



The Role of LBH Yogyakarta in Providing Mental Health Support for Victims of Violence

Revi Mariska

¹ Islamic Counseling Guidance, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia

mariskarevi21@gmail.com

Abstract

Forensic mental health counseling is one of the areas in counseling related to legal issues, and cases of violence are cases that often involve mental and legal issues. The purpose of the study was to determine the role of LBH Yogyakarta in providing mental assistance for victims of violence. The research method used was qualitative with data collection in two ways, namely through library research and interviews. Meanwhile, the results of the study, namely LBH Yogyakarta provides mental assistance for clients who are victims of violence and for clients who need further mental assistance will be transferred to institutions that are partners of LBH Yogyakarta, namely LPSK and Rifka Annisa. Both institutions provide services of psychologists or counselors who will accompany the victims.

Keywords: *Mental Forensics, Victims of Violence*

Introduction

Indonesia is a country based on the rule of law. Every problem and case that occurs in Indonesia can be brought to justice. Cases in Indonesia vary widely and often involve mental health issues for both victims and perpetrators, particularly in cases of violence and sexual harassment against children and women. These cases of violence and harassment continue to increase annually in Indonesia. In 2018, according to the National Commission on Violence Against Women's Annual Report, the number increased to 2,979 cases in the personal

sphere and 2,670 cases in the public sphere. ¹Meanwhile, the National Commission on Violence Against Women's Annual Report in 2024 recorded 445,502 cases, a significant increase from previous years.²

Given the increasing number of cases of violence and harassment each year, it is crucial for the state and legal institutions to provide mental health support for victims. In this regard, the role of psychologists, counselors, or psychiatrists is crucial for restoring victims' mental health, focusing on Forensic Mental Health Counseling. Forensic mental health counseling is a field within counseling related to legal issues. ³Psychology's role began to emerge in the legal process in 2007, following the formation of the Forensic Psychology Association (APSIFOR). ⁴Although psychology's role has been recognized and several laws exist governing its professional services, the specific position of forensic mental health counseling in Indonesia is not yet clearly defined in legislation, and its role has not yet developed significantly.⁵

However, although the role of forensic mental health counseling in Indonesia is not specifically stipulated in legislation and has not yet developed significantly, this role has been utilized in several cases. This is evident in research conducted by Putri et al., which demonstrated several roles forensic psychology plays in providing assistance to victims, such as providing psychological and emotional support during the legal process and ensuring that victims' rights are properly fulfilled. Furthermore, forensic psychology also plays a role in providing information regarding the victim's psychological condition

¹ Amanda Pasca Rini and Devi Puspitasari, "Dedication: Journal of Community Service" 4, no. 2 (2024): 63–68.

² National Commission on Violence Against Women, *EXECUTIVE SUMMARY "ORGANIZE DATA, SHARPENING DIRECTION: Reflections on Documentation and Trends in Cases of Violence Against Women 2024" Annual Report on Violence Against Women 2024*, vol. 2023, 2024.

³ Carl J. Sheperis, Donna S., Sheperis, *Clinical Mental Health Counseling: Basics of Practice*, 1st ed. (Yogyakarta: PUSTAKA BELAJAR, 2017).

⁴ Fitri Melati Sopyani and Triana Noor Edwina, "The Role of Forensic Psychology in Law in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Forensic Psychology* 1, no. 1 (2021): 46–49.

⁵ Dani Ramadhan Syam, Bambang Dwi Baskoro, and Sukinta Sukinta, "The Role of Forensic Psychology in Solving Premeditated Murder Cases (The Relevance of the 'Lie Detection Method' in the Evidence System According to the Criminal Procedure Code)," *Diponegoro Law Journal* 6, no. 4 (2017): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.14710/dlj.2017.19775>.

and can serve as expert witnesses in court, as well as mediating between victims and perpetrators if necessary.⁶

It can also be seen from legal institutions, some of which have also paid attention to the mental health of victims by providing mental support for victims, especially victims of violence and harassment. These institutions include the Witness Protection Agency (LPSK) and the Legal Aid Institute (LBH). The Legal Aid Institute is a non-governmental organization under the auspices of the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI) and has spread to various regions in Indonesia, one of which is in Yogyakarta. The focus of the LBH is to provide free legal assistance to the underprivileged. However, it is known that LBH, specifically LBH Yogyakarta, not only provides legal assistance but also pays attention to the mental health of victims, especially victims of sexual violence. Therefore, this article will examine the role of LBH Yogyakarta in providing mental support for victims of sexual violence.

Research methods

Data collection methods were carried out in two ways, namely through literature review (*library research*) and interviews (*interviews*). Literature review (*library research*) was conducted by collecting literature relevant to the title, both from books and previous journal articles, and other sources.⁷ Meanwhile, data collection through interviews *was* carried out through a question and answer process between the interviewer *and* the *interviewee* who were staff of LBH Yogyakarta.⁸ Meanwhile, research data was processed and analyzed qualitatively based on the results of the literature review and the results of the interviews using words to describe the results, so that conclusions can be produced in the form of systematic language and sentences, and can be well understood.

⁶ Tugimin. Putri, Yuliana, Aisyah, Siti. Wulandari, Putri, Agustina, Eliza, Supriadi, "The Role of Forensic Psychology in Accompanying Victims of Sexual Violence," *Bulletin of the Indonesian Scientific Psychology Consortium* 1, no. 3 (2025): 12–17, <https://buletin.k-pin.org/index.php/arsip-artikel/1309-peran-psikologi-forensik-dalam-dekatatan-viktimologi-pada-korban-kekerasan-seksual>.

⁷ Fauzan Suhaimi Pratiwi, Bella, Budiharti Ichsan, "LITERATURE REVIEW: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN MIDDLE ADOLESCENTS," 2018.

⁸ John W. Creswell, *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Approaches* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2014).

Results and Discussion

The research findings describe the role of LBH Yogyakarta in assisting clients in need of mental health support. Interviews with a staff member of LBH Yogyakarta, identified as P, revealed that clients who typically receive mental health support are victims of violence or harassment. The following subchapters discuss how LBH Yogyakarta provides this support:

The Role of LBH Yogyakarta in Accompanying Victims

Research findings based on interviews indicate that LBH Yogyakarta's role in assisting victims is crucial, as is the general function of LBHs in Indonesia: providing legal aid to underprivileged victims. However, in this case, the focus of LBH Yogyakarta's role is on mental health support for victims of violence or harassment.

*"Eh, in the incoming cases of sexual violence, the initial consultation also assesses the victim's condition. So, does he or she need crisis intervention? Well, if they do, that means we'll collaborate. So, because LBH Jogja is a legal aid institution, we don't have a psychology clinic or anything like that. So, we do collaborate with other institutions."*⁹

Based on the interview, informant P stated that LBH's role in assisting victims in need of mental health support is to connect them with relevant institutions that provide psychological services, as LBH Yogyakarta does not yet have its own psychology clinic. However, informant P added the following:

*"Hmm, there aren't any specifically psychological ones. We're all legal counselors. But we often receive training on how to receive clients or become counselors in handling sexual violence."*¹⁰

So, based on the informant's statement, LBH Yogyakarta staff are also equipped with basic counseling skills to be used to handle clients who are victims of sexual violence, so that for initial assistance, the role remains with LBH Yogyakarta, before being transferred to an expert psychologist if more serious mental treatment is needed.

⁹Interview P (May 2025)

¹⁰Interview P (May 2025)

Mental Counseling Process by LBH Yogyakarta

Research findings based on interviews indicate that during the client assistance process at LBH Yogyakarta, clients are first admitted. Afterward, the client is asked to describe the issues they are facing. During this process, the LBH Yogyakarta staff member assesses whether the client requires mental health support.

*"So, the client acceptance process at LBH is that they first come here for a consultation, right? Well, that's where we, as advocates, actually conduct an initial assessment. So, we first observe the victim when they recount their story, eh, is they still eh, or what? Well, if we meet victims often, we can differentiate whether they are at the stage where they are ready to tell their story or not? This is how it is, how it is, and so on. This can all be seen when they recount their story."*¹¹

Based on the presentation, it was discovered that the initial consultation with the client is the first step for LBH Yogyakarta to determine what type of mental health support will be provided. Follow-up support involves collaborating with other institutions if the client's mental health requires more serious treatment.

*"So, in addition to explaining the chronology of the case, we also ask you about your current condition. For example, are you under any threat? Or are you experiencing anything? Are you having trouble sleeping because of this incident? Or are you thinking about ending your life, etc., these are also questions during the consultation process, to map that out."*¹²

Based on the interview results, it was discovered that in determining further mental health support, several questions were asked to guide LBH Yogyakarta staff in determining further action. The institutions collaborating with LBH in this regard include both non-governmental and governmental institutions.

"Usually we collaborate with the LPSK, the Witness and Victim Protection Agency. We usually collaborate with Rifka Annisa. Rifka Annisa isn't a government institution, either. LPSK was formed by the central government,

¹¹Interview P (May 2025)

¹²Interview P (May 2025)

*right? And there's also something called Reksodi Utami. That's a provincial institution that handles sexual violence, violence against women, and children."*¹³

According to informants, the LPSK (Lembaga Penita Masyarakat) is a central government-established institution that collaborates with LBH. Rifka Annisa is a non-governmental organization. Furthermore, Reksodia Utami, a provincial government-established institution, also operates. These institutions have their own psychology units, making it easier for clients to access mental health support through them.

*"Well, if it's psychological support, they'll find a psychologist and then the victim can access it for free."*¹⁴

So, based on the interview, it was discovered that institutions collaborating with LBH Yogyakarta also require psychologists from outside the institution to be accessed free of charge by victims using provincial government funds.

*"If it's not referred to another institution that can access funds from the province, if not, we use our funds, and the very last thing, usually if it's really urgent and we can't access these two, then we use the client's own funds, like that."*¹⁵

Based on the informant's explanation, it was discovered that if provincial funds are unavailable, funds are provided by LBH Yogyakarta. However, if the situation is truly urgent and cannot be accessed from provincial funds or LBH, the client must use their own funds. The decision regarding whether to proceed to psychological assistance depends on the client's condition, as explained by the informant:

"Eeee... actually, fifty-five, Miss, it depends on the client's condition, right? I mean, sometimes there are clients who don't realize that they are going through a bad psychological phase, so if it's like that, we usually give them advice, sometimes there are also those who are already aware, they come here because they feel they have no other choice, or whatever, they want to end their life and

¹³Interview P (May 2025)

¹⁴Interview P (May 2025)

¹⁵Interview P (May 2025)

*all that, so they are already aware that they need help and if the victim is like that, usually they are the ones who ask for it. Like that."*¹⁶

So, for clients who truly need psychological help but are still in denial about their condition, LBH Yogyakarta will provide advice and help them understand. However, there are also clients who are aware of their psychological condition. These clients will come forward on their own for help. Meanwhile, in addition to their psychological issues, there are also legal issues that clients must face. The following is a detailed explanation of the process as described by the informant:

*"Well, in our procedure, we have to first map out their psychological condition to see whether they are ready or not for the trial process. If they are not ready, their psychological problems must be resolved first. So, we don't have to wait until it's completely finished before we handle the psychological problems, but the psychological problems must come first before legal treatment because legal treatment is definitely long... The process... considering the trauma, right? So, we have to clear up their psychological problems first, at least if they don't recover, they must be strong enough to face the trial process. We also have to consider the victim's condition, for example, if they do need psychological help, but they are ready to face the reporting process, then that's okay, we'll go through it together."*¹⁷

Based on the interviews, it was discovered that before undergoing legal proceedings, the client's psychological condition must first improve. However, if the client's psychological condition is not too severe and allows them to participate in the legal process, then mental or psychological support will run alongside the legal process. The informant described the transfer of clients requiring mental support from LBH to partner institutions as follows:

"So, uh, usually the chronology... we've already put together a chronology, for example, we've definitely met with the victim several times for consultations, so from there we put together a chronology and that's what's sent to the Institute. We're the ones who tell the story there, and usually the victim will also be asked questions, uh, but I don't know what the procedure is because they're not

¹⁶Interview P (May 2025)

¹⁷Interview P (May 2025)

*allowed in, right? Only the victim and the psychologist. Like that, but we usually still hand over the chronology that we've put together, like that."*¹⁸

In this case, based on the interview, LBH Yogyakarta will provide the client's case history to the partner institution or the treating psychologist if the client has been transferred to psychological care. Afterward, the client will be re-asked for the case history to confirm further details. However, further psychological support will be transferred to the partner institution or the treating psychologist.

LBH Yogyakarta's Challenges in Providing Mental Health Assistance to Clients

The challenge faced by LBH Yogyakarta in providing mental support to clients based on research results is the lack of a psychology unit owned by LBH Yogyakarta, as stated by the following informant:

*"If there are challenges, firstly, uh... because we don't have our own, we have to collaborate. Therefore, uh, because of collaboration, the process takes a bit longer because we have to wait for procedures from each institution we're collaborating with first, that's the first thing."*¹⁹

Based on the interviews, it was discovered that the main challenge facing LBH in providing mental health support to clients is the lack of a psychology unit at LBH Yogyakarta. Therefore, to receive mental health support, clients must first go through the procedures of each of LBH Yogyakarta's partner institutions. Furthermore, informants noted that the challenges also lie with the clients.

*"Secondly, because we don't have our own, the victim has to tell us twice, so the process is two times. That's also a challenge for the victim, right? So it makes things worse... but usually, we make sure the victim is safe first, meaning if you need psychological help, we're available, but the process will take a little longer and you'll have to tell us the chronology twice, if you're ready, okay."*²⁰

So, the second challenge for LBH Yogyakarta in providing mental health support to clients lies with the clients themselves, who must recount the

¹⁸Interview P (May 2025)

¹⁹Interview P (May 2025)

²⁰Interview P (May 2025)

chronology of their cases. However, before doing so, they must ensure their readiness to recount the chronology.

Research results show that in addition to providing legal assistance, LBH also facilitates mental health support for clients. Clients who typically require mental health support are victims of sexual violence or harassment. It is crucial to address the trauma victims experience, as evidenced by Tambaip and Tjilen's research, which explains that helping victims of sexual violence recover from trauma and excessive fear requires serious support, providing appropriate and correct reinforcement. Furthermore, it is stated that a referral process is necessary to alleviate the trauma experienced by victims at the scene of the crime.²¹

However, in this case, LBH Yogyakarta does not yet have a psychology unit, so it cannot provide optimal psychological treatment. Therefore, collaboration is carried out with other institutions that provide psychology units, such as Rifka Annisa which is a non-governmental organization and LPSK which is a government-formed institution. LPSK is a Witness and Victim Protection Agency that has the duty and authority to protect and assist victims, as well as witnesses as regulated in Law Number 13 of 2006, which was later amended to Law Number 31 of 2014.²² Meanwhile, Rifka Annisa is a Non-Governmental Organization that *focuses* on cases of domestic violence against women. The form of Rifka Annisa's efforts in combating domestic violence cases is by carrying out social actions in championing laws to eliminate violence and as a form of service to women who are victims of domestic violence.²³

Meanwhile, the collaboration between LBH Yogyakarta and other institutions has been established for quite a long time, and the process of transferring clients to receive psychological assistance from partner institutions requires more time. Previously, clients will describe the chronology of their

²¹ Beatus Tambaip and Alexander Phuk Tjilen, "Positive Impact of the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service Policy in Handling Cases of Sexual Violence against Children," *Musamus Journal of Public Administration* 5, no. 2 (2023).

²² Fiona Florencia Fevernova and Hery Firmansyah, "A Review of the Role of LPSK in the Process of Enforcing Justice for Incest Victims," *Unes Law Review* 6, no. 2 (2023): 4235–42.

²³ Sukma Paramastuti and Indrawati, "The Intervention of the Yogyakarta 'Rifka Annisa' Community for Women Victims of Domestic Violence," *INTELEKSLA Journal of Development of Islamic Propagation Science* 01, no. 02 (2020): 187–211, <http://jogja.tribunnews.com/2017/03/08/rifka->.

problems to LBH Yogyakarta, which will be considered by LBH regarding the next steps in providing psychological treatment. If the psychological condition requires serious treatment, then they will be transferred to a partner institution. However, if the psychological condition is mild and can still be handled by LBH Yogyakarta staff who have received basic counseling training or supplies, then the partner institution is not involved. The counselor training is conducted to improve staff competence in assisting clients, as research by Awalya et al., which found that the competence of counselor training participants increased, where this was influenced by the participants' own motivation to improve their counseling skills.²⁴

For the client transfer process from LBH Yogyakarta to a partner institution, if the client requires further psychological treatment, LBH Yogyakarta will provide the client's case history to the partner institution or psychologist. However, the accompanying psychologist retains the authority to ask the client to recount the case history and circumstances to ensure effective support. This client transfer is stipulated in the counseling code of ethics, which encourages counselors to hand over cases to colleagues if they are unable to provide the necessary assistance.²⁵

In providing mental health support to clients, the obstacle or challenge faced by LBH Yogyakarta is the lack of a psychology unit, requiring LBH Yogyakarta to collaborate with other institutions, which takes longer. Furthermore, clients who have reported their cases to LBH Yogyakarta must recount the chronology of their cases to the partner institution or the psychologist providing the assistance. Given the high number of cases of violence, it is crucial for LBH Yogyakarta to establish a mental health or psychological support unit, ensuring that in addition to optimal legal assistance, victims' mental health support is also maximized.

²⁴ Nur Mawakhira Yusuf, "Counselor Training in Improving the Quality of Counseling for BKI IAIN Palopo Students," *Madaniya* 3, no. 3 (2022): 501–6, <https://madaniya.pustaka.my.id/journals/contents/article/view/242>.

²⁵ Jumrawarsi Jumrawarsi et al., "Counseling Code of Ethics and Problems in Its Implementation," *Encyclopedia of Journals* 3, no. 4 (2021): 53–58, <https://doi.org/10.33559/eoj.v3i4.799>.

Conclusion

In providing mental health support services to clients, LBH Yogyakarta collaborates with other institutions that provide mental health support services, such as the LPSK (Lembaga Penita Masyarakat Indonesia/LPSK) and Rifka Annisa (Religious Affairs Agency) due to the lack of a psychology unit within LBH Yogyakarta. In the mental health support process, clients will initially receive support from LBH Yogyakarta. However, if more serious treatment is needed, they will be transferred to a partner institution that provides psychological services. The lack of a psychology unit at LBH Yogyakarta is an obstacle or challenge currently faced by LBH in providing mental health support because it requires clients to recount the chronology of their cases twice. Therefore, as a suggestion in this article, it is hoped that LBH Yogyakarta will establish a psychology unit within the institution, so that support for clients is more optimal and optimal. Furthermore, suggestions for the government include greater attention to mental health support for victims of violence and a specific and clearer definition of forensic mental health in the law.

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