

## THE ROLE OF RESILIENCE IN OVERCOMING MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS AMONG DRUG ADDICTS AT THE NATIONAL NARCOTICS AGENCY OF NORTH SUMATRA PROVINCE

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### ABSTRACT

Drug abuse has serious impacts on both physical and mental health, particularly among individuals in early adulthood. The rehabilitation process is often accompanied by psychological pressure arising from experiences of detention, family conflicts, and social stigma. This study aims to examine the role of resilience in addressing mental health among drug addicts at the National Narcotics Agency of North Sumatra Province. This research employed a qualitative method using observation and in-depth interviews. The subjects consisted of three male early-adult drug users selected through purposive sampling, with criteria of individuals aged 18–40 years who were undergoing outpatient rehabilitation at the National Narcotics Agency of North Sumatra Province. The resilience theory used in this study refers to Reivich and Shatté (as cited in Hardiana & Dewi, 2023), which explains that resilience is the ability of individuals to endure, recover, and adapt positively when facing pressure or difficult life experiences, enabling them to function effectively. This ability is reflected through seven factors: emotional regulation, impulse control, causal analysis, self-efficacy, optimism, empathy, and reaching out. The results indicate that drug use is influenced by peer environment, family pressure, and the need for social acceptance. During detention, participants experienced psychological distress such as stress, anxiety, feelings of pressure, and loneliness. Among the seven resilience factors, family support, humane rehabilitation conditions, and optimism were the most significant in fostering resilience, as participants expressed a strong desire to change, avoid disappointing their families, and improve their future.

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### INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse is one of the serious problems in Indonesia that affects not only physical health but also has a significant impact on mental health, such as depression, anxiety, and emotional disturbances. This condition often worsens the rehabilitation process, as individuals must also face social stigma and difficulties in readjusting to society. Therefore, addressing drug abuse requires a comprehensive approach that focuses not only on physical recovery but also on psychological rehabilitation (Hidayat, 2024).

The success of rehabilitation largely depends on an individual's ability to cope with various psychological pressures during the recovery process. Individuals undergoing rehabilitation often experience stress, anxiety, and emotional distress due to environmental changes, limited activities, and the need to adapt to a new lifestyle. These conditions may hinder recovery if not properly managed (Hidayat, 2024).

North Sumatra is one of the regions with a high rate of drug abuse in Indonesia. Data indicate that the prevalence of drug users in this region is relatively high compared to other provinces, highlighting the need for more serious interventions, particularly in mental health recovery (BNN, 2020; Antara News, 2024; Nova et al., 2024). This situation underscores the urgency of developing more comprehensive and sustainable rehabilitation services.

In addition to environmental factors, the developmental stage of individuals also plays an important role in drug abuse. Early adulthood (18–40 years) is a phase characterized by various pressures, including social, economic, and psychological demands. At this stage, individuals face challenges such as identity formation, work responsibilities, and complex social relationships, which increase vulnerability to risky behaviors, including drug use (Razali et al., 2024; Hurlock, 2019).

In dealing with these pressures, psychological capacities that enable individuals to survive and recover from adversity are essential, one of which is resilience. Resilience refers to an individual's ability to adapt, cope with stress, and recover from difficult experiences. Individuals with high levels of resilience tend to have better coping strategies, are able to regulate emotions effectively, and maintain a more optimistic outlook on the future (Reivich & Shatté, 2002, in Hardiana & Dewi, 2023).

Resilience also functions as a protective factor in maintaining mental health and supporting successful rehabilitation. Individuals with strong resilience are more capable of managing stress, reducing the risk of psychological disorders, and preventing relapse after rehabilitation. Furthermore, social support from family and the surrounding environment plays a crucial role in strengthening individual resilience during the recovery process (Prime et al., 2020; Sihombing, 2022).

Conceptually, resilience includes several key aspects, namely emotional regulation, impulse control, causal analysis, self-efficacy, optimism, empathy, and reaching out. Individuals who possess these aspects are more capable of coping adaptively with life's challenges and maintaining mental stability in difficult situations (Reivich & Shatté, 2002, in Hardiana & Dewi, 2023; Southwick et al., 2019).

The National Narcotics Agency of North Sumatra Province (BNNP-SU) plays an important role in implementing rehabilitation programs for individuals with substance use disorder. However, the high prevalence of drug abuse presents significant challenges, particularly in ensuring mental health recovery during rehabilitation. Therefore, understanding the role of resilience in addressing mental health problems among drug addicts is essential for developing more effective and sustainable rehabilitation strategies.

Based on the above explanation, this study aims to examine the role of resilience in addressing mental health among drug addicts at the National Narcotics Agency of North Sumatra Province.

## METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using observation and in-depth interviews to gain a comprehensive understanding of individuals' subjective experiences regarding the role of resilience in addressing mental health problems among drug addicts. This approach was chosen because it is capable of exploring meanings, perceptions, as well as psychological and social dynamics that cannot be explained through quantitative methods (Amanda & Aulia, 2023; Syahrizal & Jailani, 2023).

The research participants consisted of three male individuals aged approximately 18–26 years who were drug addicts undergoing outpatient rehabilitation at the National Narcotics Agency of North Sumatra Province (BNNP-SU).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of this study were obtained through observation and in-depth interviews with three participants undergoing outpatient rehabilitation at the National Narcotics Agency of North Sumatra Province (BNNP-SU). The findings indicate that all participants experienced significant psychological changes before, during, and after the rehabilitation process.

Before becoming drug users, the participants had relatively normal social lives; however, each faced different pressures. Participant 1 experienced emotional burden as the family's breadwinner, Participant 2 was influenced by peer interaction and curiosity, while Participant 3 experienced family pressure and a desire for independence. These factors

became the initial triggers for drug use, which were largely influenced by peer offers. This finding is consistent with previous studies indicating that peer pressure plays an important role in the early stages of drug abuse (Hasan et al., 2021; Watts et al., 2024).

In addition to peer influence, individual psychological and social factors also contributed to drug use. Emotional pressure, curiosity, and the need for autonomy were identified as major contributing factors. This is in line with previous research stating that drug abuse is influenced by a complex interaction of individual, family, and social environmental factors (Alhyas et al., 2015; Nur'artavia, 2017).

During detention at the police station, all participants experienced severe psychological distress. Participant 1 reported high levels of stress due to overcrowded and inhumane conditions, Participant 2 experienced emotional disturbances such as fear, loss of motivation, and anxiety, while Participant 3 experienced sadness and shock due to limited communication with family. These conditions indicate that restrictive environments with limited activities and social interaction can lead to significant psychological pressure. This finding is consistent with Haney (2018) and Sinuraya and Subroto (2021), who highlight the negative psychological impact of detention conditions.

In contrast, during rehabilitation at BNNP-SU, participants showed gradual psychological improvement. Participant 1 felt more comfortable in a structured and humane environment, Participant 2, who initially felt disappointed, gradually adapted, and Participant 3 showed emotional improvement with social support and family visits. Positive activities such as exercise, religious practices, and social interaction contributed to emotional stability. This supports findings that structured and supportive rehabilitation environments improve psychological well-being (Shaver et al., 2023).

Resilience emerged as a key factor in supporting participants' mental recovery during rehabilitation. This finding is in line with Johanna et al. (2023), which explains that resilience consists of seven main factors, namely emotional regulation, impulse control, causal analysis, self-efficacy, optimism, empathy, and reaching out that contribute to improving individuals' quality of life. All participants demonstrated the ability to regulate emotions, control impulses, and understand the causes of their behavior. Each participant developed different coping strategies, such as engaging in physical activities, sharing experiences with peers, and strengthening spiritual practices. This is in line with studies suggesting that resilience can be developed through physical activity, social support, and spiritual approaches (Wu et al., 2022; Graber et al., 2024).

Furthermore, impulse control was evident among participants, as they were able to redirect negative urges into adaptive activities such as exercise, religious practices, and building positive social relationships. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that redirecting negative impulses into constructive activities strengthens recovery and reduces relapse risk (Putri & Rahmasari, 2021).

Causal analysis also played an important role in the resilience process. Participants demonstrated awareness of the negative impact of drug use on themselves and their families, which motivated them to change and avoid repeating past behaviors. This finding aligns with Walsh (2016), who emphasizes that awareness of negative consequences is a key factor in behavioral change and recovery.

Self-efficacy was reflected in participants' confidence in completing the rehabilitation process and maintaining positive changes. Participants showed belief in their ability to recover and rebuild their lives. This is supported by Saleem and Masood (2024), who state that self-efficacy plays a crucial role in recovery success and relapse prevention.

Optimism also contributed to the recovery process. Participants expressed confidence in their ability to change and build a better future, supported by family encouragement and personal life goals. This finding is consistent with research by Devi and Singh (2025), which highlights the role of optimism in sustaining recovery and improving quality of life. This finding is also in line with the study by Johanna et al. (2024), which shows that individuals who are able to find meaning in life during the rehabilitation process tend to have a more positive outlook, greater optimism, and improved psychological well-being.

In addition, empathy toward family and the social environment strengthened participants' resilience. Awareness of the negative impact of their behavior on family members fostered a sense of responsibility and motivation to change. This supports findings by Graber et al. (2024), which indicate that empathy and social awareness enhance recovery processes.

Finally, participants demonstrated the ability to rebuild their lives (reaching out) by engaging in productive activities, working, and distancing themselves from previous negative environments. This indicates that resilience not only supports mental recovery but also facilitates social adaptation and long-term personal development. This finding is consistent with Bufford and Lappan (2023), who state that successful recovery is characterized by the ability to live a productive and meaningful life. This is also supported by the study conducted by Aritonang et al. (2024), which states

that motivation to recover and a supportive environment play an important role in helping individuals lead more productive lives and successfully reintegrate into society after the rehabilitation process.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that resilience plays a crucial role in addressing mental health problems among drug addicts undergoing rehabilitation at the National Narcotics Agency of North Sumatra Province (BNNP-SU). The findings show that all participants experienced significant psychological distress during detention, followed by gradual improvement during the rehabilitation process.

Resilience was reflected through several key aspects, including emotional regulation, impulse control, causal analysis, self-efficacy, optimism, empathy, and the ability to reach out. These aspects enabled participants to cope with psychological pressure, adapt to challenging conditions, and maintain their commitment to recovery. Each participant demonstrated different coping strategies, such as engaging in physical activities, strengthening spiritual practices, and building supportive social relationships.

In addition, internal motivation and social support, particularly from family, were found to be important factors in strengthening resilience. The participants' awareness of the negative consequences of drug use and their desire to improve their lives contributed significantly to their recovery process and helped prevent relapse.

Furthermore, the rehabilitation environment at BNNP-SU, which provides structured activities and social support, plays an important role in facilitating psychological recovery. Positive changes after rehabilitation, such as engaging in productive activities and rebuilding social relationships, indicate that resilience not only supports mental recovery but also contributes to long-term adaptation and personal development.

In conclusion, strengthening resilience is essential in the rehabilitation process, as it helps individuals overcome mental health problems and supports sustainable recovery among drug addicts.

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