

# Loneliness psychoeducation in the community of frater in Maumere

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## ABSTRACT

Loneliness is an unpleasant experience that occurs when a person experiences social relations that are low in quality or quantity. This situation can happen to anyone, including the brothers in the Brothers Community in Maumere. The brothers as candidates for priests who are involved in community life also experience loneliness in community life. This is due to being away from family members, lack of communication with family members, and lack of socialization with the surrounding community. The Loneliness Psychoeducation given will be a new resolution to find something of value behind the loneliness they experience. The brothers who were involved in this psychoeducational loneliness activity became more understanding about loneliness and found positive coping. The methods used in this psychoeducation are loneliness socialization methods, problem trees and group counseling. The result of this psychoeducation is that the brothers understand the loneliness they feel, are more open with themselves, and find positive coping in community life.

## KEYWORDS

Loneliness;  
community of frater;  
psychoeducation



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## 1. Introduction

Convent life actually faces challenges that are not much different from the life of ordinary people [1]. What is different here is that the life of a convent trains us to live fully belonging to God and to others [2][3][4]. The monastic life brings us to the attitude that our life is completely serving God, through prayer and others, without being attached to worldly matters and personal matters [5][6]. Likewise in the Carmelite monastery, Blessed Dionysius, who generally has the same goal [7][8]. Behind the walls of this monastery there are many interesting stories but it is not uncommon for them to harbor cold loneliness and spiritual silence of their own [9][10]. The brothers who were educated at the Carmelite Monastery of Blessed Dionisius Maumere are people who are interested in becoming priests or religious associations [11][12][13].

As for the community life contained in the Blessed Dionysius Monastery, namely gotong royong and cooperation which have become the hallmarks of monastic life [14][15]. Various activities in the monastery are carried out together according to the schedule [16][17][18]. Morning activities generally start with getting up at 3.30 am to do morning worship (Laudes) for about half an hour and one and a half hours of meditation which must be followed by all community members [19][20][21]. After mass and breakfast together, the brothers begin their activities by studying in class like a school or lecture three afternoon services (Hora Media) at 12.30 for weekdays and 12.00 for holidays [22][23][24]. Afternoon activities are carried out by the brothers according to a set schedule, namely at 15.30 after the afternoon break and return to evening worship (Vespers) and then there is time for private study. The closing service (completerium) is held after dinner at 20.00, after the service and dinner are continued with recreational activities. Life in a monastery is not always as calm and peaceful as it seems [25][26]. There are still conflicts that occasionally arise because each member is still a human who is weak and has his own shortcomings [27][28]. Togetherness in the monastery teaches how interactions and conflicts are processed spiritually [29]. Living together fosters an open attitude to accept the differences

of each member as well as generosity to forgive and heal any wounds that occur due to friction with one another as ordinary people [30].

Based on interviews and observations of the brothers in the Carmelite Monastery community of Blessed Dionisius Maumere, the brothers stated that they often experience situations of loneliness as a result of the binding monastic rules where they as brothers are not free to communicate with outsiders. then the lack of communication access they have to communicate with the people closest to them [31], [32]. Apart from that, the rules for the brothers during the Covid-19 pandemic, which prevented them from having recreation outside the monastery or what is known as the recreation week, were abolished [32]. The brothers stated that they became more introverted individuals because their interactions were limited [33], [34]. The limitation of building relationships with outsiders other than being in a lecture place and then returning to the community makes them bound by rules that make them have to endure climbing that calling [35]. Such rules and demands with limited access to information or communication media that they have make the brothers experience a situation or condition of psycho-emotional imbalance which is marked by a feeling of emptiness or feeling empty due to a lack of ties with other people which is usually called loneliness or loneliness [36], [37].

Loneliness is a condition that is subjectively felt by someone as lacking in quality and quantity in establishing relationships because the relationships that occur are smaller than the desire [38], [39]. Loneliness often occurs among the brothers, especially those who are new to the monastery, this situation is part of a psychological problem which will certainly affect a person's psychological development [39]–[42]. Loneliness is closely related to psychological well-being and emotions and psychological distress [43].

Loneliness is a problem experienced by a person, which occurs as a result of interpersonal relationships currently not in accordance with the expectations that have been formed so that it becomes an unpleasant and sad subjective experience, causing feelings of sadness, feelings of helplessness, hopelessness and emptiness [44], [45]. Unpleasant feelings are influenced by the absence of social relations as expected by individuals and the absence of intimate relationships so that social contact with people is cut off [46], [47]. Loneliness referred to in this case is a feeling in which a person feels empty, feels alone, feel that they have no friends in them, are always restless and bored even in a busy environment [48], [49].

The loneliness experienced by the brothers is a clear example of the problems that ordinary people face [50]. The brothers also experienced difficulties communicating with those closest to them during their education as future priests [51]. They are only allowed to communicate during Catholic holidays [52]. Apart from that, the Covid-19 pandemic has prompted many changes to the rules. Usually, they often have a week of limited recreation, so they spend a lot of time in monasteries and private rooms [53]. The limited access to communication that the brothers have and the strict rules in the monastery are one of the problems of loneliness that brothers experience even though they are in a community with quite a large number of members [54]. Loneliness can occur depending on personal assessment of the relationship experienced rather than the number of friends one has [55].

Loneliness will greatly affect the life of the brothers in the monastery, affecting the quality of themselves and the vocation they are currently living [56]. Loneliness is correlated with several psychological disorders, mood disorders, impaired mental health, self-harm, and attempted suicide [57]. Loneliness also affects a person's physical and mental condition, making him more vulnerable to death. If the loneliness experienced by the brothers is not resolved immediately, it will be bad for the brothers themselves and also for the community in the monastery. Because constant loneliness will certainly make a lot of negative emotions that often arise. Emotional balance in dealing with loneliness and managing it certainly needs educational guidance so that the brothers are better able to deal with this situation [58].

The guidance that will be given to the brothers is related to things to do when the brothers experience loneliness in the convent [59]. Counseling and telling stories can certainly make them find new experiences to make a reference for continuing to climb the vocation as a candidate for priests. The phenomenon of loneliness that they often experience must certainly become a concern for the community to continue to fulfill their religious vocation and guide prospective priests to balance and find themselves in the reflection of silence in a life of prayer together in the Carmelite community of

Blessed Dionisius Maumere. In response to this reality, psychoeducation of loneliness has become a joint activity plan for the brothers in the Carmel community of Blessed Dionysius so that new information related to overcoming the feeling of loneliness that they often experience can be handled properly. In addition, psychoeducation is an intervention method that focuses on educating participation regarding challenges or problems in life. The hope of the researchers providing this psychoeducation is to help the brothers develop sources of social support in dealing with loneliness and to be able to explore feelings of loneliness that they often experience alone in community life by choosing positive stress coping.

## 2. Method

a) The initial step taken by the researcher was to conduct observations and interviews for one week with the brothers at the monastery of Blessed Dionisius Maumere

b) Coordination, approaching the Blessed Dionisius Maumere community and the fathers in the Carmelite Community of Blessed Dionisius Maumere East Nusa Tenggara to carry out Loneliness Psychoeducation for the brothers in accordance with the problems found by researchers.

c) Implementation of Loneliness Psychoeducation for the brothers at the Carmel Convent of Blessed Dionisius Maumere will be held on Sunday, June 6 2021, 09:00 – 14:00 WITA, and the second day on Monday, June 7, 2021 09:00-11: 00 WITA took place at the Carmelite Monastery Community of Blessed Dionisius, Kelurahan, Kota Uneng Maumere – NTT, which was attended by 14 first degree brothers.

d) Evaluation. After the loneliness psychoeducation activity for the brothers Carmel Beato Dionisius Maumere. The Nusa Nipa University Psychology Study Program community service team evaluates activities related to the activities that have been carried out. The activities carried out went well with satisfactory results. The Community Service Team (PKM) of the Psychology Study Program at Nusa Nipa University hopes that the information received by the brothers regarding loneliness will not only stop until the activity ends today, but it is hoped that this information can be passed on to other brothers who are not participating in socialization activities and become a medium of learning and sharing in living with the community.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The stages of implementing loneliness psychoeducation activities include:

a) Providing Loneliness Socialization

The provision of Loneliness Socialization is shown in Figure 1. The figure shows that in this session the participants were given information about loneliness which became new information for them to better understand loneliness more broadly.



**Fig. 1.** Loneliness Socialization

b) Problem Tree

The division of groups in making the problem tree is shown in Figure 2. The figure shows that in the problem tree stage, the participants will draw the trees in their study and will be divided into groups according to the number of participants present.



**Fig. 2.** The division of groups in making a problem tree

The making of the problem tree is shown in Figure 3. The figure shows that the participants will explore deeper the roots of the problems they feel and the impact they feel based on the problem of loneliness personally and as a community.



**Fig. 3.** Creating a Problem Tree

#### c) Group counseling

Group counseling is shown in Figure 4. The figure shows that in a group counseling session, participants will be divided into two groups and each participant in the group will freely tell the root of the problems they are experiencing and then be given solutions by the facilitator and counseling assistant with the participants.



**Fig. 4.** Group Counseling

The psychoeducational activities at the Carmelite Monastery of Blessed Dionosius Maumere will take place on Sunday 06 June 2021 and Monday 7 June 2021. The activities on the first day lasted 5 hours and on the second day lasted 2 hours. The implementation of loneliness psychoeducation was carried out by a community service team from the Psychology Study Program, Faculty of Social Sciences, totaling five people, consisting of two Psychology Study Program lecturers and three psychology students, namely Ms. Epifania Margareta Ladapase, M.Psi., Psychologist, Mrs. Sitti Anggraini, M.Psi, Psychologist, Paulus Lunga, Natesha Fabiola Leto, Claudia Kasmayati Sari Kasih,

The implementation of psychoeducation begins with an introduction according to the rundown that has been prepared. The brothers were asked to draw their own faces by naming the most prominent good and bad qualities. Furthermore, the participants were asked to write down their hopes and

concerns related to the ongoing process of loneliness psychoeducation activities. After the process of presenting the Loneliness material, there was an introduction to each participant, then they made their hopes and worries about the problems they were facing. Psychoeducational activities went very well starting from the presentation session on loneliness material, making a problem tree and the last session was a counseling session. The participants seemed active during the process and seemed to enjoy each session enthusiastically and cooperatively.

After the process of giving material to the brothers about the psycho-education of loneliness, the brothers were directed to enter the next stage, namely the problem tree. In this session the participants were asked to find the factors that cause loneliness and the consequences of loneliness itself. And each group then presented the results of the discussion together. The series of activity processes was then followed by a group counseling session. In this counseling session the participants openly shared the problems they were experiencing and were then given confirmation by a psychologist which lasted 1.5 hours. After the counseling process took place, the participants were then directed to make an action plan which became their commitment after receiving psychoeducation. When evaluating the emphasis is on implementing the action plans that have been made and providing positive inputs related to managing loneliness that arises both individually and in community life. The results of the evaluation that was carried out on the brothers in the psychoeducational activities provided were well received and all participants felt comfortable participating in the loneliness psychoeducational activities until they were finished. The participants were very interested in loneliness and of course this topic is very relevant to monastic life. Group counseling sessions allow the brothers to be freer and allow them to share openly and find solutions to the problems they face. Loneliness is indeed a serious problem in community life in monasteries. Therefore a very important role for the brothers is to carry out positive stress coping to support self-management in responding to loneliness that occurs in a more positive direction.

Loneliness is the realization when a person feels unloved and alienated from other people in their environment. Like other psychological variables, it originates within but shows itself through various external symptoms such as poor social skills; emotional problems such as low self-esteem, depression and anxiety; behavioral problems such as shyness, social withdrawal and decreased participation. Loneliness relationship with various physiological diseases such as heart failure, high blood pressure and dementia. People with few social ties are at increased risk of death from heart disease, cancer, respiratory and gastrointestinal diseases and suffer more anger, anxiety, hostility, pessimism and lower self-esteem.

The brothers who are involved in the life of the convent certainly experience quite significant changes in the life of the community. They must adapt well to the situation of silence and monastic life, which are not used to many things like ordinary people. They are also limited by the use of mobile phones so that the access they have is not very good to communicate with the people closest to them. In addition, the commitment to celibacy, which is full of challenges, is also at risk of having a saturation effect and sometimes putting pressure on it too. The feeling of loneliness they experience is a challenge in itself that allows them to be able to control the situation so that they don't do bad things if they are not managed properly.

Their reactions to the loneliness they often experience are different and based on observations and interviews during the activity during the group counseling session they learn to be honest with the situation they are experiencing and they experience a lot of internal problems they are experiencing and have not found the right coping. of the problems they are experiencing. Some of them have vented their emotions negatively and some of them even chose to keep the problems they were experiencing. Such an attitude will certainly make the lonely situation worse, making it difficult for them to find the right way. The presence of loneliness psychoeducation for the brothers is a good first step to study and learn together to find problem solving that they get from the problems they experience. Loneliness is an unwanted and disturbing feeling. Loneliness is a feeling of being alone inside or incomplete or not quite satisfied rather than being alone physically. Unlike loneliness, if being alone is the result of a preferred choice, it may not lead to feelings of loneliness. Loneliness is a common and depressing problem. Although to varying degrees, most people experience loneliness at least once in their life. Loneliness is described as the difference between a desired relationship and an actual relationship. So it is a deficiency in social relations that is felt. Loneliness is an emotional state that is felt subjectively rather than

something that can be measured by the number and physical proximity of people around. In the formation of feelings of loneliness, the level of satisfaction in social relations rather than the number is important. Loneliness is divided into two categories: emotional loneliness and social loneliness. Emotional loneliness is the absence of close committed relationships, and social loneliness is the absence of a satisfying social circle. Social loneliness is accompanied by feelings of rejection and boredom.

Accepting loneliness and telling about it is an important step to take further to change the situation. Another efficient method for lonely people besides therapy is social skills training. can develop social skills he is not good at and acquire skills to deal with loneliness. learning nonverbal communication methods are some of the social skills that are taught.

The loneliness psycho-education given to the Carmelite Brothers of the Community of Blessed Dionisius Maumere has become a new learning medium for the brothers to find positive coping with their loneliness problems and to help them find positive actions they can do everyday to reduce loneliness itself. that they experience in community life.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The loneliness psychoeducation given to the brothers at the Carmelite Convent of Blessed Dionisius Maumere has become a new educational platform to learn how to find positive stress coping for yourself in community life. The brothers became more open and challenged to tell stories for healing. Loneliness must be managed with a positive attitude of acceptance so that living in prayer together while in the community becomes joy in togetherness, not loneliness in the vocation itself. The brothers are expected to develop a more open attitude with themselves and know more about themselves in order to enrich their abilities so that they can utilize their talents and interests to turn any feeling of loneliness into positive stress coping.

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#### **Author Contribution**

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#### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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