


Digital Intervention and Peer-Support Group to Promote Mental Health of Children and Adolescents During COVID-19: Practical Guidelines From Indonesia

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Dear Editor,

Changes in the education system during the pandemic challenge education development, especially in dealing with students' mental health.¹ The author believes that COVID-19 has psychologically affected students' mental health. Every effort should be made so that education is not only a role in transferring knowledge but is also a means of promoting mental health. Under normal conditions, sometimes students still face mental health development problems, especially during COVID-19. After approximately 2 years, the government established a policy on distance learning. There are some advantages and negative impacts, one of the negative impacts is on students' mental health.² In Indonesia, for example, the government has reopened schools with various directions and guidelines for preventing the spread of COVID-19, such as using masks and social distancing. Still, the mental health of students has not been entirely a concern of various parties.³

The authors agree with the article by Sharma et al⁴ that the long-term implications of school closures on the mental development of children and adolescents need to be paid attention to by various elements, such as schools, doctors, psychologists, and the government. Sharma suggested that maximizing the role of peer-support groups would significantly increase awareness about the importance of mental health in schools.⁴ In addition, the authors consider the need to use existing technologies such as digital applications or websites to promote students' mental health, which can be easily accessed via their smartphones.^{5,6} Schools can also maximize social media's role in promoting students' mental health. Communication technology allows people to get information about health, education, politics, and others. In particular, the smartphone is handy for people to bring it everywhere and help them access any information.^{7,8} Social

media can strengthen and protect adolescents' mental health.^{9,10}

The importance of developing a curriculum that pays attention to the mental health development of students after Covid-19 will have an impact on reducing the risk of mental health decline for children and adolescents. This curriculum design will maximize peer support groups to develop students' mental health and maximize existing technology using digital applications or websites related to mental health. Until now, distance education and direct education have not maximized peer support groups and technology in improving the mental health of students in Indonesia. By reviewing education development in Indonesia, this article becomes essential as a curriculum design reference that can facilitate the development and promotion of students' mental health during and post-COVID-19 with the digital intervention and peer supports group.

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