a social integration process aimed at redefining clients' identities and social orientations. In this process, clients are encouraged to adopt new perspectives, recognize the consequences of their past actions, and prepare for the challenges of reintegration. However, the potential impact of this counseling has not been fully evaluated because each client's social background, life history, and level of acceptance vary greatly. Therefore, research on the effectiveness of Bapas counseling in changing mindsets and preparing clients for reintegration into society is needed.

METHODS

This study uses a literature review method with secondary data as the primary basis. Secondary data were obtained from various written sources, such as books, scientific journals, research reports, census results, and articles discussing urbanization and social change in rural and urban areas. According to Andriani, library research or literature study is a series of activities that include collecting references, reviewing, recording, and processing research materials to obtain relevant information (Andriani, 2022).

Through this approach, researchers do not collect primary data or conduct direct observations in the field but rather gather information from available sources. This approach helps researchers understand patterns, trends, and related phenomena more comprehensively. By reviewing various pieces of literature, this study aims to illustrate how effective Bapas counseling is in changing mindsets and preparing clients to reintegrate into society. Furthermore, the literature review method provides space to compare previous research findings, identify research gaps, and strengthen the theoretical foundation used. The final results of this study are expected to provide a coherent, comprehensive, and easily understood overview. Therefore, this research can serve as a reference for future studies that examine the effectiveness of Bapas counseling in changing mindsets and preparing clients to return to society.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Guidance and Counseling in the Indonesian Correctional System

Rehabilitation of prisoners in Indonesia does not end after serving their sentence in a correctional institution (Lapas). Law Number 22 of 2022 concerning Corrections explicitly states that the rehabilitation process in Indonesia must be ongoing. The goal is for prisoners or rehabilitated correctional clients to become responsible members of society, understand

legal norms, and be able to fulfill their social roles. Articles 3 and 4 of Law Number 22 of 2022 explicitly state that rehabilitation has three dimensions: mental rehabilitation, social rehabilitation, and skills rehabilitation, which should be carried out not only within prison walls but also as clients enter the integration phase outside prison walls (Jano Trigan et al., 2024).

At this stage, the Community Guidance Center (Bapas) of the Correctional Institution performs a crucial function. In this regard, the Correctional Institution provides community services for correctional clients under the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, who are undergoing integration programs, such as Conditional Release (PB), Pre-Release (PBM), Conditional Release (PP), and childcare outside of correctional institutions. In accordance with Articles 7 and 16 of Law Number 22 of 2022, Bapas is tasked with providing guidance, supervision, mentoring, and assessing the development of clients in the community.

These duties and functions are further outlined in the Regulation of the Minister of Law and Human Rights Number 7 of 2022 concerning Community Mentors and Assistant Community Mentors, which outlines the following guidance:

1. Preparation of Litmas as a basis for decision-making;
2. Group guidance, which includes social education, character building, and legal awareness;
3. Individual counseling to overcome personal problems;
4. Counseling is a form of education that focuses on socio-psychological reasoning, motivation, and client adaptability.

Regulations explain that counseling is not merely a ceremonial activity or merely the provision and dissemination of information, but rather part of a social intervention aimed at changing behavior. In a correctional context, counseling is an interpersonal communication activity that facilitates clients' understanding of the consequences of past behavior, assists with future planning, and reconstructs social identity. Counseling also plays a role in providing and fostering motivation, helping clients become more self-aware, and empowering and strengthening their power over societal stigma (Fajri, 2024).

Therefore, counseling activities carried out by Bapas (the Correctional Institution) are crucial during social reintegration. Correctional clients require complex psychological and social management as they adapt to society, given that they often face various challenges, such as low family support, poor job skills, economic constraints, and stigma that can hinder the adaptation process. In this regard, counseling serves as a bridge between the client's internal changes and the complex social demands they must meet after release.

Development Stage

Several studies show that correctional training in Indonesia is generally divided into three stages, namely initial training, advanced training, and final training.

1. Initial Treatment
   The initial stage of counseling is crucial before any other program is provided to clients. At this stage, officers conduct risk assessments and initial interviews and map the needs of each client. According to Samara et al. (2024), this assessment process serves to understand the client's family background, psychological condition, factors that drive the client to commit crimes, and how likely the client is to repeat their actions in the future. This information helps officers develop an Individual Counseling Program (PPI) that suits each individual's needs. This initial stage determines whether the client needs legal education, personal counseling, skills training, or other psychosocial support. Counseling at the Bapas (Penitentiary Correctional Institution): the results of the initial assessment greatly determine the form of counseling to be provided, because changes

in mindset can only occur if the client's social and psychological conditions are understood from the outset.

2. Advanced Stage Advanced Treatment
   The advanced stage is the main part of the training process, emphasizing legal education, individual and group counseling services, job skills training, and moral and social development. At this stage, clients are not only provided with information or learning materials but are also encouraged to begin to understand themselves and realize their responsibilities in social life. (Karimah et al., 2024) explain that education at this stage is very influential in shaping clients' ways of thinking, as they are given space to reflect on past experiences, consider the consequences of their actions, and begin to re-establish more positive life goals. The regularly organized and ongoing programs at this phase help build character, improve self-control, and foster internal motivation to change into a better person.
3. Pre-Release
   This stage is the final step in the rehabilitation process, implemented when the client is deemed ready to return to society through integration programs, such as assimilation, pre-release leave, or parole. During the pre-release phase, correctional officers provide various forms of support aimed at helping clients adjust to social life outside the institution. Activities in this stage typically include providing mental readiness training, practical skills training for employment, reinforcing moral and social values, and providing an understanding of rights, obligations, and legal restrictions after release (Putri, 2023).

The Effectiveness of Bapas Counseling in Changing Clients' Mindsets

The primary objective of the Bapas Counseling service is to provide support to clients under supervision, particularly those undergoing social reintegration. In line with the function of case supervision services, 9 at Bapas is designed to help clients develop new, more adaptive mindsets and psychological constructs, fostering responsibility, and leading a more positive life direction. Counseling is not simply a one-way communication session or conversation but a professional process involving assessment, emotional support, moral guidance, and capacity building, enabling clients to manage their lives after returning to society (Pratidina & Muhammad, 2022). Based on various studies and social rehabilitation practices, counseling has been shown to have a significant impact on changing client behavior. Some of the key benefits of counseling at Bapas can be seen in the following aspects:

1. Understand the social and legal consequences.
   Through the counseling process, clients are encouraged to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the social and legal consequences of their criminal acts. This deepening encompasses not only formal punishments such as prison terms or other legal obligations but also the long-term impact on family relationships, social reputation, and future opportunities. Counseling helps clients see that criminal acts do not stand alone but rather create a domino effect that can impact the trust of others, the family's economic stability, and social acceptance after release. A deeper understanding of these consequences is expected to foster a sense of responsibility, healthy remorse, and intrinsic motivation to improve. At this stage, counseling serves as a space for moral reflection, encouraging clients to recognize that behavioral change is part of restoring social relationships damaged by their actions (Julizar Sanjaya & Priyatmono, 2024).

2. Change your perspective on the future.
   Counseling also plays a crucial role in helping clients reshape their perspective on the future. Many clients experience despair, lack of confidence, or a sense of directionlessness after serving their sentences. Through counseling, they are guided to identify their potential, interests, and the positive opportunities that remain achievable. Clients are encouraged to formulate concrete, realistic, and measurable life goals, such as career planning, improving family relationships, choosing a healthy social circle, or developing specific skills. This process helps clients develop a clear future orientation so they are less easily tempted to return to high-risk environments and behaviors. By having a more focused life vision, clients can develop a strong commitment to living a more stable, productive, and normative life (Soliha & A., 2024).
3. Improve social skills
   In counseling sessions, both individual and group, clients are given the opportunity to hone various social skills essential to the reintegration process. They learn how to communicate assertively, express emotions nonviolently, and resolve conflicts with a more mature and constructive approach. These skills are crucial, given that many clients are accustomed to dealing with problems impulsively or aggressively. Furthermore, group counseling provides a space for clients to practice interacting in real-life social situations, share experiences, and learn from group dynamics. Developing social skills helps them adjust more easily when returning to their families, the workplace, and the wider community (Wiliyanto & Setiawan, 2025). With these skills, clients have a greater opportunity to build positive relationships and reduce the potential for new conflicts.
4. Reduce the tendency for recidivism.
   Various studies have shown that effective counseling significantly reduces the risk of recidivism. (Sunariyah et al., 2025), for example, explains that interpersonal communication-based counseling can help clients improve their mindsets, develop more mature decision-making mechanisms, and enhance their coping skills in the face of social pressure or risky situations. Through counseling, clients are taught to recognize triggers for criminal behavior, develop strategies to avoid situations that could lead to relapse, and enhance their sense of self-control. Gradually, clients learn to take responsibility for their life choices, significantly reducing the potential for repeating past mistakes. Thus, counseling becomes a key instrument in creating sustainable social reintegration.

However, the effectiveness of counseling at Bapas (Village Counselors) does not stand alone but is heavily influenced by various internal and external conditions that shape the client's life context. Counseling, no matter how structured, will not achieve optimal results without environmental support, mental readiness, and professional competence from all parties involved.

Several important factors determining the success of supervision and counseling include:

1. Client readiness
   Internal readiness is the primary foundation of behavioral change. Counseling will be more effective when clients have intrinsic motivation, a willingness to be open, and an awareness of self-improvement. Clients who still resist change or have not accepted responsibility for their actions tend to show slow progress. Therefore, the initial stages of counseling are often focused on building trust and fostering the client's willingness to actively participate in the rehabilitation process. In this regard, counselors need to understand the dynamics of the client's feelings, such as shame, fear of rejection, or trauma, which may hinder the process of self-disclosure (Galang et al., 2024).

2. Family support
   The family environment is one of the most influential external factors in the success of the counseling and social reintegration process. Families that are able to provide acceptance without stigma, provide space for dialogue, and support the client's emotional recovery act as a "safety net" that fosters psychosocial stability. Conversely, families experiencing conflict, rejection, or indifference can become new stressors for clients, slowing down positive change. Therefore, Bapas often involve families in family counseling sessions to build healthy communication and strengthen support (Thamrin & Lestari, 2023).
3. Community Guidance (PK) Competency
   Counselors play a crucial role as they are the primary companions on clients' journeys toward social reintegration. The success of counseling is greatly influenced by the counselor's ability to build empathetic professional relationships, conduct comprehensive assessments, and design interventions tailored to the client's individual needs. Furthermore, interpersonal communication skills, crisis management, and knowledge of behavior change theory are crucial to the quality of the counseling process. Competent counselors are capable of facilitating change, not just supervising (Putri, 2023).
4. Availability of extension facilities
   The effectiveness of counseling is also determined by the supporting facilities and infrastructure. A safe, private, and comfortable counseling environment will help clients feel more at ease and willing to open up. In addition to an appropriate counseling space, the availability of psychosocial assessment tools, training modules, educational media, and supporting programs such as life skills training are essential components. The lack of facilities often hinders or subsides the counseling process (Sari, 2021).
5. The social environment to which the client returns
   After leaving prison, clients must re-engage with the community—and the community's response is crucial to successful reintegration. An inclusive environment that accepts clients without stigma and provides opportunities for employment or social contribution will accelerate the adaptation process. Conversely, if the community continues to stigmatize, discriminate against, or reject clients, this can lead to psychological distress, triggering stress and frustration and even increasing the likelihood of recidivism. Therefore, community education and strengthening social networks are crucial factors that cannot be ignored (Jano Trigan et al., 2024).

Counseling as Preparation for Social Reintegration

Supervision at the Correctional Institution (Bapas) serves not only as a means of conveying administrative information but also as a crucial strategy in the reintegration process, focusing on behavioral change and client social adjustment. In the modern correctional context, supervision is no longer viewed solely as oversight but rather as a mentoring process that helps clients establish new, healthier, more productive lifestyles that align with societal norms. From a sociological perspective, this supervision process can be explained through several relevant theoretical concepts (Julizar Sanjaya & Priyatmono, 2024).

Breaking the Criminal Stigma Against Clients Through Counseling

From the perspective of labeling theory, individuals who have been involved in criminal activity are often given a persistent social label or stigma, such as "ex-convict" or "criminal offender." This label appears not only verbally but also in societal attitudes, such as suspicion, rejection, or restrictions on employment and social opportunities. This stigma significantly impacts clients' life journeys, as they face social barriers even after serving their

sentences. In many cases, this negative label can actually make individuals feel isolated and worthless, ultimately reinforcing a negative self-identity.

Supervision at Bapas (Civic Correctional Institution) serves to break this cycle of stigma by providing systematic support that helps clients build new, healthier, and more constructive identities. Through counseling and coaching sessions, Community Counselors (PKs) help clients understand that their identities are not solely defined by past mistakes. Education on stigma management is provided to raise awareness that social labels can be addressed and do not have to stick forever. Clients are taught strategies for dealing with stereotypes, such as how to responsibly explain their past, how to demonstrate positive change, and how to respond to rejection without reverting to old behavior patterns.

Furthermore, the supervision process helps clients rebuild the self-confidence often lost due to criminal experience. PK emphasizes that a person's life journey can change through consistent choices and actions, not the judgments of others. With this support, clients begin to develop a growth-oriented personal identity, such as becoming a responsible worker, a better family member, or a contributing individual to their community.

Removing or reducing the impact of social labels is not only crucial for clients' psychological processes but also lays the foundation for successful social reintegration. When clients are able to see themselves as individuals with the potential for change, their motivation to maintain positive behaviors is strengthened. Supervision at the Penitentiary Supervisory Agency (Bapas) plays a crucial role as a mechanism for identity restoration, ensuring clients are not trapped by past stigmas and can rebuild their lives with greater confidence and direction (Soliha & A., 2024).

Building Clients' Self and Social Environment Through Socially Meaningful Interactions

Supervision can also be explained from a sociological perspective through symbolic interactionism, a theory that emphasizes that a person's behavior, way of thinking, and identity are formed through social interaction and the interpretation of meaning that arises from that interaction. In the context of Bapas, the relationship between the client and the Community Guidance Officer (PK) is not simply a formal relationship between the officer and the individual being supervised but rather a meaningful communication process. Every conversation, piece of advice, and feedback provided by the PK becomes a symbol or social message that is interpreted by the client in building a new understanding of themselves and their environment.

Through consistent interactions, clients have the opportunity to reinterpret their life experiences. Past experiences, including mistakes, are no longer viewed solely as permanent failures but as part of a learning process that can serve as a foundation for self-improvement. Conversations with a PK, whether about personal issues, family dynamics, or social challenges, help clients revisit past situations from a more mature and reflective perspective.

Furthermore, these interactions also help shape clients' understanding of their relationships with their families. Through PK-guided discussions, clients are encouraged to understand the role of the family as a support system and the importance of improving communication and emotional relationships with family members. Hope for the future is formed through a dialogue process that gradually builds a new awareness of more positive life choices.

During the supervision process, the PK not only provides information but also serves as a symbolic figure representing certain social values, such as discipline, hard work, caring, and responsibility. Seeing the PK as a role model helps clients internalize these values, leading to gradual behavioral changes. Repeated interactions allow clients to refine their

interpretation of situations, understand the consequences of their actions, and build internal motivation for change (Sunariyah et al., 2025).

Thus, supervision becomes a crucial space for dialogue, as it is through these conversations and interactions that clients experience a transformation of meaning. They no longer view themselves as troubled individuals but as individuals undergoing the process of forming a new identity. This process encourages clients to develop a more responsible attitude, better manage their emotions, and be better prepared to face social demands upon their return to society.

Social Learning as a Process of Changing Client Behavior

Group-based supervision, such as regular discussions, sharing sessions, or collaborative coaching, is a highly effective method for changing client behavior. In group settings, clients not only receive guidance from Community Counselors (PK), but also learn from the real-life experiences of fellow clients with similar backgrounds and life challenges. When one client shares a successful experience in overcoming social pressures or economic challenges, it provides inspiration and concrete examples of strategies others can emulate. Conversely, stories of repeated failures or mistakes also serve as warnings so others can avoid repeating similar behavior patterns.

In this context, the learning process takes place through observation, where clients observe the behavior, attitudes, and responses of others and then assess which can be applied to their own lives. They learn how to manage emotions, how to deal with family conflict, how to confidently seek employment, or how to reject invitations from the environment that could potentially trigger relapse into criminal behavior. The interactions created within the group foster a sense of belonging, which is crucial for clients who often experience feelings of isolation after leaving prison.

Social Learning Theory asserts that behavioral change is more easily achieved when a person has a role model or role models to emulate. In group activities, these role models come not only from the counselor but also from peers undergoing the same mentoring process. This strengthens clients' internal motivation because they feel they are not struggling alone and see evidence that change is possible and realistic.

Through an understanding of these various theories, labeling, symbolic interactionism, and social learning can be seen as a highly strategic component of the social reintegration process. Supervision encompasses more than just administrative aspects but also encompasses behavioral development, mindset improvement, and strengthening clients' social capacities to lead more stable lives.

In practice, supervision helps clients prepare to return to functioning as productive members of society. They learn to navigate social stigma, practice communication skills for job searches, improve relationships with family, and establish daily routines that support an orderly and independent life. When supervision is conducted consistently, professionally, and purposefully, clients' chances of successful social reintegration significantly increase. This also means that the potential for recidivism can be reduced, enabling clients to live safer, more stable, and more productive lives in society (Thamrin & Lestari, 2023).

Comprehensive Evaluation of Counseling Program for Clients

Evaluation of program effectiveness is a crucial component in ensuring that the entire series of coaching, counseling, and supervision provided by the Correctional Facility (Bapas) truly produces tangible changes for clients. This evaluation is not merely an administrative process but also a quality control mechanism that allows the Correctional Facility (Bapas) to determine the extent to which the interventions provided have addressed client needs and supported the goal of social reintegration. Through systematic evaluation, the Correctional

Facility (Bapas) can also identify potential obstacles that may have gone undetected in the initial stages of coaching, allowing various program adjustments to be made more precisely and measurably.

At this stage, assessment is conducted through a process of continuous monitoring and a comprehensive review of the client's progress. The evaluation encompasses several aspects, including behavioral development, increased psychological readiness, social skills, and the client's level of compliance with the established coaching plan. Furthermore, assessments are conducted periodically through interviews, observations of client interactions, and the use of psychosocial instruments to measure stress levels, motivation, and self-control. This multimethod approach ensures that evaluation results do not rely solely on a single indicator but rather reflect the client's condition more holistically and objectively.

Quantitative indicators also play a crucial role in evaluation, such as recidivism rates, client employment success, community involvement, discipline levels during the program, and reductions in conflict or violations during the guidance period. These data provide an objective picture of the program's effectiveness in reducing the risk of clients reoffending. The use of quantitative data also helps Bapas (the correctional officer) compare performance across periods, allowing for more accurate analysis of success and failure trends.

In addition to client assessments, the evaluation also targets the quality of service providers, namely Community Guidance Officers (PK) and other support systems. PK performance is measured by their ability to conduct targeted assessments, provide interventions tailored to client needs, and maintain positive professional relationships. Facilities evaluation is also crucial, as comfortable counseling spaces, adequate learning resources, and sufficient budget support can strengthen the rehabilitation process. Organizational factors such as internal coordination, effective SOPs, and consistent program implementation are also considered to ensure service quality is maintained.

Furthermore, the evaluation also considers external factors, such as the family and community's response to the client's presence after the program is implemented. If the family is able to provide a strong support system and the community demonstrates an inclusive attitude, the program's outcomes are typically more effective. Conversely, if the community's response tends to be discriminatory, the client's risk of reintegration failure is higher.

At this stage, officers also assess the consistency of the client's behavior when interacting outside the Bapas environment as an indicator of social readiness. Evaluations are conducted on an ongoing basis to ensure that behavioral changes are truly stable and not temporary. Furthermore, input from relevant parties, such as community leaders or village officials, is an important consideration in determining the continuation of guidance. This external information helps Bapas validate the results of internal evaluations, ensuring a more accurate and comprehensive final decision.

Through this comprehensive evaluation, Bapas can identify which parts of the program are running optimally and which areas need improvement. Evaluation findings are used to formulate recommendations, strengthen policies, increase the capacity of community counselors, and develop intervention methods to be more adaptive to client needs. Thus, evaluating program effectiveness is not merely a means of oversight but also a crucial foundation for building a more professional, humane, and successful social reintegration-oriented model for clients.

CONCLUSION

Counseling services at Correctional Institutions (Bapas) play a strategic role in clients' social reintegration, particularly in helping them rebuild their mindset, self-identity, and readiness to function productively in society. This is accomplished through an interactive

communication process, where counselors help clients understand the social and legal consequences of past crimes. Furthermore, they help shape the client's new identity. The influence of internal factors, including mental readiness, motivation to change, and the client's willingness to be open to the counseling process, are crucial elements in determining success. Meanwhile, external factors such as family support, community acceptance, the professional competence of Community Counselors, and the availability of supporting facilities play a significant role in strengthening counseling outcomes. This structured and consistent counseling program has been proven to reduce the risk of recidivism, as clients receive training in social skills, mental readiness, and the ability to make wiser decisions upon their return to society. This increases clients' chances of living independently and productively and avoiding criminal behavior.

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