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Application of the Reframing Technique to Improve the Self-Confidence of Students Who Experienced Bullying

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ABSTRACT

Bullying remains a serious problem in schools because it negatively affects students' psychological well-being, particularly their self-confidence. Students who experience bullying often develop negative self-perceptions, become reluctant to express their opinions, and encounter difficulties in social interactions. Therefore, effective counseling interventions are needed to help students reconstruct more positive perspectives about themselves. This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of group counseling using the reframing technique in improving the self-confidence of eighth-grade students who experienced bullying at SMP Negeri 14 Palu. This study employed Guidance and Counseling Action Research (PTBK) involving six students selected through purposive sampling. The research was conducted in two action cycles consisting of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Data were collected through observation, interviews, documentation, and a self-confidence questionnaire, and were analyzed using descriptive quantitative and qualitative approaches. The findings demonstrated a consistent improvement in students' self-confidence throughout the intervention. The average self-confidence percentage increased from 39.17% during the pre-cycle to 57.67% in Cycle I and reached 73.17% in Cycle II. These findings indicate that group counseling using the reframing technique effectively improved students' self-confidence and can be considered an appropriate counseling intervention for students who experience bullying.

1. Introduction

Bullying has become one of the most serious issues in educational settings, particularly in Indonesian schools, because it threatens students' psychological well-being and the quality of the learning environment. Schools are expected to provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment where students can optimally

develop their intellectual, emotional, social, and personal potential. However, the reality indicates that repeated bullying incidents continue to occur and adversely affect students, especially during adolescence, a developmental stage characterized by rapid emotional and social changes. Previous studies have emphasized that a positive school climate and comprehensive guidance and counseling services are essential to preventing bullying and promoting students' psychological development (Rahmah & Purwoko, 2024; Cahyani et al., 2025).

Bullying has consistently been recognized as a significant risk factor affecting students' mental health, psychological adjustment, and academic participation. Victims of bullying frequently experience anxiety, fear, emotional distress, social withdrawal, and decreased self-confidence, all of which may negatively influence their learning motivation and interpersonal relationships (Rahmah & Purwoko, 2024; Hadijah et al., 2023). According to Olweus (1993), bullying refers to repeated aggressive behavior that intentionally harms another individual and involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. Bullying may occur in physical, verbal, social, or psychological forms and is repeated over time. In educational settings, bullying generally involves repeated aggressive behaviors characterized by an imbalance of power between perpetrators and victims. Consequently, victims often experience not only physical harm but also long-term psychological consequences, including emotional instability, decreased academic performance, and social isolation (Hadijah et al., 2023; Hasanah & Nursalim, 2023). Moreover, child-friendly school management and effective school counseling programs have been identified as important protective factors for reducing bullying while promoting students' emotional well-being (Cahyani et al., 2025).

One of the most significant psychological consequences experienced by bullying victims is diminished self-confidence. Self-confidence refers to an individual's belief in his or her own abilities, strengths, and personal value, enabling individuals to act independently, think optimistically, accept responsibilities, and remain resilient when facing various challenges (Lauster in Ghufon, 2012; Hakim, 2021). Students with high self-confidence are generally more willing to express opinions, participate actively in classroom discussions, establish healthy interpersonal relationships, and solve academic problems independently. Conversely, students with low self-confidence often develop feelings of inferiority, fear of failure, hesitation to communicate, difficulty concentrating, and reluctance to engage in classroom learning activities (Hadijah et al., 2023; Rahmah & Purwoko, 2024). These findings are consistent with Wololi et al. (2025), who reported that structured group guidance services effectively improve students' self-esteem and confidence by encouraging positive self-evaluation and strengthening interpersonal interaction.

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that self-confidence is closely associated with students' academic engagement, emotional well-being, interpersonal communication, and problem-solving abilities. Students with adequate self-confidence tend to participate more actively in classroom discussions, demonstrate greater persistence when facing academic challenges, and develop healthier interpersonal relationships. Conversely, students with low self-confidence

often avoid social interaction, underestimate their own abilities, and become increasingly vulnerable to emotional distress. Therefore, counseling interventions designed to strengthen students' self-confidence should become an integral component of comprehensive school guidance programs. Similar conclusions were reported by Putri and Darmayanti (2025), who found that group counseling interventions significantly improved the self-esteem of adolescents who experienced bullying, indicating that cognitive and behavioral counseling approaches effectively help victims reconstruct positive self-perceptions and adapt more successfully to their social environment.

To address this problem, effective interventions within school guidance and counseling services are required. One promising cognitive-behavioral intervention is the reframing technique, which originates from the Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) approach. Reframing assists individuals in changing the meaning they assign to unpleasant experiences by replacing negative interpretations with more adaptive and constructive perspectives (Corey, 2017). In the context of bullying, reframing encourages students to reinterpret their experiences not as evidence of personal weakness but as opportunities for growth, resilience, and self-development (Fajrin & Christina, 2020). Consequently, students become more capable of accepting themselves, managing negative emotions, and rebuilding positive beliefs about their own abilities (Fajriani et al., 2022; Hasanah et al., 2025). Likewise, cognitive-based counseling interventions have demonstrated considerable effectiveness in modifying maladaptive thinking patterns and improving students' psychological adjustment. Putri et al. (2025) reported that cognitive restructuring techniques successfully reduced maladaptive behavioral tendencies by helping students replace irrational beliefs with more adaptive and constructive thinking patterns. These findings further strengthen the theoretical basis for applying the reframing technique because both interventions emphasize cognitive restructuring as the primary mechanism for improving students' psychological functioning.

Group counseling provides an appropriate setting for implementing the reframing technique because students are encouraged to share experiences, receive emotional support from peers, exchange constructive perspectives, and learn adaptive coping strategies within a supportive group environment. The interaction among group members also strengthens the cognitive restructuring process because students realize that their experiences are not unique and that others can successfully overcome similar difficulties. Previous studies have demonstrated that group counseling combined with cognitive interventions effectively improves students' confidence, emotional regulation, and social adjustment (Fajrin & Christina, 2020; Fajriani et al., 2022; Miranda & Hasibuan, 2025).

Although numerous studies have investigated bullying, self-confidence, and various counseling interventions, limited studies have specifically examined the implementation of the reframing technique through Guidance and Counseling Action Research (PTBK) involving junior high school students who experienced bullying. Most previous studies employed experimental or quasi-experimental approaches, whereas PTBK enables counselors to continuously improve counseling services through systematic cycles of planning, implementation, observation, and

reflection. Consequently, further investigation is required to provide practical evidence regarding the effectiveness of reframing techniques implemented in authentic school counseling settings. This study attempts to fill this gap by implementing group counseling using the reframing technique for students experiencing low self-confidence as a consequence of bullying.

Preliminary observations conducted at SMP Negeri 14 Palu, particularly in Class VIII Aristoteles, revealed that several students had repeatedly experienced verbal bullying, resulting in low self-confidence. These students frequently demonstrated reluctance to express opinions, avoided classroom participation, experienced feelings of inferiority, and displayed negative perceptions of their own abilities. Such conditions indicate the need for structured counseling interventions capable of modifying students' maladaptive cognitive patterns and restoring their self-confidence.

Based on the theoretical background, previous empirical findings, existing research gap, and the problems identified at SMP Negeri 14 Palu, this study aimed to examine the effectiveness of group counseling using the reframing technique in improving the self-confidence of eighth-grade students who experienced bullying. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of evidence-based guidance and counseling practices, particularly in implementing cognitive-behavioral interventions to support bullying victims in secondary schools.

2. Methodology

This study employed Guidance and Counseling Action Research (Penelitian Tindakan Bimbingan dan Konseling/PTBK) to examine the effectiveness of the reframing technique in improving the self-confidence of students who experienced bullying. PTBK is an action research approach specifically designed to enhance the quality of guidance and counseling services through a continuous process of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. This design allows counselors to identify existing problems, implement counseling interventions, evaluate the outcomes, and continuously improve subsequent counseling practices (Hidayat & Badrujaman, 2012; Taniredja et al., 2010; Manuardi, 2019). Therefore, PTBK was considered the most appropriate research design because the primary objective of this study was not only to measure changes in students' self-confidence but also to improve counseling services through systematic reflective cycles.

The study was conducted at SMP Negeri 14 Palu, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, involving students from Class VIII Aristoteles during the 2024/2025 academic year. The research participants consisted of six students who were identified as victims of bullying and demonstrated low levels of self-confidence based on the results of preliminary observations, counseling teacher recommendations, and initial self-confidence assessments. The participants were selected purposively because they met the characteristics required for the implementation of the counseling intervention. Prior to conducting the research, informed consent was obtained from

the school, and all participants voluntarily agreed to participate in every counseling session.

This research adopted the action research model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart, consisting of two action cycles. Each cycle included four interconnected stages, namely planning, action, observation, and reflection. During the planning stage, the researcher prepared counseling session plans, observation sheets, self-confidence questionnaires, and supporting counseling materials. During the implementation stage, group counseling sessions applying the reframing technique were conducted. The observation stage focused on monitoring students' behavioral changes, participation, communication, and emotional responses throughout the counseling process. Finally, the reflection stage was carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of each counseling session and to identify necessary improvements before implementing the subsequent cycle (Taniredja et al., 2010).

The counseling intervention consisted of four group counseling meetings, with two meetings conducted in Cycle I and two meetings in Cycle II. During each counseling session, students were encouraged to identify negative thoughts resulting from bullying experiences, discuss these experiences within the counseling group, receive constructive feedback from peers, and reconstruct maladaptive perceptions into more adaptive and positive interpretations through the reframing technique. The counselor facilitated discussions, guided students in recognizing irrational beliefs, and encouraged participants to develop healthier cognitive perspectives regarding themselves and their experiences. This intervention was expected to strengthen students' self-confidence by helping them reinterpret bullying experiences from a more positive and constructive perspective.

Data were collected using a self-confidence questionnaire consisting of 27 items developed based on indicators of self-confidence, including self-belief, courage in expressing opinions, social interaction, responsibility, and emotional control. In addition, observation sheets were used to record students' behavioral changes during counseling sessions, including participation, communication, confidence in expressing ideas, and interaction with other group members. These two instruments complemented each other in describing both quantitative changes in self-confidence scores and qualitative changes in students' behavior throughout the intervention.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive percentage analysis to determine changes in students' self-confidence across the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II. The percentage scores were classified into three categories: very low (<40%), low (40%-59%), and high ($\geq 60\%$). The effectiveness of the intervention was evaluated by comparing self-confidence scores obtained before and after each action cycle. Furthermore, observational findings from each counseling session were used to support the interpretation of quantitative results and to provide a more comprehensive understanding of students' psychological development during the implementation of the reframing technique.

The success indicator of this study was achieved when the majority of participants demonstrated improvement in self-confidence from the low or very low category to

the high category after the implementation of group counseling using the reframing technique. The reflection results obtained in each cycle served as the basis for improving subsequent counseling activities until the predetermined success criteria were achieved.

3. Result and Discussion

Implementation of Group Counseling Using the Reframing Technique

Before presenting the research findings, it is important to describe how the group counseling intervention using the reframing technique was implemented throughout this study. The intervention was carried out through Guidance and Counseling Action Research (PTBK) consisting of two action cycles, with each cycle involving planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Overall, four counseling meetings were conducted, with two meetings in Cycle I and two meetings in Cycle II. During the first meeting of Cycle I, the counselor established rapport among participants, explained the objectives of group counseling, introduced group rules, and encouraged students to share their experiences related to bullying. Most participants initially demonstrated hesitation when expressing their thoughts and emotions because they had developed negative perceptions of themselves after repeatedly experiencing bullying. Therefore, the counselor emphasized creating a supportive group atmosphere that encouraged openness, empathy, and mutual respect among participants.

The second meeting focused on introducing the reframing technique. Students were guided to identify irrational beliefs and negative self-perceptions that had emerged as a consequence of bullying experiences. Through reflective discussions, guided questioning, and peer feedback, participants gradually learned to reinterpret bullying experiences from more positive and adaptive perspectives. Although several students began to demonstrate improved confidence during group discussions, observations indicated that some participants still experienced anxiety and hesitation when communicating their opinions. Consequently, improvements were planned for the second action cycle.

Cycle II emphasized strengthening cognitive restructuring through more intensive reflective discussions, positive reinforcement, and peer support activities. Participants were encouraged to identify their personal strengths, appreciate their own achievements, and replace negative self-beliefs with more realistic and constructive interpretations. The counselor continuously facilitated group interaction so that students could learn from one another's experiences while developing greater confidence in expressing ideas and interacting socially. Observational findings during Cycle II indicated noticeable behavioral improvements. Participants became more active in counseling sessions, demonstrated greater willingness to communicate, responded positively to peer feedback, and showed increased confidence when discussing their previous bullying experiences. These behavioral changes suggested that the reframing technique effectively facilitated positive cognitive changes before measurable

improvements were observed in the self-confidence questionnaire results. Following the implementation of the counseling intervention, students' self-confidence was measured during the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II. The findings are presented in the following section.

This section presents the results of students' self-confidence measured during the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II following the implementation of group counseling using the reframing technique. Students' self-confidence was assessed using a 27-item questionnaire with a maximum score of 108. Based on the percentage scores obtained, students' self-confidence was classified into three categories, namely very low (<40%), low (40%-59%), and high ($\geq 60\%$). The comparison of self-confidence scores across the three measurement stages provides empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of the counseling intervention implemented throughout this study. The pre-cycle assessment was conducted to determine the initial level of students' self-confidence before the implementation of the counseling intervention. This initial measurement served as the baseline for evaluating the effectiveness of the reframing technique throughout the two action cycles. The results of the pre-cycle assessment are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Initial Self-Confidence Levels of Students Who Experienced Bullying (Pre-Cycle)

No.	Participant	Score	Percentage (%)	Category
1	P1	47	44	Low
2	P2	39	36	Very Low
3	P3	37	34	Very Low
4	P4	38	35	Very Low
5	P5	46	43	Low
6	P6	46	43	Low
Mean		42.17	39.17	Very Low

Table 1 presents the initial self-confidence levels of students who experienced bullying before the implementation of group counseling using the reframing technique. The findings indicate that three participants were categorized as having very low self-confidence, with percentage scores ranging from 34% to 36%, while the remaining three participants were classified in the low category, with scores ranging from 43% to 44%. The average score obtained during the pre-cycle was 42.17, equivalent to 39.17%, indicating that the participants generally demonstrated very low self-confidence prior to the intervention. The pre-cycle findings suggest that bullying had negatively affected students' confidence in expressing their opinions, interacting with peers, and recognizing their own abilities. Similar findings have been reported by Hadijah et al. (2023) and Rahmah and Purwoko (2024), who stated that students who experience bullying commonly develop negative self-perceptions and reduced self-confidence. Therefore, the initial assessment confirmed the need for an appropriate counseling intervention to assist students in developing more positive perceptions of themselves before proceeding to the first action cycle.

Following the pre-cycle assessment, the first action cycle was implemented through two group counseling sessions using the reframing technique. During this cycle, students were encouraged to identify negative thoughts resulting from bullying experiences and gradually reconstruct these maladaptive perceptions into more positive and rational interpretations. The counselor also facilitated group discussions to encourage peer support and active participation throughout the counseling process. The results obtained after the implementation of Cycle I are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Students' Self-Confidence Levels After the Implementation of Group Counseling Using the Reframing Technique (Cycle I)

No.	Participant	Score	Percentage (%)	Category
1	P1	64	59	Low
2	P2	71	66	High
3	P3	63	58	Low
4	P4	63	58	Low
5	P5	49	45	Low
6	P6	65	60	High
Average		62.50	57.67	Low

Table 2 demonstrates that students' self-confidence improved following the implementation of Cycle I. The average score increased from 42.17 during the pre-cycle to 62.50, equivalent to an average percentage of 57.67%, indicating a considerable improvement in participants' self-confidence. Two participants (P2 and P6) successfully achieved the high self-confidence category, while the remaining four participants remained in the low category with percentage scores ranging from 45% to 59%. Although the quantitative findings indicate positive progress, observational data revealed that several participants still experienced hesitation when expressing their opinions and occasionally returned to negative self-evaluations during counseling sessions. These findings indicate that the reframing technique had initiated positive cognitive changes; however, the restructuring process had not yet been fully established. This finding supports the cognitive-behavioral perspective proposed by Corey (2017), which explains that modifying deeply rooted maladaptive beliefs requires repeated cognitive practice and continuous reinforcement. Similar findings were reported by (Fajrin & Christina, 2020), who concluded that the reframing technique gradually changes students' negative perceptions by encouraging them to reinterpret unpleasant experiences from more adaptive perspectives.

Therefore, additional counseling sessions were necessary to strengthen the intervention outcomes during Cycle II. Based on the reflection conducted after Cycle I, several improvements were implemented during Cycle II. The counseling sessions focused on strengthening the application of the reframing technique through more intensive reflective discussions, positive reinforcement, and peer support. Students were encouraged to reinterpret their bullying experiences from more adaptive perspectives, recognize their personal strengths, and develop more

positive beliefs about themselves. The results obtained after the implementation of Cycle II are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Students' Self-Confidence Levels After the Implementation of Group Counseling Using the Reframing Technique (Cycle II)

No.	Participant	Score	Percentage (%)	Category
1	P1	83	77	High
2	P2	82	76	High
3	P3	79	73	High
4	P4	82	76	High
5	P5	67	62	High
6	P6	81	75	High
Average		79.00	73.17	High

Table 3 shows a substantial improvement in students' self-confidence following the implementation of Cycle II. All participants successfully achieved the high self-confidence category, with percentage scores ranging from 62% to 77%. The average score increased to 79.00, equivalent to 73.17%, indicating that the counseling intervention produced consistent improvements in all participants after the second action cycle. The findings indicate that repeated implementation of group counseling using the reframing technique enabled students to gradually replace negative self-perceptions with more positive and realistic interpretations.

In addition to the improvement in questionnaire scores, observational data showed that participants became more confident in expressing their opinions, actively participated in group discussions, and demonstrated greater confidence when interacting with their peers. These behavioral changes suggest that the intervention not only improved students' self-confidence quantitatively but also positively influenced their interpersonal communication and classroom participation. The present findings are consistent with Hasanah et al. (2025), who reported that the reframing technique effectively improves students' self-confidence by modifying maladaptive cognitive patterns developed through negative experiences. Similarly, Miranda and Hasibuan (2025) found that structured group guidance services significantly enhanced students' self-confidence by promoting positive thinking, emotional regulation, and supportive peer interaction.

Therefore, the improvements observed in Cycle II indicate that repeated counseling sessions strengthened the effectiveness of the reframing technique in helping students reconstruct more adaptive beliefs about themselves following bullying experiences. To obtain a comprehensive overview of the effectiveness of the intervention, students' self-confidence scores obtained during the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II were compared. This comparison illustrates the overall progress achieved throughout the implementation of group counseling using the reframing technique and provides evidence regarding the consistency of students' self-confidence improvement across the two action cycles. The comparison of participants' scores is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Comparison of Students' Self-Confidence Scores Across the Pre-Cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II

No.	Participant	Pre-Cycle	Cycle I	Cycle II
1	P1	47	64	83
2	P2	39	71	82
3	P3	37	63	79
4	P4	38	63	82
5	P5	46	49	67
6	P6	46	65	81
Average Score		42.17	62.50	79.00
Average Percentage (%)		39.17	57.67	73.17

Table 4 demonstrates a consistent improvement in students' self-confidence throughout the research process. The average score increased from 42.17 during the pre-cycle to 62.50 in Cycle I and further increased to 79.00 in Cycle II. Similarly, the average percentage improved from 39.17% in the pre-cycle to 57.67% in Cycle I and reached 73.17% in Cycle II. These findings indicate that students' self-confidence improved progressively following each counseling cycle, suggesting that the repeated implementation of the reframing technique contributed positively to participants' cognitive and emotional development.

Although improvements had already emerged during Cycle I, the most substantial changes were observed after Cycle II, when all participants successfully achieved the high self-confidence category. This finding indicates that the counseling intervention required continuous implementation before producing stable cognitive and behavioral changes. The results are consistent with Corey (2017), who emphasized that cognitive restructuring requires repeated practice to replace maladaptive beliefs with more adaptive patterns of thinking. Similar findings were also reported by Fajrin and Christina (2020) and Putri et al. (2025), who concluded that cognitive-based counseling interventions effectively strengthen students' self-confidence through gradual changes in cognitive interpretation and self-evaluation. To facilitate the interpretation of students' progress throughout the intervention, the comparison of self-confidence scores across the three measurement stages is also illustrated graphically in Figure 1. The graphical presentation provides a clearer visualization of the consistent improvement achieved by each participant following the implementation of group counseling using the reframing technique.

Figure 1 illustrates a consistent increase in the average self-confidence scores throughout the research process. The average score improved from 42.17 during the pre-cycle to 62.50 after the implementation of Cycle I and further increased to 79.00 in Cycle II. This upward trend demonstrates that each action cycle contributed positively to improving students' self-confidence, with the greatest improvement observed after the implementation of Cycle II. The progressive improvement shown in Figure 1 confirms the effectiveness of repeated group counseling sessions using the reframing technique. The intervention enabled students to gradually replace negative self-perceptions resulting from bullying experiences with more adaptive and constructive beliefs. Similar findings were reported by Corey (2017), who

explained that cognitive restructuring requires repeated reinforcement to produce stable cognitive changes. Likewise, Putri et al. (2025) found that cognitive restructuring techniques effectively modify maladaptive thinking patterns through continuous counseling processes, while Miranda and Hasibuan (2025) reported that structured group guidance services significantly enhance students' self-confidence through positive thinking, emotional regulation, and supportive peer interaction.

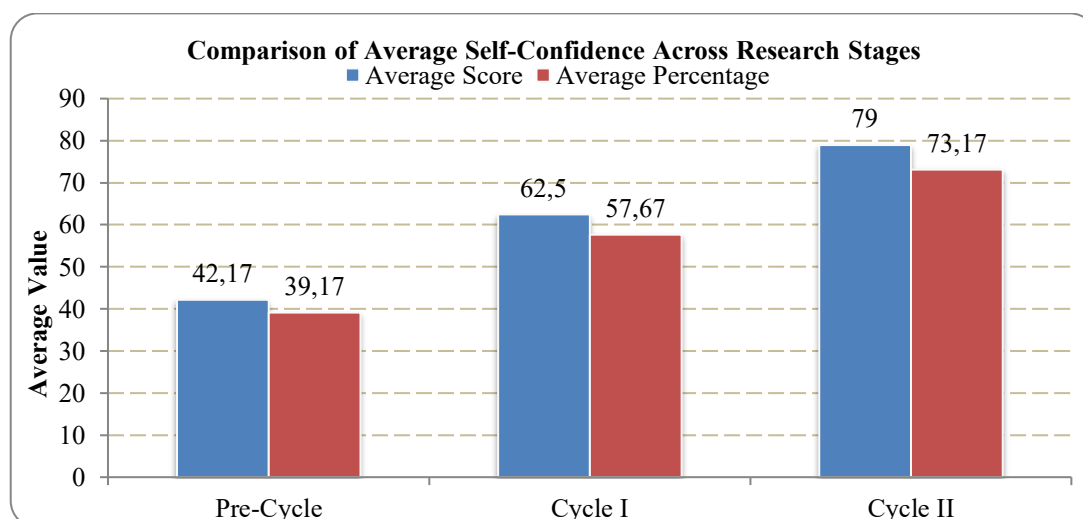


Figure 1. Comparison of Students' Self-Confidence Scores Across the Pre-Cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II

Overall, the graphical trend supports the quantitative findings presented in Tables 1-4 and provides additional evidence that the implementation of group counseling using the reframing technique was effective in improving the self-confidence of students who experienced bullying. These findings serve as the basis for the subsequent discussion regarding the theoretical implications of the intervention and its contribution to guidance and counseling practices in schools.

4. Conclusion

This study was conducted to examine the effectiveness of group counseling using the reframing technique in improving the self-confidence of eighth-grade students who experienced bullying at SMP Negeri 14 Palu. Based on the findings obtained throughout the two action cycles, it can be concluded that the implementation of the reframing technique within group counseling effectively improved students' self-confidence. The intervention enabled participants to develop more positive perceptions of themselves, express their opinions more confidently, interact more actively with their peers, and demonstrate greater emotional resilience when responding to the negative experiences caused by bullying.

The success of this study indicates that group counseling combined with the reframing technique can serve as an effective intervention for assisting students in reconstructing maladaptive thoughts into more adaptive and constructive

perspectives. The findings also highlight the important role of school counselors in providing structured and continuous counseling services to support students' psychological well-being and personal development.

Future research is recommended to involve a larger number of participants, include schools with different educational settings, and examine the long-term effectiveness of the reframing technique through follow-up observations. In addition, further studies may compare the reframing technique with other cognitive-behavioral counseling approaches to identify the most effective intervention for improving students' self-confidence and addressing the psychological impacts of bullying.

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