

THE APPLICATION OF POSITIVE AFFIRMATION THERAPY TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE IN PATIENTS WITH LOW SELF-ESTEEM AT TAMPAN MENTAL HOSPITAL IN THE RIAU PROVINCE

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Abstract

Mental health is a fundamental aspect of human well-being, influencing physical, psychological, social and spiritual balance. Low self-esteem is one of the most common psychosocial issues experienced by people with mental health conditions and can result in a decreased quality of life. This study aimed to describe the implementation of positive affirmation therapy to improve the quality of life of patients with low self-esteem at Tampan Mental Hospital in the Riau Province of Indonesia. A case study approach based on EvidenceBased Nursing Practice (EBNP) was employed for two patients diagnosed with low self-esteem. Data were collected using the Indonesian version of the Subjective Well-Being Under Neuroleptic (IM-SWN) questionnaire before and after the intervention. The therapy was conducted once daily for three consecutive days, with each session lasting 10–15 minutes. The results showed significant improvements in the quality of life scores of both patients, with scores increasing from 58 to 70 for patient 1 and from 56 to 66 for patient 2, indicating an adequate quality of life. Positive affirmation therapy was found to effectively enhance self-confidence, self-acceptance and overall well-being. In conclusion, positive affirmation therapy can serve as a non-pharmacological intervention to improve the quality of life of patients with low self-esteem, and it should be considered for broader implementation in mental health nursing practice.

Keyword: Positive affirmation therapy 1; Low self-esteem 2; Quality of life 3.

INTRODUCTION

Mental health is an essential component of overall human well-being, influencing physical, psychological, social and spiritual aspects of life (WHO, 2020). Mental health disorders are a growing global health problem caused by various biological, psychological, social, genetic and environmental factors (Hartanto, 2021). One psychosocial issue frequently encountered in patients with mental health conditions is low self-esteem, which is characterised by feelings of worthlessness, failure and an inability to fulfil social roles effectively (Keliat, 2019).

Low self-esteem can have a significant impact on patients' quality of life (QoL), leading to feelings of hopelessness, a loss of motivation, and social withdrawal (Moorhead, Johnson, Maas & Swanson, 2018). Several studies have demonstrated a correlation between self-esteem and quality of life in patients with schizophrenia. Daryanto and Khairani (2020) found a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and quality of life ($r = 0.195$, $p = 0.037$), suggesting that interventions aimed at enhancing self-esteem could improve overall well-being and treatment outcomes.

In addition to pharmacological interventions, psychosocial nursing care plays a vital role in enhancing mental health outcomes. One promising non-pharmacological approach is positive affirmation therapy, which involves repeating positive statements to reinforce self-belief and self-worth (Nelson, 2019). The therapy aims to strengthen a positive self-concept, build confidence and improve patients' overall quality of life.

Previous studies support the effectiveness of positive affirmation therapy. For example, Ardika et al. (2021) reported a significant improvement in the QoL of patients with low self-esteem following positive affirmation therapy at RSJD Dr. Arif Zainudin Surakarta ($p = 0.004 < 0.05$). Similarly, Siswati and Wahab (2023) observed a substantial increase in quality of life (QoL) scores among patients with low self-esteem after receiving affirmation therapy at Puskesmas Limboto ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$). However, despite its proven benefits, positive affirmation therapy has not been optimally implemented in psychiatric hospitals such as RSJ Tampan in the Riau Province. This study therefore aims to describe how positive affirmation therapy can be implemented to improve quality of life among patients with low self-esteem at RSJ Tampan in the Riau Province.

METHODS

This study adopted an Evidence-Based Nursing (EBN) approach with a case study design to evaluate the effectiveness of positive affirmation therapy for patients with low self-esteem. This approach aimed to evaluate the effect of positive affirmations on patients' quality of life (QoL) at RSJ Tampan Psychiatric Hospital in the Riau Province of Indonesia.

1. Participants and setting

The intervention was carried out with two patients who had been diagnosed with low self-esteem. Both patients were admitted to RSJ Tampan and met the inclusion criteria, which included showing signs and symptoms of low self-esteem.

- a. showing signs and symptoms of low self-esteem;
- b. having an inadequate QoL score;
- c. being in stable physical condition;
- d. being cooperative; and
- e. being first-time inpatients who had received general therapy.

Patients who were non-cooperative, had adequate QoL scores, communication impairments or were recurrent admissions were excluded.

2. Procedure

Positive affirmation therapy was provided once daily for three consecutive days, with each session lasting 10–15 minutes. Depending on patient availability and condition, each session was conducted either in the morning (07:00–10:00), afternoon (12:00–14:00) or evening (16:00–18:00).

The procedure included:

- a. Explaining the therapy objectives and obtaining patient consent;
- b. Assisting patients in formulating personal positive affirmation statements;
- c. Encouraging patients to repeat each affirmation ten times with confidence and clear articulation;
- d. Providing reinforcement and emotional support during the sessions;
- e. Incorporating affirmation practice into patients' daily routines.

3. Data collection instruments

Patient quality of life was measured using the Indonesian Modification of the Subjective Well-Being under Neuroleptic (IM-SWN) scale. This scale consists of 20 items designed to assess subjective well-being among patients undergoing antipsychotic therapy. The IM-SWN is a patient-reported outcome measure, with total scores ranging from 20 to 100.

- a. A total score of at least 80 indicates adequate quality of life.
- b. An increase of 10 points (or $\geq 20\%$) from baseline was categorised as an improvement.

4. Data analysis:

Descriptive analysis was used to compare pre-test and post-test quality of life (QoL) scores before and after therapy implementation. Observational notes and nursing documentation were used to support the quantitative findings and provide a comprehensive evaluation of patients' behavioural and emotional changes following the intervention.

RESULTS

Two female patients participated in positive affirmation therapy. Patient 1 (Ms I), a 55-year-old woman, was admitted to RSJ Tampan on 22 May 2024. She exhibited symptoms of low self-esteem, including feelings of worthlessness and low self-confidence, as well as social withdrawal. Patient 2 (Ms F), a 34-year-old woman, was admitted on 28 March 2025 with similar issues, including fear of rejection, self-blame and lack of motivation. Both patients exhibited flat affect, low eye contact and slow speech. Their baseline quality of life scores were categorised as inadequate at 58 and 56, respectively.

Each patient participated in three sessions of positive affirmation therapy over three consecutive days. During these sessions, they repeated ten personally tailored positive statements per day. Reinforcement was provided to strengthen belief in each affirmation.

Therapeutic interactions during repetition encouraged patients to maintain good posture, eye contact, and a positive tone of voice. By the final session, both patients had demonstrated increased engagement and verbal confidence.

Outcome evaluation after three days of the intervention, both participants showed measurable improvement.

Participant	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Category
Ny. I	58	70	Adequate
Ny. F	56	66	Adequate

Patients showed improvements in the form of increased verbal interaction, relaxed body posture, an improved mood and a greater willingness to engage in social activities. Both participants reported feeling calmer and more confident after the sessions.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that positive affirmation therapy effectively improved the quality of life of patients with low self-esteem at RSJ Tampan in the Riau Province. This improvement was indicated by an increase in IM-SWN scores from inadequate to adequate levels within three days of the intervention taking place.

Positive affirmation therapy works by replacing negative self-beliefs with constructive and empowering thoughts, thereby enhancing patients' self-concept and emotional regulation. Repeated verbal affirmations stimulate cognitive restructuring, promoting optimism and reducing self-deprecating thoughts. This mechanism aligns with the work of Nelson (2019), who emphasised that affirmation practices can strengthen self-worth and improve overall mental health outcomes.

These results are consistent with those of the study by Ardika et al. (2021), which found a significant increase in quality of life (QoL) scores among patients with schizophrenia following affirmation therapy ($p = 0.004$). Similarly, Siswati and Wahab (2023) reported a positive correlation between affirmation therapy and improved self-esteem, resulting in enhanced social adaptation and life satisfaction.

The present case study provides further evidence-based support for the integration of non-pharmacological interventions into mental health services. Positive affirmation therapy requires minimal resources, can easily be integrated into daily nursing routines and encourages active patient participation in their recovery process.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated that positive affirmation therapy significantly improved quality of life among patients with low self-esteem at RSJ Tampan Psychiatric Hospital in the Riau Province. After three days of intervention, both participants experienced measurable increases in IM-SWN scores, rising from inadequate to adequate levels. Patients also displayed visible improvements in confidence, self-acceptance and emotional stability.

These results support the use of positive affirmation therapy as an evidence-based, non-pharmacological nursing intervention to enhance self-esteem and quality of life in psychiatric patients. This approach empowers patients, fosters positive thinking and contributes to holistic mental health recovery. Further research involving larger populations and longer intervention periods, as well as integration with other psychosocial therapies, is recommended to strengthen the evidence base for its effectiveness in mental health nursing practice.

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