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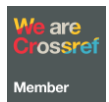
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# Ego state counseling to increase gender awareness in LGBT adolescents



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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to test the effectiveness of the ego state counseling model in increasing gender awareness in gay adolescents, focusing on aspects of masculinity, femininity, and gender neutrality. This study used a single case study design with an ABA approach. The subject of the study was a 12th grade high school student in Tasikmalaya who was identified as part of the LGBT group and showed feminine behavior. The ego state counseling intervention was carried out for 5 sessions, with a duration of 45-60 minutes per session. The measuring instruments used were the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) to measure gender awareness and the Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (MHC-SF) to measure the dimensions of mental well-being. The results showed that the ego state counseling intervention was effective in increasing gender awareness in the subjects. There was a significant increase in the masculine score ( $d = 1.84$ ) and a significant decrease in the feminine score ( $d = 3.55$ ). The dimensions of mental well-being also showed a significant increase, especially in social well-being ( $d = 2.45$ ). This study contributes to guidance and counseling services by demonstrating the potential of ego state counseling as an effective intervention to increase gender awareness and mental health in gay adolescents. These findings may assist counselors in developing more specific and targeted intervention strategies to help gay adolescent construct healthier gender identities and achieve better mental well-being.

## Keywords :

Gender Awareness  
LGBT  
Homosexual  
Gay Adolescents  
Ego State Counseling  
Mental Wellbeing  
Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI)  
Mental Health Continuum (MHC-SF)

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## Introduction

Gender issues are currently a hot topic of discussion and have even become a world problem because they are still being debated in relation to other issues, so that gender becomes one of the latest news (Lestari et al., 2023). Gender emphasizes more on the differences in roles, functions, and responsibilities between women and men (Gusmansyah, 2021). This is the result of socio-cultural construction that can change along with the times (Dalimoenthe, 2021). The problem that occurs is not the difference in roles, functions, and responsibilities, but the injustice that can arise due to these differences, which is detrimental to one party (gender) (Larasati & Ayu, 2020). The lack of awareness and slow development of public knowledge and understanding of the importance of gender awareness can lead to role gaps based on their nature (Gusmansyah, 2021; Sahertian, 2020). According to the Student Independence Competency Standards (Ministry of National Education, 2007), there are around 11 aspects of development that must be achieved by students at the senior high school level, one of which is the aspect of gender awareness by achieving internalization of objectives such as the introduction of collaborative behavioral learning between genders in various aspects of life, accommodation to appreciate the diversity of male or female roles as a modality of

collaboration and harmony in life, and actions to collaborate harmoniously with other genders in various roles.

The problem of gender awareness in society is a serious problem. The lack of gender understanding will further reduce the access that everyone should have without being limited just because of their gender. Based on Statista data in an online global statistics platform published via the LGBTQ Worldwide Statistics & Facts page in August 2023, a survey was conducted in 27 countries, where 7 out of 10 people identified as heterosexual or opposite-sex relationships, while approximately 3% of respondents identified as homosexual or LGBT and another 4% identified themselves as bisexual, and another 1% identified as pansexual or omnisexual (Devina et al., 2024). In addition, in Europe (Eastern Europe and the Balkans) it was recorded that around 7 out of 10 people identified as LGBT perpetrators (Wijaya, 2022). Meanwhile, the percentage of the Indonesian population identified as LGBT is 3%, meaning that 7.5% of the 250 million Indonesian population identify themselves as LGBT or 3 out of 100 in a location identify themselves as LGBT (Nurfinahati et al., 2023). Then, the results of the YKPN survey showed that there were around 4000-5000 gay people in Jakarta (Kristiono et al., 2019). Gaya Nusantara estimates that 260,000 of the 6 million people of East Java are gay (Kristiono et al., 2019). There are 76,288 gay people registered as members of the Gay community in Indonesia (Kristiono et al., 2019). While Oetomo estimates that there are 1% of the Homosexual community in Indonesia (Kristiono et al., 2019).

Lack of gender awareness of the roles of men and women can be a factor in the occurrence of LGBT behavior (Tubuon, 2023). One of the factors causing LGBT is a biological factor in the form of social deviation due to genetic factors that are greatly influenced by the testosterone hormone which can affect the behavior of both men and women (Mukhid, 2021). The existence of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or LGBT is still a hot topic in various circles. The existence of LGBT is still a pro and con from various parties, both internationally and in Indonesia (Wijaya et al., 2022). In 2016, the United States shocked society because it officially legalized LGBT in its country, but there were also several countries that opposed the existence of LGBT people, one of which was the Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam which shocked the world by issuing a decision to implement caning and stoning for LGBT groups in early 2019 (Chandra & Wae, 2019).

LGBT is also often referred to by the general public as homosexual. Homosexual behavior is sexual behavior directed at same-sex couples (Pratama et al., 2018). When it occurs among women it is often called Lesbianism, and when it occurs among men the term commonly used is Gay (Hartini, 2019). In addition, the term bisexual is also known which targets individuals who are attracted to two genders at once (Wijayanto et al., 2023). The last term is Transgender, which is a condition where an individual has changed their gender according to what they want, such as men who change their gender to women through medical procedures, and vice versa for women who change their gender to men (Chandra & Wae, 2019). Understanding gender awareness is currently very important, especially for teenagers, because of the many social changes and technological developments that affect the roles of men and women in various aspects of life (Kabeer, 2019; Mohanty, 2018). Without adequate understanding of gender awareness, adolescents will have difficulty dealing with gender-related issues, such as sexual harassment or gender discrimination (Lombardo et al., 2021). Therefore, gender awareness needs to be introduced early in schools, schools can also provide lessons on gender awareness and promote gender awareness values in the curriculum which is one of the right places to provide gender awareness education (Yulianti, 2019).

One of the LGBT sexual deviations that is currently widespread in society is homosexual (gay) teenagers (Saidah, 2016). Gay is not taboo in society because being gay is their life choice where they experience difficulties and disturbances in their developmental tasks in finding their identity (Lesmana, 2021). Homosexual (gay) behavior is an effort to fulfill the reasonable need to get affection, acceptance and identity through sexual intimacy with people of the same sex (Azari, 2018). Although the factors that determine the development of sexual orientation are complex and hidden, one of the main roots of homosexuality is the breakdown of relationships in a person's childhood (Aziz, 2017).

Impact of LGBT (El-Qudah, 2015) a specialist in sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS at the World Islamic Medical Association (FIMA) explained that the impact of LGBT is a health impact, including 78% of homosexuals contracting sexually transmitted diseases. The average age of gays is 16-28 years while the age of lesbians is 18-32 years (Rueda, 1982). Data from the Ministry of Health in 2012 showed that there were 1,095,970 men in relationships with men, aka gays, spread across all regions (Syalabi, 2016). Data from the research extension team on the development of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), the number of LGBT in West Sumatra was recorded at 18,000 people (Arifin, 2019). The phenomenon of the development of LGBT news has brought many other cases to the surface. The Commissioner of the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) said that cases of same-sex sexual crimes against children had increased sharply from the previous year (Hendrian, 2018). Cases in Tangerang recently reached 41 cases of same-sex sexual harassment. 2017 was also a dark history for the city of education, Malang, East Java. Malang TIMES managed to obtain data on a Facebook group containing 1,116 members and named Gay SMP Malang Singosari Lawang. Furthermore, Malang TIMES found the Gay SMA group, the Brawijaya University Gay Association and the Malang Gay Community which reached 4,000 members (Arifah, 2017). This is certainly a highlight for educators, especially BK teachers, in facilitating the development of gender role identities so that they develop in accordance with the values and norms that apply in society (Trisnawati, 2020).

Gender awareness is an awareness in responding to gender roles in community life (APA, 1975). Gender awareness can be interpreted as increasing male concern for women's problems and needs (Lekskes, 1998). In the medical field, it is interpreted as health workers who have gender-sensitive attitudes and knowledge as well as insight into the meaning of gender as a whole and are included as important determinants of health and disease (Verdonk et al., 2009). Gender awareness is an understanding of the differences in roles and relationships between women and men (Matsumoto & Juang, 2013). The division of roles between men and women is not something rigid as expressed by (Stromquist, 2007) gender is socially constructed, it can also be changed socially. (Megawangi, 1999) explains that the differentiation of roles between men and women is intended so that there is a mechanism to complement each other, so that a harmonious unity relationship is created.

Meanwhile, in Salgado's (2002) theoretical concept, gender awareness is an integral component of gender education itself. Understanding gender is the essence of a person's gender awareness, so that it will be easier to accept gender issues more easily (Arofah et al., 2022). With gender awareness, every boy and girl are expected to be able to take on their respective social roles according to what applies in their socio-cultural environment (Fibrianto, 2016). These roles can be found and learned in several environments including religion, family, school, and society which are generally known as gender roles. In addition, the mass media also plays a role in shaping public perceptions of gender, both through stereotypical depictions and through unbalanced representations between men and women (Pahlevi & Rahim, 2023). And gender awareness factors according to Salgado (2002) namely gender knowledge is defined as an individual's ownership of accurate information regarding general and specific aspects related to sex and gender, ideology also in gender roles is an ideology used in the use of negative or traditional stereotypes about men and women and gender sensitivity is also a factor of awareness and ownership of sympathy for the unique needs of men and women.

Research conducted by (Hilman & Khusumadewi, 2019) shows that the stages of achieving internalization of gender insight and readiness of students have not reached the action stage and are only at the introduction and accommodation stage. This means that awareness of roles and functions is not achieved. Furthermore, research conducted by Kwaning et al (2021) found that the average gender stigma awareness score for male students was 8.1, while for female students, it was 9.2. This score is almost twice as high as the average gender stigma awareness score among ethnically diverse US adolescents. Awareness of sexual media literacy and attitudes significantly affects gender sensitivity among high school students, accounting for 41.6% of the variance in gender sensitivity scores (Choi et al., 2023). Then, research conducted by Generale, M., & Emilyn, C. (2023) showed that high school students showed moderate awareness of gender laws and



mandates, with a group mean score of 36, which corresponds to a rating of 3.00 on the awareness scale.

The relationship between gender awareness is from differences in parenting patterns to gender awareness (Lestari et al., 2023). In addition, there is a relationship between the influence of gender diversity on sustainable awareness in students (Siskawati et al., 2023) and the relationship with the social environment that interacts so that it can trigger a lack of gender awareness and result in gay behavior (Ardi et al., 2018). Therefore, the need for gender awareness in each individual is one of the efforts to solve problems regarding gender awareness which can be started by understanding gender (Wahyudi, 2018). Individuals can carry out their social roles freely without social pressure and discrimination from both sexes (Inayah & Fauzi, 2024). By taking on the right gender role, children/individuals will have a clear gender identity (Ahmad, 2019). Gender awareness is important to eliminate gender stereotypes and discrimination (Panggabean et al., 2024). The gender awareness aspect consists of 3 components, including gender sensitivity, gender role ideology and knowledge (King et al., 2002. Salgado et al., 2002).

Lack of gender awareness significantly impacts gay youth, contributing to mental health challenges and social isolation, research shows that gender nonconformity among LGBT youth is associated with increased victimization and poorer mental health outcomes, especially for those who are openly gay or bisexual (Beusekom, 2018). Lack of gender awareness significantly impacts gay individuals, contributing to discrimination, mental health issues, and social injustice, as Cabral & Pinto (2023) explain gay individuals often face discrimination, which is associated with poorer mental health outcomes, including increased anxiety and depression.

In conditions of lack of gender awareness, a recovery process is needed. Gender counseling and therapy generally help clients use their strengths and potential, make appropriate choices, improve poor skills and develop a positive and flexible self-concept (Kibtyah, 2014). Counseling is an effective step that can be used by every individual who has problems (Aryani et al., 2023). There are several counseling models in dealing with LGBT problems that focus on developing gender awareness, including Cognitive Behavior Therapy counseling (Sukandar, 2016), in addition to the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy counseling procedure (Riswanto & Aswar, 2020), and the religious psychotherapy approach (Pasilaputra, 2016). Of the several treatment models, all of them focus too much on cognitive change and none are specific in dealing with gay behavior problems. Ego state counseling can handle gender identity disorder awareness problems (Emmerson, 2014). Ego state counseling is a key component of transactional analysis, focusing on the different ego states (Parent, Adult, Child) that influence behavior and interactions, thus aiming to increase self-awareness and improve communication through understanding these states in counseling sessions (Habsy et al., 2024).

The concept of ego state is also used in the Transactional Analysis Therapy approach, although the definition of ego state proposed by Eric Berne (1961) is different from the understanding proposed by JG Watkins and HH Watkins. In Transactional Analysis, ego state is considered as a concept related to interactive communication, describing patterns of behavior, feelings, and thoughts that can be recognized in individual social interactions. There are three types of ego states known, namely Child ego state, Adult ego state, and Parent ego state. In contrast, in the framework of ego state therapy, the number of ego states is unlimited because ego states are seen as part of a continuously developing personality structure, including dynamic conditions of feelings, logic, skills, and adaptability (Hartman & Zimmeroff, 2003).

Ego state counseling is a brief therapy technique based on the premise that personality consists of separate parts and these are called ego states (Emmerson, 2003). Ego states are often referred to as small parts of a person's personality. Watkins (1997) defines ego state therapy as a therapy that uses an individual, family and group therapy approach in accessing and connecting the ego with its environment. ego state therapy aims to release and resolve ego state conflicts that occur, including: the main goal of ego state therapy is to make the ego state vaded, retro or conflict into the ego Ego state therapy is a therapy that aims to free individuals from self-sabotage and find happiness in

their lives (Watkins, 1997; Barabasz & Watkins, 2008). In general, Emmerson (2003) formulates the goals of ego state therapy including allocating the place of pain, trauma, anger or frustration in the ego state, ego state and facilitating expression, releasing negative emotions, providing comfort and empowerment, facilitating communication functions between ego states. Helping clients recognize their ego states so that clients can gain more benefits and overcome self-conflicts or ego state conflicts (Habsy et al., 2024). Therapeutic conditions can understand how individuals mentalize their own and others' ego states can enhance therapeutic engagement, especially in addressing personality disorders that may differ based on gender (Przybylski et al., 2023).

Basically, ego state counseling views humans as involving the exploration and integration of various aspects of a person's ego state to facilitate personal growth, increase self-understanding, and reduce internal conflict. And ego states are very useful in helping individuals identify unhealthy or unproductive behavioral patterns and directing them towards a more balanced integration of various aspects of themselves (Emmerson, 2003). Ego state counseling has also been widely used as an intervention, for example the ego state counseling approach to managing anger (Sugara, 2017) ego state counseling is also a treatment to improve students' mental health (Haq, 2022) and ego state counseling is used as a treatment to improve psychological well-being in victims of sexual abuse (Windayani, 2023). Ego state therapy focuses on various aspects of personality, allowing individuals to engage with their internal states, which can foster empathy and self-awareness (Dietrich, 2016). Ego state counseling, based on previous research, has been shown to be effective in increasing self-understanding and dealing with individual internal conflicts, including gender awareness. By understanding how ego states play a role in the formation and maintenance of gender perception, it is hoped that ego state counseling can be an effective intervention in helping individuals achieve gender awareness, so this study examines increasing gender awareness in gay adolescents through ego state counseling.

## Method

### Ethical Approval

This study has received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education, University of Muhammadiyah Tasikmalaya with Protocol Number NO. 622/UMTAS-FKIP/B.4/V/2024. Before conducting the counseling session, the counselor and client met to be interviewed regarding problem identification and made a contract containing personal data and implementation time, so that the counseling process during the study took place and had obtained permission and was mutually agreed upon.

### Participant

The participant in this study was a 17-year-old 12th grade student who attended a high school in Tasikmalaya. The selection of participants was based on the results of a preliminary study and recommendations from the guidance and counseling teacher at the school. This student identified himself as part of the LGBT group and exhibited feminine behavior, which is often associated with homosexual orientation. The participant's level of self-awareness regarding his sexual identity was moderate, where he began to understand and acknowledge his position on the spectrum of sexual orientation.

The participant in this study will be referred to by the initials NA, has a fairly complex background. Since the age of 10, NA has experienced a traumatic experience when she was a victim of harassment by a senior. In addition, she also experienced harassment from a friend she met through social media. These experiences resulted in significant emotional impacts, and NA often felt uncomfortable in carrying out her daily activities.

The parenting pattern that NA received also reinforced her feminine characteristics. She was often advised to play with her sisters and was forbidden to interact with male friends outside the

home. This treatment from her parents contributed to her self-perception and reinforced behaviors that were considered feminine. This condition made NA often blame herself and feel worthless, which could affect her mental health.

In the context of this study, NA met the criteria to be a research subject after identifying the problems she faced and expressed her readiness to participate in counseling interventions in several upcoming meetings. To maintain the confidentiality of her identity, the participant's name was disguised. The typical characteristics possessed by NA, including traumatic experiences, a feminine-reinforcing parenting style, and a low level of self-awareness related to her sexual identity, were the main focus of this study. This shows how important it is to have a deeper understanding of the experiences of individuals involved in the study, as well as the challenges faced in the context of sexual identity and emotional well-being.

### **Procedure**

This study is a study that tests the effectiveness of the ego state counseling model to increase gender awareness in gay adolescents. This research method uses intervention or treatment of research subjects. The type of experiment used in this study is Single Subject Research (SSR). Research with Single Subject Research (SSR) is an experimental study conducted on relatively small subjects, used to analyze changes in a person's behavior that arise due to intervention (Sunanto et al., 2006), and to determine the magnitude of the influence of interventions given repeatedly (Creswell, 2013). The research design used is the ABA design which is a development of the basic AB design, where in the ABA design there is an additional second baseline condition (A2), as a control for the intervention, so that it is possible to draw conclusions about the existence of a functional relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable (Sunanto et al., 2005).

After conducting structured and in-depth interviews, the researcher conducted initial measurements to determine the description of gender awareness and trauma symptoms that occurred in the subjects who would be given the intervention. After conducting the measurements, the results showed that the subjects were confirmed as gay and had moderate awareness. The next stage was to create a schedule to conduct measurements at baseline (A1). Participants were measured three times at baseline (A1). After obtaining stable data, participants participated in an intervention session consisting of 5 sessions for 5 weeks. The procedures used in implementing this intervention were in accordance with the protocol that had been prepared according to the stages in the Ego State counseling intervention. Counseling was conducted face-to-face for 60 minutes, and at each session, the narrative that had been created in the previous session was reread and an evaluation was carried out at the end of each session. Every three days after the intervention session, participants were measured to determine the description of the changes that occurred after attending the counseling session. This was done so that the counselor knew the extent of the changes in increasing gender awareness and decreasing gay behavior in the participants.

The counseling stages used to increase gender awareness of victims of sexual harassment use the counseling stages described by (Watkins & Watkins, 1970). Furthermore, the subject was given a baseline measurement (A2) three times, to measure the subject's condition after being given the Ego State Counseling intervention. The results of the baseline measurement (A2) will be compared with the results of the baseline measurement (A1) to see the changes that occur and see the effectiveness of the Ego State Counseling intervention in increasing gender awareness in gay teenagers.

### **Ego State Counseling Interventions**

The procedure used in implementing Ego State counseling is based on Emmerson's (2014) explanation which states that ego state counseling is a brief therapy technique based on the premise of personality consisting of separate parts by finding ego states that are injured by trauma and then looking for other ego states, which are able to calm and help to be productive and protect each other. The implementation of this intervention is carried out in five sessions. Determining the number of sessions refers to the principle of brief ego state counseling and refers to Gordon

Emerson's opinion. Each session is carried out for 45 minutes to 60 minutes. Determination of the intervention schedule is carried out according to the agreement that has been agreed upon between the counselor and the client.

The framework for this Ego State Therapy intervention was developed with the acronym " EREC," which stands for the following stages:

**Table 1.** Procedure and Implementation of the EREC Model

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| E= Emotional Release    | Releasing negative emotions/conditions in clients                              |
| R=Resolution            | Changing negative circumstances and strengthening them into more positive ones |
| E = Empowering          | Strengthening positive conditions and finding hope                             |
| C= Commitment to change | Commitment to positive change  |

The following is a detailed explanation of each counseling session in this study. The first session, which is carried out in the first counseling session is the Diagnosis of Pathology, which is an activity where the counselor tries to explore and diagnose mental health problems experienced by the client. The counselor tries to analyze the problem and in this case a negative emotion that is being faced by the client which will later be found the root of the problem and resolved. At this stage the counselor tries to draw a situation where the negative feelings or emotions last appeared around the last 2 weeks (vivify specific). The counselor asks the question "Tell me about the negative feelings or emotions that you have felt in the last two weeks. When and where did the feeling appear? What happened at that time?" The client expresses his/her negative experiences and emotions. The counselor will then help the client find the ISSE (Initial Significant Emotional Event), which is the first situation in childhood where the negative emotions appeared.

The second session, the client who is able to express his feelings, and release emotions in the past will be directed to make a resolution or change regarding the feelings or negative state that was previously hurt. This resolution aims for the client to have a new and more positive picture of the negative state that has been experienced so far. In this second session, the client will be guided by the counselor to find positive resources that are more able to empower and help the client in achieving better mental health. The purpose of this second session is for the client to be able to find positive resources in themselves that are able to empower and make their mental health better. The topics discussed between the counselor and the client are as follows. The counselor asks the question "Now, let's find out what positive resources you have to overcome these negative feelings. What can you do to feel better? Who can you talk to?" The client responds by finding and identifying their positive resources. The counselor will help the client find positive resources that can empower them and help them achieve better mental health.

The third session, This third session aims to provide reinforcement and find a positive state which is the hope and ideals of the client that can be a motivator and strengthener in carrying out their activities, in accordance with the criteria of a mentally healthy person who has hopes and ideals for their future. The steps used in this session are for the client to find a positive feeling that they have experienced during the past 2 weeks, then after that the client will be directed to find their hopes and ideals by finding a picture of success in the future. The topics discussed between the counselor and the client are as follows. The counselor asks the question "Tell me about the positive feelings you have felt in the past two weeks. What makes you feel happy and excited?" The client responds by expressing their positive feelings." The counselor will help the client find their hopes and ideals by finding a picture of success in the future. The client will then be directed to find ways and steps that can be used to achieve their ideals.

The fourth session focuses on commitment so that the client remains on the changes that have been achieved and has the ability to overcome problems that may arise in the future. The topics discussed between the counselor and the client are as follows. The counselor asks questions "How do you feel about the changes you have made? What can you do to maintain these changes? What



will you do if you face challenges in the future?" The client responds by stating his/her commitment to change and strategies to overcome challenges."

The fifth session is the last session that focuses on evaluating the changes that have been made by the client during the counseling process. The topics discussed between the counselor and the client are as follows. The counselor asks questions such as "How do you feel now? What have you learned during counseling? Do you feel there are positive changes in yourself?" The client responds by evaluating the changes that have occurred."

Through this structured Ego State counseling process, clients are expected to be able to overcome their mental health problems and build a stronger positive state.

### **Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI)**

This study used the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI), an instrument developed by Rosdianti (2016) to measure gender awareness in clients. The BSRI consists of 60 questions with 7 answer choices, ranging from "Never" to "Always", namely 1 = Never 2 = Rarely 3 = Sometimes 4 = Usually 5 = Almost often 6 = Often 7 = Always. This instrument measures three aspects of gender awareness, namely Feminism, Masculine, and Neutral, as defined by Bem (1974). The BSRI has high reliability, with a Cronbach Alpha score of 0.69, indicating that this instrument can be relied on to measure gender awareness in adolescents.

### **Mental Health Continuum**

The next instrument is the Mental Health Continuum (MHC-SF) developed by Corey LM Keyes (2008). This instrument is a shortened version of the Mental Health Continuum-Long Form (MHC-LF) previously designed by Keyes to measure psychological and emotional well-being in more detail. The MHC-SF is designed to measure three main dimensions of mental well-being, namely; 1) Emotional Well-being (happiness, and life satisfaction), 2) Psychological Well-being (individual Psychological Well-being), such as autonomy and self-acceptance, 3) Social Well-being (positive relationships with society and social contribution). The number of items is 1, each of which covers the core aspects of each dimension and uses a Likert scale to measure it 6 points from "Never" to "Every Day". This instrument is often used in research to measure the level of Flourishing (Well Developing), Languishing (Poorly Developing), and Moderate in a person's mental health. The reliability of the instrument with a Cronbach Alpha score of 0.77, indicates good interaction between items and persons.

### **Social Validation**

Social validation data were collected after the intervention was conducted, to determine and explore clients' perceptions and feelings after the intervention. Social validation provides qualitative data that can help researchers understand the outcomes and effectiveness of the intervention (Turner et al., 2014). Clients answered questions openly to gather new insights into the usefulness, relevance, and positive influence of the ego state counseling intervention used on their thoughts and behaviors.

### **Data analysis**

This study used a single case study design with an A-B-A approach, consisting of three phases, namely initial measurement or baseline (A1), intervention (B), and final measurement after the intervention session or baseline (A2). The purpose of this single case study is to evaluate the relationship or changes that occur between the intervention and the dependent variable, with the client or individual as the subject of the study (Lenz, 2015). This study also aims to assess the impact of the intervention by comparing the scores in the baseline phase (A1) with the intervention phase (Kinugasa et al., 2004; Sunanto et al., 2005). Data obtained from the baseline phase to the intervention phase are presented in graphical form for visual analysis, which allows conclusions to be drawn regarding behavioral changes based on the characteristics of the existing data (Leodford et al., 2018). This visual analysis aims to evaluate whether or not there is an influence or how much

influence the intervention has (Herrington & Velliver, 2015). The aspect that determines the effectiveness of an intervention is the change in trend or direction of data after the intervention is applied to the target, which can be observed through data trends, whether there is a decrease or increase over time (Tankersley et al., 2008).

To determine the magnitude of the intervention's influence, a Non-overlap of All Pairs (NAP) analysis can be performed. A decrease or increase in points on the graph (trend) is evidence of the intervention's influence (Tankersley et al., 2008). To calculate NAP, the number of possible pairs is calculated by multiplying the number of data points on the baseline (A1) by the number of points on the intervention (B), then the result is subtracted from the number of points above or below or parallel to the line, then the result is divided by the total number of possible pairs (Vannest & Ninci, 2015). Parker & Vanest (2009) determined the NAP score range with a weak category of 0.0 - 0.65; moderate category 0.66 - 0.92; and strong category 0.93 - 1.0.

Then to find out the magnitude of the changes experienced by the participants can be seen by calculating the Reliability Change Index (RCI; Jacobson & Trunx 1991). This RCI is the difference between the pretest score and the posttest score (gain) then divided by the Standard Error of Difference (Jacobson & Truax, 1991). If the RCI value is greater than 1.96 then the changes that occur in the participants are significant (Cunningham & Turner, 2016).

As for seeing how big the influence of the intervention is, it can be calculated using Cohen's formula, where if the calculation result is  $< 0.87$  then the influence of the intervention is in the small category; if the calculation result is in the range of  $0.87 - 2.67$  then the influence of the intervention is in the medium category; and if the calculation result is  $> 2.67$  then the influence of the intervention is in the large category (Parker & Vannest, 2009).

In this study, the researchers used all three methods to analyze the data and interpret the results. Visual analysis showed a significant trend change in masculine and feminine scores after the intervention. The NAP calculation showed that the ego state counseling intervention was effective in increasing gender awareness in gay adolescents, with a NAP value of 75%. The RCI calculation also showed a significant change in the total score from the pretest and post-intervention phases of Ego State counseling for participants.

## Results

Data on mental health and gender awareness across all phases of the study are presented in Figures 1 and 2. Across all phases, data from New Zealand showed mental health was characterized by sluggish gender awareness and was dominated by women. No overlapping data points were observed between the baseline and treatment phases. Visual analysis revealed that participants showed certain levels of mental health and gender awareness during the baseline phase, which changed after the implementation of ego state counseling.

### Mental Health Continuum

Results on the Emotional Well-being dimension of participants across all phases of the study are presented in Table 1. Participants showed a moderate increase ( $d = 3.33$ ) in Emotional Well-being scores from the pre-test phase ( $M = 8.67$ ,  $SD = 2.08$ ) to the intervention phase ( $M = 15.06$ ,  $SD = 1.67$ ) and post-intervention phase ( $M = 16.33$ ,  $SD = 0.58$ ). This increase in scores indicates that participants experienced an increase in their ability to experience positive emotions and have a more optimistic outlook on life. This increase underscores the clear increase in scores from the initial baseline phase (A1) to the post-intervention baseline phase (A2).

To evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention, the Non-overlap of All Pairs (NAP) method was used. The results showed that the intervention had a 100% effect on participants, indicating that ego status counseling is included in the category of a strong and highly effective approach to increasing gender awareness in gay adolescents. In addition, the calculation of the Reliable Change Index (RCI)

confirmed a significant increase in the total Mental Health Continuum (MHC) score from the pre-test to the post-intervention phase. In the Social Well-being dimension, participants showed a large increase ( $d = 2.45$ ) in the Social Well-being score from the pre-test phase ( $M = 14$ ,  $SD = 2.65$ ) to the intervention phase ( $M = 18.4$ ,  $SD = 3.36$ ) and the post-intervention phase ( $M = 26.3$ ,  $SD = 2.08$ ). This dimension showed a highly significant increase, with the mean score almost doubling from pre-test to post-intervention. This suggests that participants felt more connected to their social environment, more valued, and more able to make meaningful contributions to their community. The very high post-intervention score ( $M = 26.3$ ) reflects the significant impact of the intervention on the social dimension, which is a key aspect of participants' well-being. In the Psychological Well-being dimension, participants showed a moderate increase ( $d = 1.39$ ) in Psychological Well-being scores from the pre-test phase ( $M = 20.0$ ,  $SD = 3.46$ ) to the intervention phase ( $M = 24.8$ ,  $SD = 2.59$ ) and post-intervention phase ( $M = 26.0$ ,  $SD = 3.61$ ). Participants showed significant improvements in aspects of psychological well-being, including self-awareness, environmental mastery, and ability to cope with life challenges. Scores increased gradually from pre-test to post-intervention, with an average increase of 9.7 points. Higher scores in the post-intervention phase indicate a positive impact of Ego State Counseling on participants' personality development and adaptability.

Furthermore, to assess the extent of the intervention's influence, a Non-overlap of All Pairs (NAP) calculation was performed. The results showed that the intervention had an influence of 75% on participants, indicating that Ego State Counseling can be categorized as a good and effective intervention to increase gender awareness in gay youth. This is further strengthened by the RCI calculation which shows a significant change in total score between the pretest and post-intervention phases, indicating the success of the intervention in producing meaningful changes in participants.

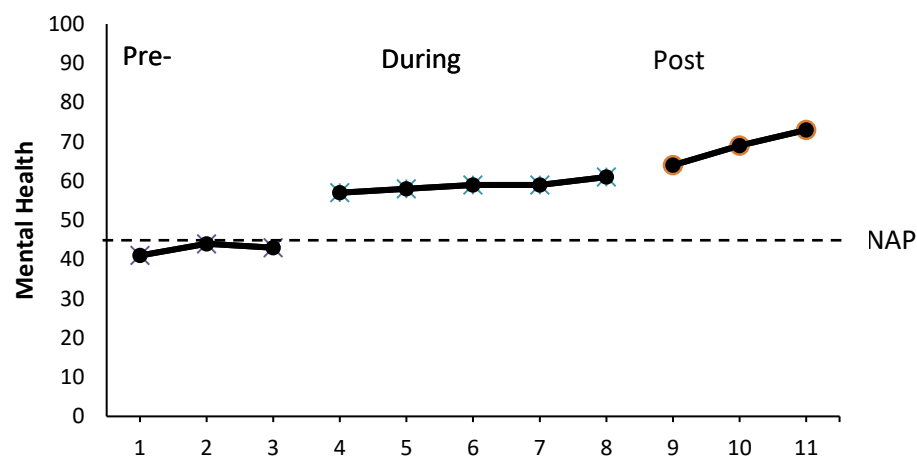


Figure 1. Changes in Participants in Mental Health Programs

### Gender Awareness

In measuring the level of gender awareness in gay adolescents, counselors measure using the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) measuring tool. Participants before the counseling intervention were given measurements for two weeks 3 times to obtain the Baseline (A1), then after the Baseline measurement (A1), ego state counseling was carried out for one month 5 times counseling sessions, and continued measurements for 2 weeks to obtain the baseline (A2) with a distance of 3 times after completing the intervention process. For more details, the scores of each measurement from Baseline (A1), intervention (B) and Baseline (A2) will be presented through the graph below. Participants showed a large increase ( $d = 2.05$ ) in total gender awareness from the pretest phase ( $M = 77.56$ ,  $SD = 4.10$ ) to the intervention phase ( $M = 71.87$ ,  $SD = 8.90$ ) and during the post-intervention phase ( $M = 69.44$ ,  $SD = 13.25$ ). Furthermore, to see the magnitude of the influence of the

intervention, it can be done by calculating the Nonoverlap of All Pairs (NAP). The results of the study showed that the effect of the intervention on participants was 1.00, which indicates that the ego state counseling intervention is included in the moderate category for increasing gender awareness.

The results of the masculine dimension data of participants in all phases of the study are presented in table (2). Participants showed a significant increase from postintervention with ( $d=1.84$ ) in the masculine score from the pretest phase ( $M=80.67$ ,  $SD=0.58$ ) to the intervention phase ( $M=79.6$ ,  $SD=11.68$ ) and from the postintervention results ( $M=82.33$ ,  $SD=11.68$ ). The results of the RCI calculation showed an increase after postintervention in the masculine dimension of the participants. The effect was very large, indicating that the intervention helped strengthen the masculinity aspect of the participants. Related to the ability of participants to express masculine attributes more comfortably and consciously after the intervention.

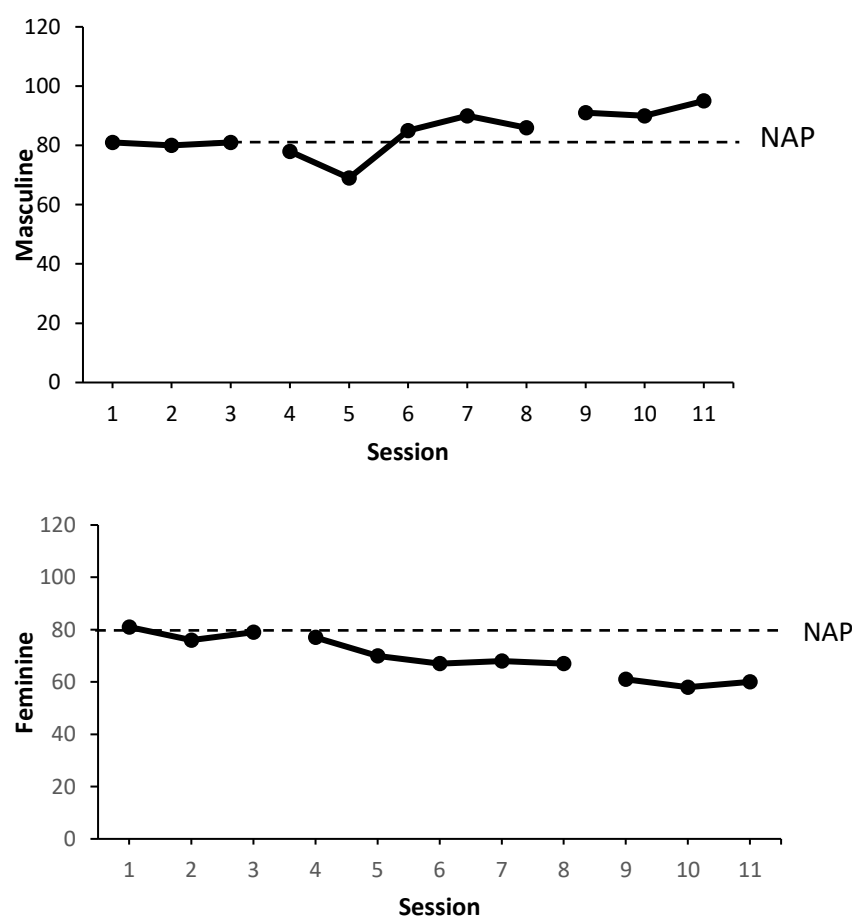


Figure 2. Participant Changes in the Gender Awareness

The results of the feminist dimension data in all phases of the study are presented in table (2). Participants showed a high decrease in feminism scores ( $d = 3.55$ ) from the pre-test phase ( $M = 78.67$ ,  $SD = 2.5$ ), to the intervention phase ( $M = 69.8$ ,  $SD = 4.21$ ) while the post-intervention results ( $M = 59.67$ ,  $SD = 1.53$ ). The results of the RCI calculation showed a significant change in participants in this dimension. The influence was very large, indicating a change in perception or expression of feminist attributes post-intervention. This decrease reflects a change in the balance of gender attributes which were previously more dominant towards feminism, becoming more integrated with masculinity or neutrality.



The ego state counseling intervention proved to be highly effective in increasing gender awareness in gay youth, particularly with a significant increase in masculinity and a significant decrease in feminism. This reflects the program's success in helping participants achieve better gender balance.

| Scale                    | Pre-Counseling |      | During Counseling |      | Post Counseling |       | Get   | RCI   | D     |
|--------------------------|----------------|------|-------------------|------|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                          | M              | SD   | M                 | SD   | M               | SD    |       |       |       |
| Mental Health            | 42.67          | 1.53 | 58.80             | 1.48 | 68.67           | 4.51  | 16.13 | 15.54 | 10.54 |
| Emotional Well-being     | 8.67           | 2.08 | 15.06             | 1.67 | 16.33           | 0.58  | 6.93  | 4.91  | 3.33  |
| Social welfare           | 14             | 2.65 | 18.4              | 3.36 | 26.3            | 2.08  | 4.4   | 2.45  | 1.66  |
| Psychological Well-being | 20.0           | 3.46 | 24.8              | 2.59 | 26              | 3.61  | 4.80  | 2.05  | 1.39  |
| Masculine                | 80.67          | 0.58 | 81.6              | 8.14 | 82.33           | 11.68 | 1.07  | 7.53  | 1.84  |
| Feminine                 | 78.67          | 2.5  | 69.8              | 4.21 | 59.67           | 1.53  | 8.87  | 8.36  | 3.55  |

## Discussion

This study examines the effectiveness of ego state counseling in increasing gender awareness in gay adolescents. The results showed that ego state counseling interventions were proven to be effective in increasing gender awareness in gay adolescents. This can be seen from the significant changes in masculine and feminine scores in participants after the intervention. Masculine scores increased, while feminine scores decreased. Nurjanah (2015) explained that gender refers to social and cultural roles, namely behavior in women and men and masculinity or femininity. Increased gender awareness in participants can be associated with the concept of ego state therapy which focuses on accessing and integrating various aspects of a person's ego state. Ego state counseling that focuses on identifying and managing various ego states (child, adult, and parent) within a person can help improve aspects of femininity and masculinity (Berne, 1961). Ego state counseling helps participants identify and release negative emotions that are tied to ego states that are hurt by the past. By releasing negative emotions and building a more positive ego state, participants can develop a better understanding of themselves and reduce internal conflict.

Watkins (1997) defines ego state therapy as a therapy that uses individual, family and group therapy approaches in accessing and connecting the ego. Ego state therapy aims to release and resolve the conflict of ego states that occur. The main goal of ego state therapy is to make the ego state vaded, retro or conflict into ego state normal so that individuals are free from self-sabotage and gain happiness in their lives (Watkins, 1997; Barabasz & Watkins, 2008). These results are in line with the theory of gender awareness put forward by Salgado (2002) which states that gender awareness is an integral component in gender education. Ego state counseling helps participants to increase gender knowledge and gender sensitivity through the process of exploration and integration of ego states.

Participants' masculinity scores increased significantly after the intervention. Participants showed a significant increase from postintervention ( $d=1.84$ ) in masculinity scores from pretest ( $M=80.67$ ,  $SD=0.58$ ) to intervention ( $M=79.6$ ,  $SD=11.68$ ) and postintervention ( $M=82.33$ ,  $SD=11.68$ ). This suggests that participants began to display stronger masculine characteristics, which may have previously been suppressed due to traumatic experiences and parenting styles that suppressed femininity (Berne, 1961). Ego state counseling can help individuals identify and release ego states that inhibit healthy feminine expression, such as the helpless "child" ego state or the overly critical "parent" ego state. This allows individuals to access and develop the more confident, empathetic, and assertive "adult" ego states that are traditionally associated with femininity (Berne, 1961). Ego state counseling can help individuals strengthen positive feminine ego states,

such as the relationship-oriented “adult” ego state and the loving, nurturing “parent” ego state. This can help individuals develop positive feminine qualities, such as empathy, nurturing, and sensitivity to emotions (Berne, 1961).

Ego state counseling can help improve masculinity in terms of gender awareness because this approach allows individuals to understand and explore the internal roles that shape their behavior and perceptions, including those related to gender. In the context of masculinity, ego state counseling serves to identify and restructure the social and emotional influences associated with gender roles that have been embedded in the individual. Ego state counseling can help individuals identify and release ego states that inhibit healthy expressions of masculinity, such as the fearful “child” ego state or the overly critical “parent” ego state. This allows individuals to access and develop the more confident, assertive, and responsible “adult” ego state, which is traditionally associated with masculinity (Berne, 1961).

The results of the increase in scores measured through the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) in the masculine dimension, indicate that participants began to show stronger masculine characteristics, which may have previously been suppressed due to traumatic experiences, and parenting patterns that suppress femininity. Meanwhile, the results of the feminist dimension data in all phases of the study are presented in table (2). Participants showed a high decrease in feminism scores ( $d = 3.55$ ) from the pre-test phase ( $M = 78.67$ ,  $SD = 2.5$ ), to the intervention phase ( $M = 69.8$ ,  $SD = 4.21$ ) while the post-intervention results ( $M = 59.67$ ,  $SD = 1.53$ ). The feminine dimension shows that participants began to reduce feminine characteristics that were previously more dominant which may be related to social pressure and internalization of gender roles that are not in accordance with their identity. Ego state counseling emphasizes more on managing or reconciling internal conflicts rather than changing certain aspects of gender identity. In this regard, the ego state approach may focus more on creating self-awareness and balance between the various parts of the ego (e.g. child, adult, parent) than on actively reducing femininity or reducing the external influences that shape it (Berne, 1961).

Ego state counseling, while effective in many psychotherapy contexts, tends to be less effective in reducing femininity in the context of gender due to several factors related to the theories and approaches underlying this counseling. Femininity, as a social and cultural construct, is often more influenced by external norms and deep social learning, rather than simply internal roles that can be changed through understanding ego states. Here are reasons why ego state counseling may be less effective in reducing gender femininity, along with relevant references. To reduce or change femininity, larger social changes are often needed, such as eliminating gender stereotypes or limited roles for women in society. Ego state counseling focuses on internal changes, such as how individuals view themselves and manage parts of their personality. While this can strengthen self-awareness and help manage internal conflicts, it does not allow for addressing external factors such as gender norms taught in the family or culture, which strongly influence femininity (Liss & Erchull, 2012).

Feminine and masculine characters that characterize certain groups, namely behavior, verbal and nonverbal communication, preferences, lifestyle, interests and other things that are challenges for men and women according to their gender identity (Handayani, 2018). Differences in perception of gender characters result in a less positive understanding by some people of themselves according to their gender. Women will live their gender character as a feminist character and male students will live their gender character as masculine as something that should and should be, so that if not, it can be considered outside of normality and propriety. This gender pressure certainly limits or influences adolescents in innovating or creating "outside" their gender roles. The consequences of gender roles (masculine and feminine) can have a less positive impact, namely limiting each gender from getting out of their gender "box" (Murniarti, 2004).

Meanwhile, in the neutral dimension, there was a significant decrease in scores after the intervention, this indicates that neutral characteristics began to decrease in participants, which is likely related to uncertainty and internal conflict related to gender identity. Feminine and

masculinity characteristics can be characteristics of certain groups, namely a person's behavior, verbal or nonverbal communication, preferences, daily lifestyles, interests that are recommended or prohibited for men and women according to their gender identity (Handayani, 2018). Women will live their gender character with a feminine character and men will live their gender with a masculine character, so that it is in accordance with the characteristics of the gender itself (Handayani, 2018).

Increasing gender awareness among gay youth requires a deep understanding of external factors, such as social and cultural factors that influence gender identity and expression (Putri & Ahmad, 2024; Trisnawati, 2020). Social factors are formed from peer support that plays a role in the formation of adolescent gender identity, peer support helps gay youth feel accepted and understand their identity (Putri & Ahmad, 2024). The role of teachers and school counselors plays an important role in instilling gender awareness, teachers and counselors function as motivators, facilitators, and informants in providing the right understanding of gender (Putri & Ahmad, 2024). Then, the family plays a role in parenting, thus influencing the development of adolescent gender identity (Putri & Ahmad, 2024; Trisnawati, 2020). Cultural factors are formed from norms that apply in community life, media that play a role in shaping public perception of gender identity, policies and educational environments (Putri & Ahmad, 2024). Through increasing masculinity scores, it affects gender sensitivity awareness. Gender sensitivity is the ability to feel and understand differences, problems or issues, and existing gender inequalities (Bila & Prihatini, 2024).

In addition, this study also shows that ego state counseling has the potential to improve mental health in gay youth. The assessment of participants' mental health scores used the Mental Health Continuum (MHC) measurement based on three aspects, including emotional, social, and psychological. The results of the study showed that social well-being scores increased almost twofold from pre-test to post-intervention, while emotional and psychological aspects showed moderate changes. Adolescence is the initial process of a person towards adulthood. At this stage, adolescents seek their identity and free themselves from dependence on others (Susanti & Arianti, 2022). Participants showed an increase in the dimensions of mental health after the intervention, especially in the dimension of social well-being. Keyes (Alini & Meisyalla, 2022) explains that social well-being is a condition where social needs are met as members of society and function well psychologically and socially, meaning that happiness and life satisfaction are positive, and have a balanced emotional condition. This shows that ego state counseling can help gay youth build more positive social relationships and reduce the negative impacts of stigma and discrimination that participants often experience. The results of this study support the theory of gender awareness which states that gender awareness is an understanding of the differences in roles and relationships between women and men (Matsumoto & Juang, 2013).

The EREC stage, which stands for Emotional Release, Empowerment, Resolution, and Commitment, is a stage in Ego State counseling designed to help individuals overcome trauma and build better mental health in this study. This concept, as explained by Emmerson (2014), focuses on identifying and managing various ego states (child, adult, and parent) within a person, which can help improve aspects of femininity and masculinity. Emotional Release, the first stage, involves releasing negative emotions tied to ego states that are hurt by the past. This process helps individuals recognize and release pent-up negative emotions, such as fear, anger, or sadness, which can hinder healthy emotional development and gender awareness. It is important for individuals to recognize emotions well, so that they can control and channel them in a way that is acceptable to others (Ananda, 2017). Inappropriate expression of emotions will cause stress. Psychosocial stressors experienced by a person can be caused by problems with emotional maturity, such as self-acceptance, parenting patterns, peers, etc. (Riawati et al, 2019). In the case of participants, one of the emotional expressions that was formed was due to inappropriate parenting patterns.

Resolution, the second stage in the counseling process of this study, focuses on changing negative states and strengthening states to be more positive (Emmerson, 2014). At this stage, individuals are encouraged to find positive resources that can empower them and help achieve

better mental health. Individuals have a self-image of themselves, such as feeling afraid, worried, panic, and insecure (Putri et al., 2023). Ramadhani et al (2016) positive and negative attitudes are not only the absence of suffering, but the impact of the past includes active involvement in the world, understanding the meaning and purpose of life, and one's relationship to objects or other people. A person's attitude will be formed from good and bad experiences, then these experiences are projected into motivation for him to achieve positive things in the future. Whatever achievements are obtained will give appreciation to himself and get his own strong internal motivation which can be in the form of an attitude of never giving up and being optimistic about the results that will be achieved and also being grateful for the things that happen. This attitude can also emerge when someone can develop themselves well, which is marked by a feeling of peace in their heart (making peace with the past), as well as focusing on trying and developing their potential.

Empowerment, the third stage, aims to strengthen positive conditions and find hope (Emmerson, 2014). Individuals are encouraged to find positive feelings they have experienced and then directed to find their hopes and ideals by finding a picture of success in the future. Human efforts to find the meaning of life can cause inner tension, so that this condition will cause frustration or disruption of human desire to find the meaning of life (Putri, 2020). Then, Sumanto (2006) explained that if meaningfulness continues to be fought for, the person concerned will experience self-transcendence and gain positive emotional experiences by having a match in fulfilling awareness and behavior. Haya (2016) stated that future orientation is reflected through the views, hopes, interests, motives and fears of individuals towards the future. Future orientation is closely related to hopes, goals, standards and plans and strategies carried out to achieve a goal, dreams and ideals (Putri, 2020).

Commitment, the final stage, focuses on the commitment of individuals to maintain the changes that have been achieved and have the ability to overcome problems that may arise in the future (Emmerson, 2014). Individuals are encouraged to express their commitment to change and strategies to overcome challenges that may be faced in the future. The EREC stage in Ego State counseling can have a significant influence on emotional changes and gender awareness in this study. By helping participants release negative emotions tied to past trauma, the EREC stage can help participants to build healthier relationships with themselves and with others. This can help participants to develop a better understanding of themselves, including their gender identity. Ego state counseling interventions help participants understand and integrate various aspects of their gender identity, so that participants can build a more complete understanding of themselves. The results of this study also indicate that gender roles are socially constructed and can be socially changed (Stromquist, 2007). Through ego state counseling interventions, participants release social pressures and internalization of gender roles that are inconsistent with their identity, and construct gender roles that are more consistent with themselves. This study provides an important contribution to the development of counseling interventions for gay adolescents. Ego status counseling may be an effective and potential alternative to improve gender awareness and mental health in gay adolescents.

## Conclusion

This study shows that Ego State Counseling is effective in increasing gender awareness and mental well-being in gay adolescents. The results of the gender awareness intervention showed participants' scores based on aspects of masculinity, femininity, and neutrality. The intervention in this study resulted in a significant increase in masculine scores and a decrease in feminine scores in participants, indicating that they achieved better gender balance. Ego state counseling successfully increased masculinity scores in participants indicating that participants began to show stronger masculine characteristics, which may have previously been suppressed due to traumatic experiences and parenting patterns that suppressed femininity. Then, the participants' femininity scores decreased significantly. This indicates that participants began to reduce their previously



more dominant feminine characteristics, which may have been related to social pressure and internalization of gender roles that did not match their identity. And, gender neutrality scores also decreased. This indicates that participants began to reduce uncertainty and internal conflict related to gender identity, which may have previously manifested in neutral characteristics.

Ego State Counseling also improves participants' mental well-being. The results of measuring the increase in mental well-being through three aspects, namely social, emotional, and psychological well-being. Participants showed a significant increase in the social well-being dimension. This shows that ego state counseling helps gay adolescents build more positive social relationships and reduce the negative impacts of stigma and discrimination that are often experienced. Then, participants experienced a moderate increase in the emotional well-being dimension, showing an increase in the ability to feel positive emotions and have a more optimistic outlook on life. And, Participants showed a moderate increase in the psychological well-being dimension, showing an increase in aspects of self-awareness, environmental mastery, and the ability to overcome life's challenges. Thus, these findings indicate that Ego State Counseling can be an intervention to improve gender awareness and mental health in gay adolescents.

Implications for implementation in schools include integrating Ego State Counseling into guidance and counseling programs to help gay adolescents develop healthier gender identities and achieve better mental well-being. This study provides an important contribution to the development of counseling interventions for gay adolescents. Ego state counseling can be a therapeutic approach for gay adolescents in schools. The findings of the study also highlight the need for broader social change to address deeply rooted gender roles and stereotypes that may continue to influence the development of an individual's gender identity.

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