

## Therapeutic Communication for Healing Psychological Trauma Experienced by Victims of Sexual Violence: A Literature Review

Enggal Hadi Kurniyawan<sup>1</sup>, Chicha Amilia Putri<sup>1</sup>, Iftita Khoiril Waroh<sup>1</sup>, Nadya Anfa Askiya Irham<sup>1</sup>, Dicky Endrian Kurniawan<sup>1</sup>, Kholid Rosyidi Muhammad Nur<sup>1</sup>, Alfid Tri Afandi<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Nursing, Universitas Jember, Indonesia

Correspondence should be addressed to:  
Enggal Hadi Kurniyawan  
[enggalhadi.psik@unej.ac.id](mailto:enggalhadi.psik@unej.ac.id)

### Abstract:

Victims of sexual violence have psychological trauma. In handling victims of sexual violence, a holistic approach needs to be taken to overcome the trauma experienced. The holistic approach is carried out using therapeutic communication. Therapeutic communication is used to support the healing process in victims of sexual violence. This research aims to find out about therapeutic communication strategies that can be applied to heal psychological trauma in victims of sexual violence. This research was conducted using a literature review by searching through three databases (Google Scholar, PubMed, and Science Direct). The search used several keywords in English and Indonesian. The literature review research shows that there are several stages in therapeutic communication for victims of sexual violence, namely pre-interaction, introduction, work, and termination. In addition to these four stages, there are three stages in therapeutic communication used in trauma recovery: pre-counseling, counseling process, and post-counseling stages. The literature study was conducted with ten articles that discuss therapeutic communication in victims of sexual violence; there are three main discussions, namely, the first discusses the stages of therapeutic communication, the second discusses the techniques that can be applied in conducting therapeutic communication, and the last discusses the benefits obtained by applying therapeutic communication in handling victims of sexual violence. From the literature review study conducted, the application of therapeutic communication to victims of sexual violence has proven to help handle the healing of psychological trauma experienced by victims of sexual violence.

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## INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence is any act of degrading and attacking a person's body, sexual desires, and reproductive functions with violence or threats of violence, either psychologically or against a person's will and in a condition where the person is unable to give consent in a free state that utilizes the vulnerability of inequality, or dependence of a person based on gender which can result in physical, psychological, sexual suffering or misery, economic, social and cultural losses (Uyun et al., 2022). The prevalence of sexual violence in 2021 decreased when compared to 2016, which at that time reached 33.4%, a decrease in 2021 to 26.1%. It can be seen that from the perspective of place of residence, most physical and sexual violence tends to be experienced more in urban areas when compared to rural areas (Dhini, 2021).

Sexual violence is a severe problem that is not only physically harmful but can have a psychological impact on victims. This problem requires a holistic approach to overcome the trauma

they experience. One of them is the application of therapeutic communication to victims of sexual violence. Therapeutic communication is carried out consciously with a purpose, and activities are centered on the patient's healing process (Hananah et al., 2021).

Therapeutic communication is one of the interpersonal communication that focuses on psychological trauma recovery. Interpersonal communication is the most effective communication because it is carried out directly between the communicator and the communicant so that they can influence each other (Hananah et al., 2021). Therapeutic communication is planned consciously and purposefully, and its activities are focused on the patient's recovery. Nurses with therapeutic communication skills will quickly build trust with patients, prevent illegal problems, provide professional satisfaction in nursing services, and improve the image of the nursing profession and the hospital (Nur et al., 2023).

Nursing is a type of professional service that is an important part of health care based on nursing knowledge and skills. Nursing is the activity of providing care to individuals, families, groups, or communities, both in sickness and health. As an integral part of the health care system, nursing includes health promotion, disease prevention, and the care of physically ill, mentally ill, and disabled people of all ages in all health services and other community settings (ICN, 2023). The purpose of this literature review research is to explore the role of therapeutic communication in supporting the healing process of victims of sexual violence and to identify how effective the use of therapeutic communication is for victims of sexual violence.

## METHOD

The method used in this research is a literature review. The literature search was conducted through three databases: Google Scholar, PubMed, and Science Direct. The search was conducted using several keywords in English and Indonesian. The literature search in English used the keywords "Therapeutic" OR "Communication" OR "Therapeutic Communication" AND "Sex Offense" OR "Sexual Violence" OR "Sexual Abuse" OR "Sexual Traumas". While the search with literature in Indonesian used the keywords "Komunikasi Terapeutik" AND "Korban Kekerasan Seksual" OR "Korban Pemerkosaan" OR "Korban Pelecehan Seksual". The literature search process begins with the identification of keywords that have been determined. The search results conducted by the keywords obtained 7.437 appropriate literature. Inclusion criteria in the literature search were selected based on the year of publication from 2018-2023. Exclusion criteria were selected based on the literature type, other than journals. Based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 1.939 literatures met the criteria. Furthermore, literature was selected based on the title and discussion of the literature. Ten kinds of literature fit the research criteria and could be continued to the analysis step.

## RESULT

Several journals explain how therapeutic communication techniques are applied to individuals with sexual violence problems. A form of sexual violence is any act in the form of forcing sexual relations unnaturally, both incestuous and incestuous (Hananah et al., 2021). In this case, individuals who receive sexual violence need assistance from counselors so that excessive trauma does not arise. One of the ways that mentoring can be done is to use communication. According to research by Hananah et al. (2021), Juwita et al. (2022), and Wahyuningsih (2022), communication is the most effective assistance that can be done so that victims can open up and tell stories. Communication is carried out so that the victim does not harbor his feelings and

reduces the psychological burden he feels. Communication techniques carried out in assisting victims of sexual violence are therapeutic communication techniques. Therapeutic communication is communication used to aid the healing process (Wahyuningsih, 2022).

In therapeutic communication, counselors can communicate in both verbal and non-verbal ways. Verbal attitude provides words used as questions, suggestions, and prohibitions. Nonverbal is an action regarding appearance and body expressions such as silence, listening, and smiling. Verbal and nonverbal attitudes will minimize fear, help victims to dare to open up, and help them recover from trauma (Orwela, 2022)

In the implementation of therapeutic communication for victims of sexual violence, each counselor in several studies Hannah et al., (2021); Juwita et al., (2022) and Wahyuningsih (2022) uses four stages, namely pre-interaction, introduction, work, and termination. The pre-interaction phase of the counselor identifies and seeks information about the victim and devises strategies to communicate with the victim. After the preparation has been completed, the counselor enters the orientation stage, namely introducing themselves, fostering trusting relationships, exploring thoughts, and formulating goals (Hananah et al., 2021). The counselor's work stage begins with communicating with the victim by sitting together, carrying out active communication, and digging deeper into the victim's problem (Herawati, 2022). Entering the termination stage, the counselor has the decision to choose whether the meeting and communication will continue another day or end. The meeting will continue another day if the communication process does not run smoothly, such as victims who are quiet, embarrassed, do not want to tell, and so on. The meeting will end if the counselor reaches the victim, does not encounter traumatic symptoms when communicating, already has a plan for the next life, and is completely healed (Wahyuningsih, 2022). In therapeutic communication, creating a pleasant environment must be taken care of. A pleasant environment will create a supportive atmosphere when the counselor dialogues with the victim. A supportive environment can be a safe, warm, quiet, and quiet room, a room of privacy and no people who can pass by, and a soundproof room (Moreira & Costa, 2021)

The psychologist's demands and readiness in the mentoring process is a phenomenon of conscious experience regarding how he must be able to adjust the planning, preparation, and implementation of dynamic therapeutic communication because he is faced with various characters and reactions of different victims (Rosyana & Yuningsih, 2023). The communication strategy carried out to empower children and women as victims of violence and sexual harassment takes into account five components, namely the strategy for selecting communicators/roles, the strategy for determining messages, the strategy for selecting media, the strategy for selecting audiences, and the resulting impact (Faisal et al., 2023).

In several studies analyzing three different therapeutic approaches that marriage counselors might use, families and couples were educated about the various treatment options for sexually abused adolescents. This approach includes trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy (Devlin et al., 2019). In therapeutic communication, the companion provides solutions for the victim because the essence of therapeutic communication is to guide the patient in realizing his desires and what is needed to solve problems and achieve goals (Tiara & Pratiwi, 2018).

Table 1. Results of Literature Review

ID Number	Author and Journal Identity	Journal Title	Objective	Population and Sample	Method	Summary of Results
A1	Author: Herawati.  Journal Identity: The Commerciu m/2022/Vol 5 (2): 100-108.	Counselor therapeutic communication towards children with sexual violence and incest	Therapeutic communication for children who have experienced sexual violence	PPA data shows that the father committed 4 out of 7 incest cases that occurred in Madiun Regency.	Using the case study method through a qualitative descriptive approach, as well as collecting data through interviews and observation	Counselor therapeutic communication in cultivating trauma in children who are victims of incest sexual violence is carried out through 4 stages, namely assessment, observation, performance, and termination, which supports this process by involving non-formal messages such as clothing arrangement, transportation, sitting position, eye contact, and touch.
A2	Author: Hananah, et al.  Journal Identity: Journal of communication sciences/2021/vol 9 (1): 271-284	Therapeutic Communication Process In Accompanying Child Victims Of Sexual At UPTD PPA SAMARINDA CITY	Therapeutic communication in patients with sexual violence	children who experience sexual violence	Descriptive qualitative research is where the researcher describes research results related to facts.	The therapeutic communication process has four stages: pre-interaction, orientation, work, and termination. Positive results were obtained from the assistance in the therapeutic communication process for victims. However, there were still shortcomings in the pre-interaction stage, namely, paying attention to the victim's background, ethnicity, race, economy, and culture.
A3	Author: Juwita et al.  Journal Identity: Journal Aristo (Social, Politic, Humaniora) /2022/Vol. 10 (1): 149 - 166.	Therapeutic Communication For Children Victims of Sexual Violence In Citra Tepian-Samarinda.	Therapeutic communication in children with sexual violence.	Two psychologists and one companion at the UPTD PPA Citra Tepian Kota Samarinda	Descriptive qualitative approach.	Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded the four stages in the therapeutic communication process that are important for children of sexual violence victim in healing their trauma that are, pre-interaction, orientation, problem-solving, and termination stage.
A4	Author: Wahyuning sih.  Journal Identity:	Counselor's therapeutic communication in assisting victims of	Therapeutic communication mentoring on male victims of	Boy victims of sexual violence at UPTD PPA Sidoarjo.	Constructivism paradigm with a qualitative research type, with a	Therapeutic communication carried out by the counselor has several stages: preparation, introduction, assistance, and the end of assistance. Therapeutic

	Jurnal Komunikasi Profesional. 2022, Vol.6 (5): 435-457.	sexual violence against boys	sexual violence.		case study approach.	communication techniques carried out by counselors consist of verbal, nonverbal, and entertainment or relaxation techniques.
A5	Author: Orwela.  Journal Identity: Jurnal Studi Gender. Volume 15, Number 2, 2022. (PP: 225-254)	Therapeutic Communication in Trauma Recovery for Students Surviving Sexual Violence	The use of therapeutic communication in student trauma recovery of sexual assault victims	students from several universities and different cases of sexual violence they experienced	Qualitative research used a multi-case study approach	The therapeutic communication process in trauma recovery of students surviving sexual violence is divided into 3 stages: the pre-counseling stage, the counseling process, and post-counseling.
A6	Author: Devlin et al.  Journal Identity: Family Journal, 27(4), 359–365.	Therapeutic Practices for Sexually Abused Children and Adolescents: Resources for Marriage, Family, and Couples' Counselors	Therapeutic Practices for Sexually Abused Children and Adolescents	Children who experience sexual abuse	Interviews were obtained in the context of mixed methods that were conducted with 38 adult female survivors of childhood sexual abuse.	Three different therapeutic approaches family counselors may use for working with sexually abused children and adolescents. These approaches include trauma-focused-cognitive behavioral therapy, play therapy and expressive art therapy, eye movement and desensitization, and reprocessing therapy.
A7	Author: Moreira & Costa.  Journal Identity: Revista Brasileira de Psicodrama , 29(1), 16–25.	Psychosocial Intervention In Sexual Violence Against Children: Reflexivity And Psychodramatic Resource	Discusses psychosocial interventions for child sexual abuse	13 girls who were victims of sexual violence perpetrated by teenagers with whom they were closely related	Research methods from two different studies, namely action research and psychosocial intervention..	This study examines psychosocial interventions in child sexual abuse with a focus on reflexivity and the use of dramatization as a psychodramatic resource. The study used observation of two group sessions and thematic analysis methods.
A8	Author: Dulwahab et al. Journal Identity: Jurnal Kajian Komunikasi /Vol. 8(1): 72-84.	Therapeutic Communication Strategies in the Treatment of Sexual Assault Victims.	Therapeutic communication in individual victims of sexual abuse.	Twenty-eight children in Ciseureuh Village, West Cijambu Village.	Case study (Single Case) using interview, observation, and literature study techniques.	The results showed that the therapeutic communication strategy carried out for victims of sexual violence used three stages, namely Pre-assistance, Assistance, and Post-assistance. Each stage has a different mechanism in the implementation process.
A9	Author:	The Process	Therapeutic	Three	Descriptive	This research discusses



	Tiara & Pratiwi.	of Assistance Through Therapeutic Communication as an Effort to Psychological Recovery for Rape Victims	communication for psychological recovery of rape victims	respondents of undergraduate law graduates who participated in the Legal Resource Center for Gender Justice and Human Rights activities	Qualitative Research	therapeutic communication assistance to victims of sexual violence, which passes through four stages of therapeutic communication carried out by LRC-KJHAM respondents. LRC-KJHAM is a mentoring organization through therapeutic communication that helps restore the psychological impact on women victims of sexual violence.
A10	Author: Faisal et al.  Journal Identity: International Journal of Research and Review/Vol. 10 (2): 149-155.	Communication Strategies of Regional Technical Implementation Unit of Children and Women Empowerment Integrated Service Center (UPTD P2TP2A) in Accompanying and Dealing with the Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse of Children	Therapeutic communication with child and female victims of sexual violence and abuse.	The research subjects in the study amounted to 5 people, namely the Head of UPTD P2TP2A, the Head of the Service Section, the Head of the Coordination and Cooperation Section, the Legal Counsel Expert Staff, and the Mediator.	Qualitative and Descriptive Approach.	The results of this study indicate that there are five strategies carried out by UPTD P2TP2A, namely the communicator selection strategy/ communicator role, message determination strategy, media selection strategy, audience selection strategy, and monitoring the effects caused.

## DISCUSSION

According to Hananah et al. (2021), there are four stages of therapeutic communication: pre-interaction, orientation, work, and termination. The termination stage is divided into 2: temporary and final. The stages of therapeutic communication discussed are generally stages, while Herawati (2022) discusses the stages of therapeutic communication carried out by counselors.

According to Hananah et al. (2021), there are four stages of therapeutic communication: pre-interaction, orientation, work, and termination. The termination stage is divided into 2: temporary and final. The stages of therapeutic communication discussed are generally stages, while Herawati, (2022) discusses the stages of therapeutic communication carried out by counselors.

Juwita et al. (2022) argues that the stages of therapeutic communication that are important for child victims of sexual violence to heal their trauma include the pre-interaction stage, the orientation stage, the problem-solving stage, and the final termination stage. This opinion is very different from that conveyed by (Herawati, 2022). Psychologists communicate to collect various

kinds of information with a certain strategy, namely positioning themselves as friends of the victim. After collecting much information, the psychologist will monitor the child's development.

Wahyuningsih (2022) also discusses therapeutic communication with child victims of sexual violence, only more focused on boys. Therapeutic communication is carried out by counselors in line with the opinion of Herawati, (2022). There are also four stages of therapeutic communication, but the stages are different. The stages are the preparation stage, introduction, assistance, and final assistance, which consists of temporary assistance and final assistance. In addition, there are techniques used by counselors, namely verbal and nonverbal techniques and entertainment or relaxation.

According to Orwela (2022), the stages of therapeutic communication are pre-counseling, counseling, and post-counseling, which means this communication is more appropriate for psychologists than nurses. In the pre-counseling stage, the victim is helped to dare to talk about the problem of sexual violence that is being experienced. Furthermore, in the counseling stage, the victim continues to tell her problems. After that, in the post-counseling stage, the victim will recover from the trauma. The communication carried out is more victims who reveal rather than psychologists. This opinion is very different from the stages of therapeutic communication described by (Hananah et al., 2021).

Devlin et al. (2019) discussed related journals that also have similarities in discussing the stages of conducting therapeutic communication in healing trauma in children using three therapeutic approaches; where the therapeutic approach can also include therapies such as trauma-focused cognitive behavior, in addition to therapies such as play and expressive arts therapy, through eye movements and desensitization and reprocessing therapy. According to Orwela (2022), the stages in therapeutic communication are divided into three stages: the first pre-counseling stage, the counseling process stage, and the post-counseling stage.

Moreira & Costa (2021) explain that with play therapy using communication and interpretation, the play has several materials that reveal reflexivity as a source for expanding understanding of adverse situations and verbalization metaphors. The therapeutic approach to sexual violence requires a relationship between various contexts of social assistance, justice, and psychology to achieve the goals of social and family reorganization and psychological change for victims. According to Devlin et al. (2019), similarities with what is said discuss trauma. The stages of therapeutic communication are discussed in three stages, starting at the pre-counseling stage, the counseling process stage, and the post-counseling stage.

According to Dulwahab et al. (2020), explaining the stages of therapeutic communication, the first stage is referred to as the pre-assistance stage, which is carried out by extracting as much information as possible about the victim's condition. The excavation is carried out to the family and parties who can provide accurate information, and after collecting the data, the victim's classification is carried out. The second is the assistance stage, and the third is the post-assistance stage. This is almost the same as what was said by Moreira and Costa (2021), which also discusses the stages and strategies in therapeutic communication through three stages, namely the pre-counseling stage, the counseling process stage, and the post-counseling stage.

Tiara and Pratiwi (2018) argue that assistance or counseling is a necessity for victims of violence. In addition, the stages of communication are divided into five: the first interaction stage, the introduction stage, the orientation stage, the work stage, and the termination stage. This is similar to what Juwita et al. (2022) said, discussing only three stages: the orientation stage, problem-solving stage, stage, and termination or final stage, which is usually called the termination stage.

Faisal et al. (2023) said that there are differences with other journals, which generally only have four or three in terms of strategies, techniques, or methods used in conducting therapeutic communication. Besides that, there are also five strategies carried out by the UPTD P2TP2A of North Sumatra city, namely strategies in selecting communicators or the role of communicators, strategies in determining messages, strategies in selecting media, strategies in selecting audiences, and strategies for monitoring the impact caused.

## CONCLUSION

The application of therapeutic communication to victims of sexual violence is proven to help handle the healing of psychological trauma experienced by victims of sexual violence. Therapeutic communication is used in counseling by counselors or psychologists. In counseling, therapeutic communication is used in four stages: pre-counseling, counseling, and post-counseling. Therapeutic communication carried out in handling psychological trauma in victims of sexual violence can help reduce cognitive dissonance and help victims of sexual violence express feelings or problems experienced by victims.

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