

# **Gestalt Counseling Reduces Anxiety After Failed to Move On**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This study departs from the problems of individuals who experience anxiety disorders after failing to move on. Failure in the process of moving on causes the counselee to be in a difficult condition to focus on doing work, often has difficulty finding it, is afraid to meet new people (of the opposite sex), withdraws from social life. The purpose of this study was to develop forms of counseling in gestalt counseling to anxiety in individuals who experience anxiety after failing to move on. This research was conducted with 9 and each session has a span of 1 week. The COVID-19 pandemic does not become a barrier for Gestalt counseling practitioners in carrying out their duties by still following the rules and carrying out Health protocols. The method used in this research is single-subject research (SSR) with an A-B-A design. the subject in this study was an individual who experienced an anxiety disorder after failing to move on. Methods of collecting data using anxiety questionnaires, observations, and interviews. To get a clear picture of the anxiety experienced by the counselee in a certain period, the analytical method used in this study is the visual inspection method by making direct observations and the data that has been analyzed is presented in graphical form. The results showed that there was a decrease in anxiety in the counselee after being given the intervention, seen from the results of data analysis and the stable score obtained based on the baseline phase (A1) before being given the intervention, getting a score of 78 in sessions 1 and 2 included in the range of severe anxiety and showed no change in that phase, while after being given intervention at baseline (A2) there was a decrease in anxiety towards a positive with a score of 21-10 in sessions 1 and 2 included in the category of mild anxiety. Thus, the anxiety in the counselee has decreased as expected in this study.

**Keywords:** Gestalt counseling, Anxiety, Individuals who experience anxiety disorders after failing to move on.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The relationship that usually occurs between a pair of male and female human beings does not only occur between individuals who have bonds such as courtship but also occurs in individuals who have special closeness [1] based on the research results of Susan L., Brian, and Shuangyue There are different perspectives on romantic relationships between individuals in Asia and America where individuals in Asia such as China, Japan, and South Korea view romantic relationships as a way to pay attention to each other. others and this is an important aspect of a relationship, while American individuals view

romantic relationships as something that attaches importance to the position of love brought to the level of unconditional marriage. This shows that Americans in America have romantic relationships rationally compared to individuals in Asia. but all couples both in Asia and in America have something in common, namely, they both want a happy ending to their love story, but in reality, romantic relationships do not always have a happy ending and that is the consequence that each individual should accept[2].

Everything has consequences as well as in romantic relationships, where each individual must be ready and

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able to accept everything that will happen in the process of romantic relationships, including termination. In some people, disconnection does not cause serious problems but in others, it can trigger serious problems such as anxiety, confusion, depression. Individuals who cannot accept their situation tend to be trapped in a catastrophic field over various things in the past [3].

Several conditions cause anxiety in individuals, such as social relations, education, work, and health [4]. In the case of termination of a relationship, usually, someone wants to quickly forget all the bitter things with their previous partner and wants to get up immediately to achieve happiness, in Indonesia, this is familiar with the term Move on. Move on can be interpreted as a state to move and try to forget the bad things that happened in the past. Moving on is a desire to get back up and forget painful things [5]. But in reality, some people experience failure in the process of moving on due to several factors, one of which is a problem in the past that has not been resolved (unfinished business) this sometimes causes individuals to experience anxiety about getting to know new people (the opposite sex).

Anxiety is a natural thing experienced by every human being, anxiety is part of everyday life because anxiety is a general feeling condition. In some circumstances, anxiety occurs continuously interferes with individuals in carrying out their activities, anxiety that occurs repeatedly and interferes with daily activities is called an anxiety disorder. Anxiety disorders conditions that describe excessive anxiety, accompanied by behavioral impulses, emotions, and physiological reactions. Individuals who experience anxiety disorders will show abnormal behavior, such as panicking for no reason, unclear fear of certain objects or performing repetitive actions without being able to control them, experiencing a traumatic event, and excessive worrying [6]. Stuart defines anxiety as an emotional state that does not have a specific object and this condition is experienced subjectively. Anxiety is not the same as fear. Fear is an intellectual judgment of something dangerous, anxiety is an emotional response to that judgment[7]. Perls explains that a person is said to have an anxiety disorder if there is a gap between the present and the future if someone deviates in the present and is too fixated on the future then they will experience anxiety, for Perls, there is nothing "there" except "now". Perls continues someone who is stuck in a past problem and can't accept the situation is also called a deviation[8].

Videbeck divides anxiety into two aspects, namely a healthy aspect and a dangerous aspect, which depends on the level of anxiety, the duration of anxiety experienced, and how well the individual copes with anxiety. Anxiety can be seen in the range of mild, moderate, severe to panic. Each level causes

physiological and emotional changes in the individual[9]. Meanwhile, Jeffrey S., Spencer A., and Beverly divide anxiety into several characteristics of anxiety including physical, behavioral, and cognitive anxiety. Physical anxiety characteristics are body parts shaking, sweating a lot, difficulty breathing, heart beating fast, feeling weak, hot and cold, irritable or irritable, behavioral symptoms of avoidance behavior, attached and dependent behavior, and shaken behavior. while some of the characteristics of cognitive anxiety include feeling worried about something, feeling disturbed by fear or understanding of something that will happen in the future, something scary will happen soon, fear of not being able to solve problems, feeling confused or confused, difficult to concentrate[10].

Freud in Schultz distinguishes 3 types of anxiety, namely: Objective Anxiety or Reality (Reality or Objective Anxiety) Is fear of real dangers in the real world. Examples of objective anxiety are earthquakes, hurricanes, and similar disasters. Reality anxiety provides a positive purpose to guide our behavior to protect and save ourselves from actual harm[11]. Neurotic Anxiety (Neurotic Anxiety) Is a fear that arises from childhood in a conflict between instinctual satisfaction and reality involving a conflict between the id and ego. Children are often punished for overexpressing sexual and aggressive impulses. At this stage, this anxiety is in the realm of consciousness, but later, it will be transformed into the realm of unconsciousness. Moral anxiety is a fear as a result of the conflict between the id and the superego. It is a fear of the individual's conscience. When the individual is motivated to express instinctual impulses that are contrary to the moral values contained in the individual's superego, he will feel ashamed or guilty. In everyday life, he will find himself as "conscience-stricken". Moral anxiety explains how the superego develops. Usually, individuals with strong consciences will experience greater conflict than individuals in conditions of looser moral tolerance. Moral anxiety is also based on reality. Children are punished for violating the moral code of their parents and adults are punished for violating the moral code of society. Anxiety signals to the individual that the ego is being threatened and if no action is taken, then the ego will fall. How the ego can protect or defend itself, there are several options, namely: Escaping from a threatening situation, Blocking the emergence of impulsive needs that are the source of light, Obeying the voice of conscience from consciousness.

From the explanation above, someone who experiences these problems needs to get the right treatment so that he can return to living his life well and can maximize his potential, and can achieve happiness in his life. The counselor has an important role as an expert who knows the field of counseling to help individuals solve their problems. The BK function is preventing



problems, providing understanding, problem-solving, and maintenance [12]. To solve problems, counselors provide counseling services to counselees, both individual counseling and group counseling according to the problems they face. Massive individual counseling is used on anxiety problems in this study because the counselee is in special handling. Individual counseling is quite effective in dealing with private problems, this has been proven by Zuraida & Nurul their research, the results of the pretest and posttest of individual counseling have a difference of 83.5 and the change in the resilience interval of students is 52.26% [13].

Winkel defines counseling as a series of the most important activities of guidance to help the counselee face to face with the intention that the counselee can take responsibility for himself on various problems or special problems[14]. Based on this understanding of counseling, Anas Salahudin defines counseling as an effort to help the counselee face to face with the aim that the counselee can take responsibility for himself for various special problems and the handling of problems faced by the counselee[15]. American School Counselor Association (ASCA) in Achmad explains that counseling is a face-to-face interaction that is confidential, full of acceptance, and gives opportunities from the counselor to the counselee. The counselor uses his knowledge and skills to assist the counselee in solving his problems. Based on this explanation, counseling is an activity between the counselor and the counselee to help the counselee face the problems he faces and increase his potential[16].

The gestalt counseling approach is the right approach to deal with anxiety problems, the results of Theodore's research show that Gestalt counseling interventions are effective in reducing anxiety in almost every group[17]. Seyed & Zahra also revealed in their research results that gestalt counseling is effective in reducing anxiety in cancer patients[18].

Gestalt counseling is an approach that focuses on uncovering or resolving unfinished busyness in the past. Gestalt counseling was first developed by Frederick Perls, this counseling is a form of existential therapy that is based on the premise that each individual must find his purpose in life and take responsibility for himself if they hope to reach maturity. Gestalt counseling focuses on the what and how of behavior and experiences in the here and now (here and now) by combining divided and unknown personalities [8].

Problems in Gestalt counseling are unresolved problems in the past which include feelings that are not expressed, anger, hatred, hurt, anxiety, position, guilt, a sense of being ignored, and so on. Even though these feelings cannot be expressed, they can be realized by certain fantasies and memories [19]. The purpose of gestalt counseling is to help the counselee to live life more easily by making the counselee become a person who can stand on his own feet without dependence on others. While the main target of gestalt counseling is the achievement of awareness because without awareness the counselee does not have the tools to change his personality [3].

# 1.1. Gestalt Counseling Stages

The first phase is to build a comfortable relationship that allows changes in the counselee's self, the pattern of individual relationships depends on the uniqueness of the problem. In the second phase, the counselor convinces the counselee that he can carry out the agreed procedure, provides motivation, provides an opportunity to express everything he does not like, and increases the counselee's sense of responsibility. In the third phase, encouraging the counselee to express current feelings instead of telling the past or the future, the counselee is givenallowedeel and act in the past in current and present situations. Fourth phase: after the counselee gains understanding and awareness about himself, his actions, and his feelings, the counseling process is in the final stage [20].

Synchronization between counselor and counselee is an important key in gestalt counseling. This is reinforced by the results of research conducted by Ryszard & Andrzej that the relationship between counselor and counselee is very influential in the gestalt counseling process[21]. The same thing was also expressed by David, Heather & Béatrice in their research that Gestalt counseling does not only focus on "here and now" but also on the closeness of the counselor with the counselee[22].

# 1.1.1. Empty Chair Technique

According to Safari, the use of the empty chair technique has the aim of solving problems by deciding on the counselee's problems that have not been completed in the past[23]. The results of Kholifah's research [24]show that several techniques can be used in the gestalt counseling approach, but to deal with anxiety in individuals the appropriate technique is an empty chair. Arif & Sigit's research results show a gestalt counseling approach with the empty chair technique to solve unfinished past problems[25].

From the previous presentation, it is known that there are stages in the process of providing assistance that is carried out face-to-face, but lately, there is a virus that has hit the world, which is familiar with the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Health Organization (WHO) revealed that 125,048 people were positive for COVID-19 on 12 March 2020 [26]. The same thing also happened in Indonesia, not a few Indonesian people who were



infected with the virus recorded as many as 10,000 people infected with the virus in February 2020 [27]. The Indonesian government has issued social distancing and physical distancing policies to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic from spreading. With these limitations, gestalt counseling practitioners are required to be creative and innovate to help deal with counselee problems and still be able to carry out their duties and responsibilities during a pandemic while still complying with health protocols.

## 2. METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with experimental methods. The experimental research method is a research method used to determine the effect of using Gestalt counseling to reduce anxiety in individuals after failing to move on. The design used in this study is single-subject research (single-subject research design). Research with a single subject is research that is implemented on one subject to know how much influence the action given repeatedly has on a single case. in the single-subject research process, four main activities need to be carried out including identifying the problem and defining it in the form of observable and measurable behavior to be changed; determine the level of behavior be changed before providing an intervention; provide intervention, and follow up to evaluate whether the behavioral changes that occur are permanent or temporary [28].

Based on the explanation above, implicitly the design used is the A-B-A design. This A-B-A design is used to show a causal relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable. The procedure in this study is initially the target behavior (target behavior) in this case the indication of anxiety in individuals after failing to move on is measured periodically in the baseline condition (A1) for a certain period, then in the intervention condition (giving Gestalt counseling intervention). with empty seat technique) (B). After the measurement in the intervention condition (B) the measurement in the second baseline condition (A2) is given. The addition of the second baseline condition (A2) is intended as a control to conclude that there is a strong functional relationship between Gestalt counseling strategies in reducing anxiety in individuals after failing to move on.Instrument Penelitian

The instrument in this study used an interview and observation anxiety questionnaire to determine the level of anxiety of the counselee who experienced anxiety after failing to move on, while the anxiety measured included physical, behavioral, and cognitive anxiety. Anxiety questionnaire using the Guttman scale which contains 19 statements consisting of 13 unfavorable statements (-) and 6 favorable (+) statements. Each answer to the

favorite statement is worth 1 for a "yes" answer and "0" for a "no" answer. While the unfavorable statement is worth 1 for the "no" answer and 0 for the "yes" answer, Anxiety assessment categories are divided into 3, namely severe, moderate and mild, the detailed explanation can be seen in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1. Category of Anxiety

Scoring Criteria	Category
66 - 100	Heavy
33 - 65	Currently
0 - 32	Light

Subjects in this study amounted to only one man with the initial "M". The counselee is indicated to experience anxiety after failing to move on and requires counseling services to help solve the problems he faces. The condition of anxiety experienced by the counselee is the impact of failing to move on from his ex-lover.

#### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results showed that there were problems with the counselee, including often feeling restless, heart palpitations when meeting with the opposite sex, social withdrawal, insomnia, chaotic thoughts, often unfocused and less productive. After deepening the counselee's problem that occurred due to the failure to move on from his ex-lover, the counselee has not been able to forget his ex-lover because he still wants an explanation from his ex about why he was left without a reason, this can be seen from the counselee's words "why did I leave him, am I not serious?, the car and the house I have prepared for her but why did she break our engagement for no apparent reason, I still think about it often".

If referring to the Gestalt counseling approach, the problems experienced by the counselee are called unfinished business, namely problems in the past that have not been completed, therefore the researcher conducts individual counseling using the gestalt approach with the empty chair technique to help the counselee solve his problems in the counseling process, the counselor directs the counselee to play a role become a top dog and underdog or as a person who injures and injured people with the aim that the counselee can make peace with his past so that the anxiety of the counselee can decrease. This research was conducted with 9 sessions (each session is 45 minutes long) and each session has a span of 1 week. The details during the activity are described in table 2 as follows:



Table 2. Stages of Individual Counseling Activities with Gestal Counseling Approach

No	Activity step	Purpose		
1	Session 1 (Beginning	form of Gestalt counseling b. Measuring symptoms of anxiety faced by the counselee.		
	stage) Pretest			
2	Session 2	a. Build a good relationship (rapport) with the counselee.		
	(transition stage)	b. Explore the chronology of the counselee's case.		
		c. Define the main problem faced counselee based on the data.		
		d. Counselors and counselees together make commitments in implementing future interventions.		
3	Session 3	a. Counselor dig about the things that the counselee hopes.		
		b. The counselee expresses the mindset and views of the case he is facing.		
	stage)	c. The counselee expresses the desires he has.		
4	Session 4	a. The counselor applies the empty chair technique using role-playing to help solve		
	(implementation	unfinished businesses as the root of the problems faced by the counselee		
	stage)	b. The counselor directs the counselee to act like a top dog and underdog		
		c. The counselee expresses all the things that become his complaints.		
5	Session 5	a. Counselors explore activities that interest the counselee to reduce his anxiety.		
	(implementation	b. The counselee expresses the activities that interest him.		
	stage)			
6	Session 6	a. Joint counselor with the counselee together can reflect on the intervention session		
	(implementation from start to finish.			
	stage)	b. The counselee reveals progress made during the counseling session.		
		c. Counselors can monitor and facilitate progress counselee in the counseling		
	~	process.		
7	Sesi 7 a. Counselor directs counselee, to make plans and choices for future activ			
	(Tahap	b. The counselee expresses freely about the design activity that is the goal of life.		
0	implementasi)	Was the description of the constant		
8 (Stage a. Knowing the condition of the counselee.				
	termination)	b. Stopping the counseling process		
		c. One's understanding of the problem		
0	Session 8	d. The counselee has a future life plan		
9	Post Test	a. Knowing the conditions counselee after receiving Gestalt counseling intervention		
	Post Test	to reduce anxiety after failing to move on  h. Measuring the client's level of anxiety after giving the intervention		
10	Session 9	b. Measuring the client's level of anxiety after giving the intervention		
10		a. Knowing the conditions the counselee after the counseling process		
Home Visit b. Measuring level counselee's anxiety				

The counseling process generally consists of four stages, this is expressed by Gladding (1995) in Rusmana (2009), namely: the initial stage, the transition stage, the implementation stage, and the termination stage (closing stage). Based on a preliminary study on counselees who have anxiety problems, it is known that the counselee is indicated to have severe category anxiety disorder with a value of 78 in sessions 1 and 2, this is obtained from the results of the calculation of the questionnaire based on the range of severe, moderate and mild.

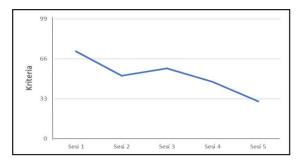


**Figure 1** The score of the client's anxiety observation assessment criteria in Baseline (A-1)

The graph above is similar to the results before treatment or intervention is given to the counselee, this condition is the baseline phase A (A-1). As previously explained, this calculation is based on giving a questionnaire to the counselee. The duration used in session 1 is 30 minutes. In session 2 in the baseline phase A (A-1) an assessment phase was also carried out and



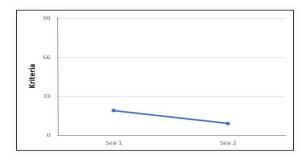
strengthened by interviews with the counselee to get to know the counselee's dean, exploring the case he was experiencing, and mapping the problems he was facing. In sessions 1 and 2, it is known that the values obtained tend to be the same, so it can be concluded that there has been no change in the problem of anxiety in the counselee, from these results, the researcher continues the research at the intervention stage (B). The details are as follows:



**Figure 2** The score of the client's anxiety observation assessment criteria in the Intervention (B)

The implementation of individual counseling with the Gestalt approach using the empty chair technique for counselees who have anxiety disorders is called the intervention phase (B) which consists of 5 meeting sessions, in each session the researcher provides an anxiety questionnaire reinforced by observations to measure the counselee's level of anxiety. From the 5 sessions conducted in session 1, there was a decrease even though it was still in the heavy category, namely at 72, in session 2-4 the average was at 47-58, including in the medium category, although in session 3 there was an increase. from the observation results, the increase was caused by a decrease in focus on the counselee due to many activities carried out by the counselee, in this case, the researcher and the counselee discussed what was the counselee's focus, so that in session 5 the score fell back to number 31 entering the low category, this was strengthened with the results of observations where the counselee begins to build relationships with the people around him.

After the intervention phase (B) was carried out, the researcher stopped counseling activities and within one week the researcher gave a questionnaire to the counselee and made observations starting from the termination of the counseling session to measure the level of anxiety after not being treated by the researcher, in this study called the phase baseline A-2 while the measurement results are as follows:

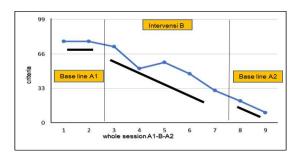


**Figure 3** The score of the client's anxiety observation assessment criteria on Baseline A-2

Based on graph 3 in the baseline phase A-2 which was carried out twice with sessions 1 and 2 without any intervention from the researcher, it can be concluded that there was a decrease in anxiety in the counselee where session 1 showed a score of 21 which was in the vulnerable 0-32 which indicated the counselee had Anxiety in the mild category can be seen in the results of observations and interviews conducted by researchers that the counselee begins to open up to others and begins to have a serious relationship. In session 2, there was a decrease from the previous session with a score of 10 and this was reinforced by the results of observations made by researchers, that the counselee had often interacted with other people, started to be productive, was able to accept the situation, and in the end, the counselee ventured into a serious relationship with the opposite sex.

After doing the research, the research data needs to be analyzed to see the effectiveness of the Gestalt counseling approach to reduce anxiety disorders in the counselee after failing to move on, the researcher uses the visual inspection method with direct observation and as shown in the graphic form. The graph shown depicts the counselee's condition before being given intervention at baseline A-1, after being given treatment B, and the condition after being given treatment at baseline 2 A-2. In the baseline study, A-1 was given 2 sessions, treatment B for 5 sessions, and baseline A-2 for 2 sessions. Observations were made at each session, while the aspects analyzed included: length of conditions; directional inclination; stability tendencies; trail tendencies; level of stability and range; and level of change. The exposure of the data obtained based on the analysis in the conditions and between conditions of the counselee is as follows:





**Figure 4** The score of the client's anxiety observation assessment criteria in Phase A1-B- A2

Based on the score graph of the client's anxiety observation criteria in phases A1-B-A2, it can be interpreted that there is a decrease in anxiety in the counselee after being given the intervention or the overall treatment of the intervention phase B to Baseline A2. The results of the visual analysis in the counselee's condition are as follows:

**Table 3.** Results of Visual Analysis in Counselee Conditions

Condition	A-1	В	A-2
Condition	2	5	2
length			
Estimated			
trend			
direction	(-)	(+)	(=)
Stable	Stabil	variable	Stabil
trend			
Trace data			
	(=)	(+)	(+)
Stability	78-78	68-31	26 -10
level and			
range			
Medicine	(0)	(+37)	(+16)
Level			

Based on the results of visual analysis, the counselee's condition tends to be stable in the baseline phase A1 and A2, while the intervention tends to be variable because in session 4 there is an increase, but the trace data shows a decrease in a positive direction, this is because the purpose of this study is to reduce anxiety in other words. the lower the anxiety, the better the achievement obtained in this study, this is also reinforced at the level of change in the table. The comparison between conditions is as follows:

**Table 4.** Results of Visual Analysis Between Conditions

Condition Comparison	A-1/B	B/ A-2
Number of variables	1	1
Change in the trend of the effect	(=) (+)	(+) (+)
Stable trend change	Stabil - variable	Variable - stabil
Level change	78-72 (+6)	31-21 (+10)

Based on table 4, the visual results between conditions can be seen before, after, and after the intervention by the researcher was terminated from the table. On baseline A1 it can be seen that before the intervention or treatment the anxiety condition tends to be stable, after being given the intervention in phase B there is a decrease even though it is variable. but anxiety decreases towards a positive direction and after the intervention is stopped the changes tend to be stable towards positive the results of the calculation of the range at baseline A2 show the number 33 while the stable range is in the range 10-44, thus after no intervention the counselee's anxiety decreases towards positive and tends to be stable, the results of the observations also show that the counselee has started to build a special relationship with someone and has started to focus on doing something and is more productive than before, thus it can be concluded that there has been a change in the counselee's self after receiving treatment and it can be said that gestalt counseling is effective for reducing individual postoperative anxiety who has failed to move on.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that gestalt counseling is effective for reducing anxiety in counselees who experience anxiety after failing to move on using individual counseling with the empty chair technique. At baseline, A-1 showed a score of 78 in phases 1 and 2 included in the heavy category with a range of 66-100 after being given intervention B decreased with a score of 73-31 in phases 1 to 5 included in the heavy and medium category with a range of 33-65 and after the intervention was terminated or in the baseline phase A-2 got a score of 21-10 in sessions 1 and 2 it was included in the mild category because there was a decrease in anxiety in the counselee, this study was completed.

The researcher realizes that this research is far from perfect, due to several factors, one of which is the limited time in this study. With this research, it is hoped that it can be a foundation for further researchers to develop



forms of gestalt counseling in reducing anxiety after failing to move on.

## **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

The author's contributions in writing this scientific work are:

- 1.1. Writer 1: Eko Rian Aryanto
  - 1.1.1. Research ideas
  - 1.1.2. Scientific writing
  - 1.1.3. Data retrieval
- 1.2. Writer 2: Suwarjo
  - 1.2.1. Text editor
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- 1.3 Writer 3: Dwi Setia Kuriawan
  - 1.3.1. Data retrieval
  - 1.3.2. Check for plagiarism and writing errors

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