

## Building Women's Resilience with Psychological Skills: A Community Project

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### ABSTRACT

#### Background:

The project was a small-scale initiative to enhance basic psychological skills among low-income residents of an apartment in Selayang, in the post-COVID period. A four-series program tailored and promoted to this community to address their unique mental health challenges was organised. The need for this intervention was determined by the psychological challenges of the pandemic, which has significantly impacted low-income families. It was identified that this group required targeted support to build resilience, manage stress, and foster a supportive environment. The program was designed to empower participants with practical skills to improve mental well-being.

#### Project details:

A non-governmental organization (Wanita IKRAM Selayang) organized a mental health project involving 19 participants. The project comprised four sessions conducted in Malay, covering stress management, Psychological First Aid (PFA), problem-solving, and building social support. These topics were chosen based on community feedback. A registered female counselor led the sessions, ensuring comfort for the female participants. Each two-hour session took place at the community program hall, providing a safe space for women to learn and share experiences. The sustained attendance throughout the four sessions demonstrated a commitment to the program.

#### Outcomes:

Post-program, a simple survey was done to obtain feedback on participants' view of the programme. Out of 19 participants, 13 responded to the survey, yielding approximately 70% response rate. Over 90% of respondents reported that the program helped them manage their mental health issues, while more than half were unemployed. All respondents (100%) expressed interest in attending similar future events.

#### Conclusion:

The program effectively met the mental health needs of low-income residents in Selayang during COVID-19. Tailored sessions on stress management, Psychological First Aid, problem-solving, and building social support improved participants' well-being. High attendance, positive feedback, and interest in future events reflect the program's success in fostering resilience.



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**Biodata:**

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2. **Dr. Arifah Abd Rahim** is a public health medicine specialist with the Ministry of Health, currently pursuing a master's in family counseling part-time. She has a deep interest in mental health and is dedicated to integrating her expertise in both public health and counseling to support mental well-being.
3. **Dr Nor Hidayah Jaris** is a medical lecturer and psychiatrist, with a deep interest in child, adolescent, women, and young adult mental health. She is actively involved in mental health advocacy and loves engaging in women mental health and parenting programs