

Pastoral Family Counseling: Client Center Approach for "Single Mother" at a young age in GMIM Karangetang

Frisca Elisabeth Londo¹, Yohan Brek²

Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Manado

friskalondo3@gmail.com¹, yohanbrek@iakn-manado.ac.id²

ABSTRACT

This research discusses the role of pastoral counseling assistance in helping single mothers or young single mothers face life challenges, especially in the context of the church. Single mothers are often faced with economic problems, social pressure, negative stigma, and complex psychological issues. This condition is exacerbated by their young age, which is often emotionally immature in facing the dual role of mother and head of the family. The Client-Centered approach proposed by Carl Rogers was chosen as a counseling method that emphasizes empathy, support without judgment, and provides space for the counselee to reflect and find their own problem solutions. This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach that emphasizes objective field observations. Through systematic counseling stages, such as establishing trust, data identification, diagnosis, plan development, help implementation, and evaluation, pastoral assistance is expected to run effectively and help single mothers restore their mental and spiritual health.

Keywords: Pastoral Counseling, Single Mother, Client-Centered, Church.

INTRODUCTION

The family is the smallest part of the social unit where there is a husband, wife and children. The family is a household that has blood or marriage ties and the implementation of basic instrumental and expressive functions for members in it.¹ This function is a factor that determines the life of children in the family and if these two things are not implemented, it will experience collapse.

In today's society, family dynamics have changed quite rapidly, especially in the increase in single mothers, especially those who are young and this is a tough challenge. A single mother is a woman who struggles for family life, especially in

¹Sri Lestari, Psikologi Keluarga: Penanaman Nilai dan Penanganan Konflik dalam Keluarga (Jakarta: Persada Media, 2016), h.6

caring for children. For a single mother living a dual role as a mother and head of the family is not an easy thing. She must try to survive raising children alone without a life companion as a single parent.²

In addition to facing economic problems, they also experience various social pressures and complex psychological problems. Even in community life, sometimes stigma and discrimination often arise, which ultimately have an impact on mental health and the ability to undergo this single mother role.³ This condition allows a single mother to need special support and assistance to face these challenges and pressures. Especially considering the age of single mothers who, when viewed from certain aspects, are emotionally immature.

In the context of church ministry, pastoral counseling becomes a matter and has a crucial role for those who need special assistance and attention such as young single mothers. This pastoral assistance is very important for them so that the single mother feels accompanied in facing problems and healing their inner wounds. A suitable approach for this case is the Client-Centered approach proposed by Carl Rogers. This approach emphasizes the client's ability to find content that is important to him/her and solve his/her problems.⁴ By providing space for clients to talk and reflect in order for them to develop self-confidence and make decisions in life.

Even in the GMIM Karangetang congregation, this case is still relevant and still exists. The need to assist young single mothers in supporting the welfare of the community and family is more concerned. The Client-Centered approach can help the church in providing assistance for this case. With proper counseling, it can solve the mental problems of single mothers.

²J.M. Henny Wiludjeng, *Orang Tua Tunggal : Permasalahan dan Solusinya*, (Jakarta: Inti Prima Promosindo, 2011), h.7.

³ Tirtanadi, Stigma Sosial terhadap Ibu Tunggal dalam Perspektif Masyarakat, *Jurnal Sosiologi dan Kesejahteraan Sosial*, vol.4 no.2, hh.210-215.

⁴ Ulfa dani Rosada, *Metode Pendekatan Konseling Client Centered dan Penerapannya dalam Praktik*, *Jurnal Counsellia*, vol.6, No.1 (2016)

RESEARCH METHODS

The method used by researchers is qualitative research methods. Qualitative research methods are research methods that are used naturally and naturally in accordance with the objective conditions of the field without any manipulation. In conducting this research, the researcher plans to use this method because according to the researcher this method is a suitable method and in accordance with the problems that the researcher raises. The qualitative approach also emphasizes observation and a natural atmosphere which requires researchers to go directly to the field. The approach chosen by the researcher in conducting his research is a descriptive approach in which the researcher will describe and describe what is the focus of the research.

DISCUSSION

Pastoral Family Counseling

Pastoral comes from the Latin *pastor*, which means shepherd and refers to shepherding.⁵ The word counseling comes from the Old English *counseil* and in Latin *counsillium* or *consulere*. Then the word counseling develops and contains the meaning of guiding, accompanying, guiding, and directing.⁶ Intarti also gave the opinion that pastoral counseling is provided by counselors to clients professionally one-on-one, in which there is direct interaction to gain better self-understanding, control and direct themselves to be used in order to solve problems and improve behavior in the future.⁷ Van Beek suggests pastoral counseling as a spiritual help process that contributes spiritual dimensions to the counseling process.⁸ Departing from the above understanding, in conducting pastoral counseling, the benchmark is the Bible or always prioritizing spirituality.

⁵ Yohan Brek, *Kepekaan Pastoral Konseling Bagi Pelayan Gereja Kontemporer*, Poimen : Jurnal Pastoral Konseling Vol.1 No.2 (2020)

⁶ Yohan Brek, *Budaya Masamper Lifestyle Masyarakat Nusa Utara* (Banyumas: CV Pena Persada, 2022), h.84.

⁷ Esther Rela Intara, *Pengantar Konseling Pastoral* (Yogyakarta : Buku Baik, 2016), h.11.

⁸ Aart Martin Van Beek, *Konseling Pastoral : Sebuah Buku Pegangan Bagi Para Penolong Di Indonesia* (Semarang: Satya Wacana, 1992), h.3.

The family is the smallest part or unit in a social order that has important elements, namely the head of the household, usually the father and mother. Lestari argues that the definition of family is a household that has blood or marriage attachment.⁹ Edith Schaeffer defines family as a place where members grow and create good relationships between individuals.¹⁰ This means that the family is the means of creating social relationships between the first individuals as a place to grow.

Pastoral family counseling is an act of service that is carried out to help families who are facing problems to find a family way without neglecting the Bible or the spiritual element in it. Some argue that pastoral family counseling is a multifaceted approach that integrates spiritual guidance with psychological support to overcome various family problems. This counseling method emphasizes the importance of love, empathy, and open communication, aiming to promote healing and reconciliation in families facing challenges.

Single Mother

Single motherhood is a social status given to a woman who is married but has no other companion in her life. Single mothers live without husbands by raising their own children and earning a living to meet the needs of their lives and families. According to Papalio, et al, single mothers are women who are abandoned by their husbands or life partners either due to separation, divorce, or death and then decide not to marry but raise their children alone.¹¹ Single mothers will have two roles, namely being a loving and gentle mother role, as well as a father role with full assertiveness and authority in making a decision.¹²

⁹ Sri Lestari, Psikologi Keluarga: Penanaman Nilai dan Penanganan Konflik dalam keluarga (Jakarta: Prenada Media, 2016), h.6.

¹⁰ Gary R. Collins, *Konseling Kristen yang Efektif* (Malang : Literatur SAAT, 2017), h.158.

¹¹ D.E Papalia, S.W Old dan R.D Feldman, Human Development (Perkembangan Manusia) Edisi Kesepuluh (Jakarta: Salemba Huanika, 2009).

¹² Sista Irianti, Gambaran Optimisme Dan Kesejahteraan Subjektif Pada Ibu Tunggal di Usia Dewasa Madya, Jurnal Psikoborneo Vol.8 No.1 (2020), h.108.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that a single mother is a woman or woman who has been abandoned by her husband or life partner either through divorce or death who then struggles alone to meet her and her family's needs.

There are two types of categories of parents or single mothers, namely:

- Had been in a marriage: Single mothers in this category had a legal marriage that was recorded in the Church and civil registry.¹³ This also has positive and negative effects. Namely, getting sympathy and negative stigma.
- Never married: Single mothers who fall into this category are also divided into two, namely first experiencing pregnancy outside of marriage and second choosing to adopt their own children because they decided not to get married.

Living life as a single mother at a young age is not an easy thing there are so many challenges and problems that will be passed especially without a partner who supports, like a family in general. The most prominent impacts are her struggle to support a family at a young age and the parenting they may think about.

Pastoral Counseling to Single Mother with Client-Centered Approach

Pastoral counseling has the aim of restoring, helping and finding a way out of all the problems and suffering experienced by the counselee. this is also the need of a single mother or single mother. In the reality that occurs, there are negative stigmas circulating and problems from outside and from within a single mother making her have psychological disorders that certainly need help. Moreover, the existence of inappropriate expectations in her life makes a single mother feel depressed that these things happen out of their control. But on the other hand they must still look strong and tough in order to meet the needs of the family, especially the child, which has become the obligation of single mothers.

¹³ Pemberdayaan Perempuan Kepala Keluarga, (Jakarta : Tanda Baca, 2012), h.2

In reality, there is still a lack of pastoral assistance from the church for single mothers, even though if you look back at the church's call to serve all members of the congregation, not certain people. Single mothers are often a stumbling block in the life of the congregation, even though they do not want this to happen in their lives.

In conducting pastoral counseling services to single mothers certainly has its own challenges, these challenges include: feelings of acceptance from single mothers, refusal of help and lack of openness from these single mothers. Given the problems experienced are not ordinary problems. Because if seen from the outside they may look ordinary but if counseling is done it will show how destroyed they are. Therefore, the skills and self-adjustment of a counselor are needed in conducting pastoral counseling.

The approach that will be used to conduct pastoral counseling is client-centered. The client centered approach in pastoral family counseling for young single mothers at Jemaat GMIM Karangetang emphasizes empathy, understanding, and support without judgment. This method is in line with the unique challenges faced by single mothers, especially those who are young and may experience anxiety and insecurity in their parenting role. The counselee in this case can actualize his/her potential and grow towards full self-awareness and self-confidence. The counselee in this case will be aware of the problem and have a way out in dealing with the next problem.

Stages of Pastoral Counseling to Single Mothers

In conducting pastoral counseling to clients, of course there are stages that must be passed in order to be more structured and orderly.¹⁴ According to Wiryasaputra, conducting pastoral counseling by paying attention to these stages can help counselors to carry out each function properly. Pastoral counseling can be done with

¹⁴ ¹⁴ Yohan Brek, *Konseling Pastoral Teori dan Penerapannya* (Pt. Giat Konseling Nusantara : Manado, 2023), h. 273.

2 time periods, namely short and long. The stages according to Yohan Brek in his book are as follows:

- Establish trust: In this case the counselor must ensure and make the counselee feel safe, it is necessary to get to know each other more deeply and create a close relationship of trust between the counselee and the counselor so that the counselee can believe that he will really be helped. Especially since the person to be helped is a single mother at a young age, it is important to create a safe space and trust because her feelings must be very sensitive.
- Identifying data (Anamnesa): The counselor identifies all data related to the counselee both through the words he says and the body gestures of the counselee. this stage is carried out holistically or thoroughly based on physical, mental, social and spiritual aspects.
- Conclusions of basic problems (Diagnosis): This stage is to make temporary conclusions based on anamnesa, for example: why is the single mother mentally and physically disturbed at a young age, are there factors that affect this. Everything must be diagnosed because it helps the counselor in determining the help plan.
- Develop a treatment plan: In this stage the counselor prepares a treatment plan but it must be adjusted to the diagnosis that has been made. Such as determining what functions will be used for further help.
- Doing help (Treatment Action): This stage is a continuation of the treatment plan that has been prepared or it can be said that this is the practice of the treatment plan.
- Analyzing: This stage is the result of treatment action which is then analyzed in depth, what things are obtained then find out whether the counselee experiences life transformation.
- Evaluation and recommendation: At this stage, the counselor sees what is the meaning or what benefits are obtained after conducting pastoral counseling. Are there things that need to be continued or have been resolved.

- Theological Reflection: This stage aims to see if there are any implied meanings after doing pastoral counseling. These meanings can aim to help the development of pastoral counseling and have a positive impact on the church.
- Sending and termination: This stage is the final stage, where the counselor after completing the help will send the counselee who has fully recovered or recovered to be a blessing to others.

The above stages must be carried out in helping or conducting pastoral counseling by taking into account the condition of the counselee. but must remember that the sensitive feelings of single mothers at a young age can also affect the counseling.

CONCLUSIONS

Single mothers face significant challenges, including economic hardship, social pressure, negative stigma, and psychological complexities that are often invisible. These conditions demand special attention so that they are able to fulfill their roles optimally and restore their personal and family well-being. The client-centered approach developed by Carl Rogers is an effective methodological solution in pastoral counseling. This approach focuses on empathy, support without judgment, and provides space for the counselee to reflect and find solutions to their problems. Through this approach, single mothers can develop self-awareness, increase self-confidence, and make better decisions in facing life's challenges.

Systematic stages in pastoral counseling ranging from building trust, holistic data collection, problem diagnosis, preparation and implementation of a help plan, to evaluation and theological reflection ensure that the counseling process is professional, structured, and sustainable. This stage also emphasizes the importance of counselor sensitivity in understanding the emotional condition of single mothers, especially young ones. In the context of the GMIM Karangetang congregation, pastoral counseling assistance for young single mothers is a need that is still relevant and urgent. The church, through this ministry, can play a crucial role in overcoming

the problems faced by single mothers, helping them restore their mental and spiritual conditions, and facilitating a life transformation process that has a positive impact on the family and community. Thus, the church not only carries out its pastoral duties but also strengthens its social role as a companion for all congregants, without exception.

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