

Section: Mental Health Nursing

Socialization group activity therapy in patient with schizophrenia experiencing social isolation

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Abstract

Social isolation is a condition in which a person experiences a decline or even a complete inability to interact with others around them. Therefore, patients experiencing social isolation require social skills. One therapy that can be provided to patients with social isolation is group socialization activity therapy, which is used to facilitate patients' social interaction skills, thereby enhancing their abilities, training them in socialization, and enabling them to participate in social environments. The objective of this case study is to determine the application of group socialization activity therapy in patients with schizophrenia and social isolation. The author selected a descriptive case study method to explore or clarify the symptoms of social isolation in patients receiving group socialization activity therapy. The method used was an interview study conducted through direct interaction, where the researcher obtained verbal information or statements from the research subject or informant. This scientific study used a non-pharmacological intervention in the form of socialization group activity therapy, implemented on socially isolated patients for 6 days, conducted once daily for 45 minutes in a gradual and structured manner. The evaluation found that patients were able to socialize. The therapy was influenced by the regularity of the sessions, had a positive impact in the form of improved social skills and reduced social isolation in patients.

Keywords: Hospital care, mental health nursing, schizophrenia, social isolation, socialization group activity

Introduction

Social isolation is a condition in which an individual experiences a significant reduction—or even a complete inability—to interact with others in their environment (Guarnera et al., 2023). Affected individuals may feel rejected, unaccepted, lonely, and incapable of forming meaningful relationships (Emerson et al., 2021). This condition can lead to a decline in overall health and, in severe cases, even death. Social isolation is a critical psychosocial issue that requires immediate attention, as it can result in physical and psychological disorders such as depression and, in extreme cases, suicide (Motillon-Toudic et al., 2022). Predisposing factors include a history of illness or personal failure, which may cause individuals to withdraw and isolate themselves. Although the effects of social isolation may not appear immediately harmful, failure to address them can lead to serious complications, including sensory perception disturbances such as hallucinations and low self-esteem. These unaddressed negative symptoms may trigger dangerous situations, as patients suppress their emotions and refuse to engage with others (Shoib et al., 2023). If left untreated, social isolation can persist over time, leading patients to construct an internal world dominated by hallucinations and distorted perceptions (Bornheimer et al., 2022). Therefore, the role of nurses is vital in addressing social isolation through the application of comprehensive nursing care standards, including assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation, and evaluation. Effective strategies may include introducing patients to one another, encouraging social interaction, and facilitating conversations among peers. Additionally, educating patients about the risks of prolonged isolation and the benefits of interpersonal engagement is essential to promote healthier social behaviour (Lee et al., 2021). These interventions are expected to enhance patient interaction, reduce psychological distress, and improve overall well-being.

One intervention to address self-imposed social isolation involves a combination of therapeutic approaches, including both individual and group therapy. Among these, group activity therapy is a primary modality in mental health nursing that can be facilitated by nurses for patients experiencing similar psychosocial challenges (Marmarosh et al., 2022). This approach allows patients to engage collectively in structured therapeutic activities. Socialization Group Activity Therapy, in particular, focuses on learning and practicing communication skills to enhance social interaction (Hartley et al., 2022). It is designed to support individuals with difficulties in forming and maintaining social relationships by helping them develop interpersonal skills, encouraging active participation, and fostering a sense of belonging within a group setting. The primary goal of Socialization Group Activity Therapy is to improve patients' capacity for social engagement, train them in effective social behaviours, and enable them to function within a social environment (Ni'mah et al., 2025). This method is especially beneficial for individuals experiencing social isolation, as

it provides a safe and supportive space to rebuild confidence and interpersonal connections. As a flexible and evidence-based intervention, Socialization Group Activity Therapy has proven effective in helping patients overcome barriers to social interaction, thereby promoting psychological well-being and improving overall quality of life. Therefore, the therapy is very important to help and facilitate socially isolated patients to gradually develop their socialization skills through seven sessions.

Case Description

In the case study conducted, respondent characteristics were obtained through structured interviews. The subject of this case study is a 13-year-old male residing in the Tempuran subdistrict of Magelang Regency. He is currently enrolled in junior high school and practices the Islamic faith. The assessment revealed that the respondent had been experiencing symptoms of social isolation for approximately one month. This was evidenced by his consistent refusal to engage in social activities, his preference for remaining alone in his room, and his deliberate avoidance of interpersonal interactions. The patient expressed a deep fear of being bullied, which served as a primary barrier to social engagement. He had completely withdrawn from peer contact and exhibited no desire to communicate with others, either within his household or in the school environment. Further exploration of the respondent's psychosocial history indicated no prior diagnosis of mental disorders, and there was no known family history of psychiatric conditions. This suggests that the social isolation may be situational rather than rooted in hereditary or chronic mental health issues. The patient's behaviour reflects a significant disruption in his developmental and emotional well-being, particularly during a critical stage of adolescence when social interaction plays a vital role in identity formation and psychological resilience. The findings underscore the importance of early identification and intervention in cases of adolescent social withdrawal, especially when triggered by fear-based experiences such as bullying. Addressing these concerns through supportive counselling, family involvement, and school-based mental health programs may help restore the patient's sense of safety and promote reintegration into his social environment.

Discussion

Based on data obtained from the initial assessment, it was found that the patient said he liked to be alone and never interacted with other people. The patient rarely interacted with his friends, often stayed alone in bed, did not want to socialize with other people, had reduced eye contact, and appeared gloomy and sad. The diagnosis of social isolation is associated with an inability to form satisfying relationships (D.0121), in accordance with the 2018 Indonesian Nursing Care Standards (SDKI). The objectives and outcome criteria for social involvement are based on the Indonesian Nursing Care Standards (SLKI). Interventions focus on promoting socialization and utilize group socialization activity therapy to enhance the patient's ability to socialize with others. Socialization Group Activity Therapy is a nursing intervention that uses a group method with a structured social activity approach to improve patients' social interaction skills. This therapy is designed to assist patients experiencing interpersonal relationship disorders, social isolation, or difficulties in socializing due to specific psychological or social conditions. Through therapy, patients are encouraged to participate in group activities aimed at fostering communication, cooperation, and positive and constructive self-expression (Riko & Soebyakto, 2023).

In nursing care, the initial stage begins with an assessment of the patient's social needs and interpersonal skills. This is done to determine the patient's readiness to participate in group therapy and to identify any social barriers that may exist. Based on the assessment results, nurses plan the implementation of therapy by adjusting the number of sessions, types of activities, and approaches appropriate to the patient's condition and needs. The implementation of therapy involves gradually providing social activity stimulation through structured sessions, starting from self-introduction, basic communication exercises, group collaboration, to reflection and evaluation. Nurses act as facilitators who encourage active patient participation, create a conducive group atmosphere, and provide emotional support during therapy (Kopelowicz et al., 2006). That study showed that this social group activity therapy is effective in improving socialization skills and reducing feelings of isolation in patients. Nurses also conduct periodic evaluations to measure patients' social skill development and adjust interventions as needed. This approach is in line with nursing principles that prioritize patient empowerment so that they can function optimally in their social environment. In addition, nursing care involving this therapy also considers environmental factors and family support as part of social rehabilitation efforts. The involvement of families and support groups outside of group therapy is expected to strengthen the results of the intervention and maintain the sustainability of positive changes in patients (Ong et al., 2021; Kuhn & Laird, 2014; Joo et al., 2022; Hodgkinson et al., 2017). Thus, the implementation of socialization group activity therapy in nursing care does not only focus on the therapeutic aspect itself but also on a comprehensive approach that involves assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation to achieve optimal results in improving patients' quality of life.

The therapy was conducted over seven sessions, each designed with a distinct focus, progressing from the introductory phase to final evaluation. In the initial session, patients were introduced to fellow group members through simple self-introduction activities, which helped foster familiarity and reduce social awkwardness. This introductory activity is essential for establishing a foundation of trust and psychological safety within the group—both of which are critical prerequisites for therapeutic success. As the sessions progressed, the focus shifted toward enhancing

communication skills and promoting social interaction. Participants were guided to actively ask questions, respond to others, and engage in collaborative group activities such as structured discussions and role-playing exercises. The final session was dedicated to reflection and evaluation, providing patients with the opportunity to articulate their feelings and share their experiences throughout the therapy process. Constructive feedback from other group members was also encouraged to reinforce a sense of social belonging and motivation, empowering participants to apply the social skills they had developed in their everyday lives. This therapeutic model is highly adaptable and can be implemented in various settings, including hospitals, social institutions, and mental health facilities. The duration and frequency of sessions can be tailored to meet the specific needs and conditions of each patient, ensuring a personalized and effective approach to overcoming social isolation.

Conclusion

Schizophrenic patients with social isolation underwent Socialization Group Activity Therapy, which consisted of 7 sessions conducted daily for 6 days, with each session lasting 45 minutes. The therapy was structured and gradual, aiming to enhance social skills and interactions through activities such as introductions, communication exercises, group cooperation, and reflection and evaluation. The regularity of sessions significantly contributed to the therapy's success, ultimately leading to improved social skills and reduced social isolation in patients. Future studies should consider extending the duration of Socialization Group Activity Therapy to assess its long-term effects on schizophrenic patients with social isolation. Additionally, incorporating control groups and larger sample sizes would enhance the generalizability of the results. Researchers may also explore the impact of this therapy on other psychiatric populations and examine the effects of varying session frequencies and durations.

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