

PARENTING COUNSELING FOR COUNSELORS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Abstract

The development of information and communication technology in the digital era has brought major changes in various aspects of life, including parenting. Generation Z and Alpha children grow up in the midst of a rapid flow of information and massive digital influence, thus posing new challenges for parents in carrying out their parenting role. Many parents feel overwhelmed by changes in children's behavior that are influenced by exposure to gadgets, negative content, and changes in communication patterns in the family. To answer this challenge, parenting counseling comes as a psychological service that aims to help parents understand child development, develop adaptive parenting skills, and strengthen emotional relationships in the family. This article is prepared using the literature study method, which examines various scientific sources related to parenting counseling, digital parenting, and the role of counselors in assisting parents. The results of the discussion show that parenting counseling in the digital era should be conducted systematically through five main stages: initial assessment, therapeutic relationship building, therapeutic intervention, homework assignment, and evaluation. Counselors are not only tasked with providing technical solutions, but also supporting parents' mental health, providing an understanding of the digital generation, and building synergy between families and schools. Parenting counseling has become very important in the midst of today's global challenges because it is very important for parents

Keywords: Parenting, Digital Age, Role of Parents

1. Introduction

The development of information and communication technology has overhauled the order of people's lives, including in terms of childcare. Parents have an important role in educating their children. Each generation has different attitudes and personalities depending on the changing times (Ruslan et al., 2025) Children in the digital era, especially Generation Z and Generation Alpha, face different challenges than previous generations. They live in the midst of a rapid flow of information, easy access to digital content, and global influences that shape their mindset and behaviour

Under these conditions, the role of parents as primary caregivers becomes increasingly important. However, not all parents are ready for this change. Many feel overwhelmed, confused, or even stressed in dealing with their children's increasingly complex behavior. This is where parenting counseling comes in as an important solution.

As this digital era continues to grow rapidly, the dynamics of family life and parenting are undergoing significant changes. The rapid development of technology, social media, and access to information has had a major impact on the interaction between parents and children. Challenges in the world of parenting are now not only about discipline, communication, or child education, but



also include new issues such as excessive gadget use, cyberbullying, negative content on the internet, and emotional disorders due to cyber exposure.

It is in this context that the role of counselors becomes increasingly important. Counselors are not only required to understand the theories of counseling and child development, but also need to have competence in providing parenting guidance that is relevant to today's digital reality. Parenting counseling in the digital era demands a more holistic, adaptive, and technology-based approach, in order to assist parents in carrying out their roles effectively without losing the essence of interpersonal relationships in the family

Parenting is a process in which parents play a role in providing education, attention, and appropriate direction to support children's growth and development. Parenting is a way or pattern of care applied by parents to their children, starting from infancy and even from the time the child is still in the womb until they reach the stage of maturity. According to Jane Brooks (2011), parenting is a process that involves actions and interactions between parents and children, where the process becomes a forum for both of them to influence and change each other as children grow towards maturity. The community environment also has a role in providing both support and pressure on parents and children, and can experience changes in responding to the needs and behaviors carried out by both (Anggraini & Karneli, 2021)

Optimal parenting not only covers the physical needs of children, but also pays attention to psychological and social aspects. In practice, good parenting plays an important role in shaping children into mentally, emotionally and socially healthy individuals. However, many parents experience difficulties in carrying out their parenting functions. Problems such as poor communication, mismatched parenting styles, pressure in dealing with family problems, or even conflicts between spouses, can become obstacles in creating a harmonious family atmosphere. This condition can have a negative impact on the process of child development, which should take place in a safe, loving, and supportive environment from parents (Redjeki et al., 2025).

Parenting counseling is a form of psychological intervention designed to help parents understand and implement positive, empathic and nurturing parenting patterns. The ultimate goal is to improve parents' ability to assist their children emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

In the digital age, parenting counseling is becoming increasingly relevant because:

- Children are vulnerable to exposure to negative content
- Parents need adaptive parenting strategies
- Social and academic pressures on children are increasing
- Communication between family members is often disrupted by the use of gadgets

Therefore, this article discusses the urgency, process, and implementation strategies of parenting counseling in the digital era, especially for counselors as professionals who assist parents in parenting.

2. Methods

This article was prepared using the literature study method, namely by collecting and analyzing various theoretical and practical sources regarding parenting counseling, parenting in the

digital era, and child development. The sources used come from scientific journals, reference books, news articles, and relevant research reports. literature study is a method of collecting data by searching and reading existing written sources such as books or literature that explain the theoretical basis.(Rusmawan, 2019) Similarly, collecting data and information by exploring knowledge or knowledge from sources such as books, papers, and several other sources that have to do with the object of research

The preparation of this article aims to provide an in-depth understanding of:

- a. The basic concept of parenting counseling
- b. The Urgency of Parenting Counseling in the Digital Era
- c. Parenting Counseling Process in the Digital Age
- d. Action Plan for Counselors in the Digital Age

3. Results and Discussion

- a. Basic concepts of parenting counseling

Parenting counseling is a form of assistance service provided by counselors or therapists to parents in the process of parenting. The goal is to help parents understand child development, develop positive parenting skills, and build harmonious relationships between parents and children.

Parenting Counseling (KP) is a therapy designed to help parents overcome various challenges that arise in the parenting process. In the digital era, where information can be disseminated easily and quickly through various technological platforms, the dynamics in parenting are increasingly complex. These changes demand a more adaptive and relevant parenting counseling approach.

The purpose of KP is to provide psychological support, guidance, and skills necessary for parents to be able to accompany their children positively and effectively. KP is conducted by counselors or therapists who are trained in the field of child development and parenting, so that they are able to assist parents in dealing with parenting problems and support optimal child development in the midst of changing challenges

- b. The Urgency of Parenting Counseling in the Digital Era

In the midst of rapid technological development and social changes occurring in the digital era, the role of parenting counseling has become increasingly urgent in supporting the health and harmony of family life. Parenting challenges are now not only related to children's basic needs, but also include complex issues that arise due to the influence of the digital environment, such as gadget addiction, exposure to negative content, cyberbullying, and changes in communication patterns between family members.

- 1) Overcoming parenting challenges

Parenting counseling provides assistance to parents in dealing with various child development challenges, especially those influenced by the digital environment. Counselors help parents understand the psychological changes in their children that may be influenced by intense use of social media, online content, or virtual interactions. With an approach based on developmental psychology, counsellors can

help parents design appropriate parenting strategies to address issues such as hyperactivity, anxiety, decreased sleep quality, or decreased ability to socialize in person

2) Developing Parenting Skills

The digital age requires parents to have more adaptive and empathic parenting skills. Parents and children engage in a process of interaction that supports the child's physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual growth from the time the child is in the womb to the time the child is born

3) Reduce Stress and Emotional Burden

The pressure of dealing with the demands of parenting in the digital age often makes parents feel overwhelmed, anxious, or even hopeless. Parenting counseling provides a safe space for parents to express their feelings, process experiences, and get emotional support from a professional counselor. Through this process, parents can relieve stress, increase self-understanding, and gain new perspectives in dealing with parenting issues

4) Strengthening Family Relationships

One of the main goals of parenting counseling is to strengthen the relationship between parents and children. The counselor helps parents understand their children's needs, emotions, and behaviors better, thus creating a deeper and more harmonious bond. In the midst of children's tendency to be more comfortable interacting with the virtual world, it is important for parents to maintain emotional closeness through sincere communication, quality time, and deep understanding. Parenting counseling is a means to build a strong family foundation and support each other in facing the dynamics of the times

c. Parenting Counseling Process in the Digital Age

The parenting counseling process is a series of systematic and collaborative stages between counselors and parents, with the aim of improving the quality of parenting and helping children grow optimally, especially amid the challenges of the digital age. The following is a complete explanation of each stage in the parenting counseling process:

1) Initial Assessment

The initial stage in parenting counseling is the initial assessment, where the counselor conducts in-depth interviews with parents to understand the background of the problems faced. The counselor will dig up information about the parenting style that has been applied, child characteristics, family dynamics, and the influence of the digital environment such as the use of gadgets, social media, and online content. The purpose of this stage is to diagnose the problem, establish parenting needs, and set realistic and measurable therapy goals. Parenting consultation activities carried out by parents go through several stages. The stages of establishing a parenting program include identifying the needs of parents. Each parent has different needs and desires for their children who are students in educational institutions (Ningsih et al., 2024).

2) Building a Therapeutic Relationship

After the assessment phase, the counselor builds a therapeutic relationship based on trust, empathy, and openness. This safe, non-judgmental atmosphere allows parents to speak honestly about the challenges they are experiencing. In the digital age, many parents feel anxious or even ashamed to admit that they are struggling with the influence of technology on their children. Therefore, emotional support and reinforcement from the counselor is essential for parents to feel heard and understood.

3) Therapeutic Intervention

At the therapeutic intervention stage, the counselor uses various approaches that suit the needs of parents and children. Techniques that are often used include:

- Play Therapy to help children express their feelings and experiences.
- Behavior Management to establish positive behavior patterns in children.
- Effective Communication to improve interactions between parents and children.
- Psychoreligion to strengthen spiritual and moral values in parenting.
- Mindfulness to help parents and children manage stress and emotions more calmly and consciously.
- These interventions are designed to help parents understand the root of the problem, change negative thought patterns, and implement healthier and more effective parenting strategies

4) Home Assignment

In order for change to be real and sustainable, counselors often give parents home assignments. These assignments are practical exercises that can be directly applied in daily life, such as:

- Getting children used to waking up early and having a healthy routine.
- Giving verbal and non-verbal appreciation to build children's self-confidence.
- Maintain a balance of left brain (logical) and right brain (emotional and creative) activities through fun activities such as drawing, music, or role-playing.
- Set time limits for gadget use and replace them with interactive activities with the family
- This home assignment is an important tool to integrate the counseling results into the family's daily life.

5) Evaluation and Adjustment

The evaluation and adjustment stage is conducted periodically to assess the extent to which the therapy goals have been achieved. The counselor will collect feedback from parents, observe changes in the child's behavior, and assess whether the strategies implemented are effective. If necessary, the counselor will adjust the therapy plan, both in terms of approach, frequency of sessions, and types of homework. This evaluation process ensures that parenting counseling remains relevant to the child's development and the changing family situation. (Laudza Zulfa Nur Dipa, 2024)

d. Action Plan for Digital Era Counselors

1) Providing Discussions to Parents about Various Roles in Educating Children

Parenting is part of the attitude that parents have to carry out a certain relationship or carry out interactions in a deeper way as measured by how the

parents carry out parenting actions including giving gifts or appreciation, enforcing discipline and giving punishment when children make mistakes, giving attention and how parents respond to their wishes and desires (Karneli, 2021)

In a digital era full of information and massive external influences, counselors have a strategic role in helping parents understand that the success of children's education does not only depend on teachers or educational institutions alone. Although teachers have an important role in the formal learning process, the success of a complete education requires active collaboration between family, school, and community. Parents can use reasonable, constructive, positive, successful and transforming parenting models or patterns based on the above ideas

Effective parenting is the primary parenting approach Counselors need to give parents a deep understanding that they are the first and primary educators of their children. Home education is the foundation of the entire child development process, including character building, emotional intelligence, moral values and social skills.

2) Understanding to Parents in Facing Generation Z and Alpha

In general, the demographics of each age group that developed in the last 15-18 years are different from the generations before and after. A cohort is a collection of traits common to all generations. (Andriyani, 2018)

In the ever-evolving digital era, parents are faced with new challenges in educating and guiding their children born in Generation Z and Generation Alpha. These two generations have unique characteristics, as well as different psychological and emotional challenges compared to previous generations.

The term "Strawberry Generation" was first introduced by Bruce Horowitz in 2012 to describe a generation of young people who look beautiful and attractive from the outside, but are vulnerable, irritable and fragile when faced with the pressures of life. The term is used because like a strawberry that looks fresh and perfect on the outside, but bruises easily when touched or bumped, generation Z and Alpha children tend to be more sensitive and less emotionally resilient.

3) Building Synergy between Parents and Teachers at School

In this challenging digital era, collaboration between parents and teachers is very important in supporting children's full development. This synergy is not only aimed at improving academic performance, but also in shaping character, mentality, and noble values that will be the basis for the future of the golden generation. Here is a full explanation of these points:

a) Common Vision and Mission in Child Education

To build a strong synergy, parents and teachers must have a common vision and mission in educating children. The main goal is not only to create children who are academically smart, but also children who have noble character, faith, and mental resilience.

- Extracurricular activities such as mental coaching and character development are important to complement the formal education process.

- Education starts from the household, because parents are the main and first educators for children. Therefore, the foundation of tawhid (faith) must be instilled early on.

- In a proverb it is mentioned: "It takes one village to educate one child, but it takes only one village to corrupt one child." This illustrates that the synergy of society, including schools and families, is very important to maintain children's morals and behavior.

b) Creative School & Active Parent Program

For synergy to be effective, a program is needed that brings together schools and parents in creative activities and children's self-development.

- Positive Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication is key in forming harmonious relationships between teachers, parents and students.

- The BBM program (Benar, Baik, Menyenangkan) can be a guideline in interaction and approach to children:

- True: Provide information and guidance that is factual and on target.

- Baal: Using methods that are in accordance with religious and ethical values.

- Fun: The education process is conducted in a light, fun and non-stressful atmosphere.

This program assists teachers and parents in creating a conducive learning environment, both at school and at home.

c) Open and Continuous Communication

Good communication between parents and teachers is the backbone of effective synergy. In the digital age, communication does not have to be limited to face-to-face meetings.

- Use digital media such as communication groups, school apps, or video calls to monitor children's progress.

- Conduct regular parent meetings to discuss student development, both academically and non-academically.

- Establish two-way communication that supports each other, not just a one-way report or criticism (Solehatin & Wijayani, 2024)

With transparent and trusting communication, teachers and parents can jointly find the best solutions to the challenges faced by children.

4. Conclusions

Parenting counseling is an important service designed to assist parents in carrying out their parenting roles more effectively, especially in facing the challenges of the digital era. In practice, parenting counseling aims to provide psychological support, equip adaptive parenting skills, and strengthen the emotional connection between parents and children. Given the strong influence of technology on children's development, this counseling is becoming increasingly relevant, especially in dealing with problems such as gadget addiction, cyberbullying, decreased communication in the family, and identity crisis in children.

The parenting counseling process is conducted systematically through the stages of assessment, therapeutic relationship building, therapeutic intervention, homework assignment, and

periodic evaluation. The methods used include psychological, emotional, and spiritual approaches, so that parents can develop healthy, empathetic, and value-based parenting patterns. Not only helping to overcome problems, this counseling also serves as a safe space to relieve parents' stress and emotional burden, as well as a means of strengthening family closeness in the midst of changing times.

The urgency of parenting counseling is even higher when faced with the reality of Generation Z and Alpha who tend to be more sensitive and emotionally vulnerable. Therefore, counselors also have a role in providing parents with an understanding of the characteristics of this generation and how to deal with them.

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