1. Introduction

Social skills in general could be categorized into two categories; an individual skillful/ clever in socializing and vice versa an individual experiencing difficulties in socializing. An individual considered skillful in socialization is able to overcome the various issues in socialization. They do not have any difficulties in making new friends, effectively communicating with others, engaging in pleasant conversations, and is able to close a conversation without hurting or disappointing anyone. In formal meetings they are able to deliver opinions, appreciate and support other people’s opinions, and are also able to criticize without hurting anyone else’s feelings. Contrary to the individuals skillful in socialization, individuals that have difficulties in socializing have trouble starting a conversation, particularly to those they haven’t been acquainted with; they feel awkward and are not able to engage in pleasant conversations. In formal meetings they don’t have the courage to convey opinions, appreciation, complaints etc.

The degree of the difficulties range, starting from situational socialization difficulties, where the subject encounters socialization difficulties in certain situations, up until socialization difficulties due to chronic mental disorders. This leads to the treatment of these difficulties to also vary. One of the popular techniques frequently applied is social skills training.

Social skills training is one of the behavior modification techniques that have frequently been used, especially for individuals experiencing difficulties in socialization. This technique may be used alone or may also be complementary to other psychotherapy techniques.

The term social skills originate from the word social and skills. The word skill is used to represent the learning process from a state of being unskilled to skilled. The word social is used to teach the ability to interact with other people. Therefore social training could be defined as training with the objective of teaching the ability to interact with other people to individuals that are unskilled to become skilled in interacting with the people surrounding them, either in formal or non- formal relationships.

2. Basic Principles in the Training

The term training is used because the training will introduce some new and practical behaviors, consisting of the skills usually applied in every day events. The training also has its learning principles; however it is the practical knowledge that would be taught in a relatively short period of time. The learning principles applied in this training is the andragogic or learning principles for adults.

In the training, the individuals are regarded as people that have some knowledge or in other words already possess the skills however in a small portion. For the training technique for adults there are some supporting principles that account for the modification of their behavior. One of the principles is the recognition that adults differ
from children. Adults are aware that they have capabilities and experiences so that they would be encouraged to get involved with the learning process. Active involvement in the learning process may lead to an optimal state of learning as opposed to passively receiving the information. Thus, in the training, the responsibility of the learning process lies solely on the participants and not the trainers.

As the case with learning, what becomes the target is not only to cover intellectual or cognitive aspects but also emotional, affective and psychomotor aspects. Changes comprising of all those three aspects may only be achieved should the participant be involved with the training process through role play which is carried out after watching the demonstrations or after they have modeled a few of the skills. The demonstration of these skills would be more effective should they involve issues encountered in everyday real life events that are relevant to the participants.

The last principle, which is equally important, is that the learning process is an experience stemming from the participants of the training and will occur within the participants, thus the participants are not taught but are rather motivated to seek for the knowledge, skills, and new behaviors by exploring the resources within themselves (Budilarasati, 1992).

3. Psychological Skills Training

Social skill training is one of the forms of psychological skills training. Psychological training is created as an alternative for guides or counselors towards the middle-lower classes of society. Based on data related to the success of psychotherapy gathered in the United States (in Goldstein, 1981), psychotherapy tends to be less effective when applied among individuals within this social class. The data indicates that the psychotherapy tends to be more effective when applied among clients that possess the YAVIS characteristics. YAVIS refers to Young, Attractive, Verbal, Intelligent and Successful. Apart from that, psychotherapy is largely directed to the middle-upper social classes (Schofield, in Goldstein, 1981). For clients that do not possess the YAVIS characteristics, psychotherapy is less preferable.

Efforts to seek for alternative interventions that cover these non-YAVIS groups have encouraged a number of experts to formulate a technique that would be effective to treat members of this group. This technique consists of structural learning procedures that cover various training for psychological skills.

There are several psychological skills trainings mentioned by Goldstein (1981), consisting of creative problem solving, assertiveness training, work interview training, and social skills training.

Basically, this type of psychological skills training could be conducted through 4 stages which are as follows:
1. Modeling, this is the stage where the participants are frequently, displayed a model
2. Role playing, this is the stage where the participants have the opportunity to role play a certain social interaction situation according to the interaction topic displayed by the model
3. Performance feedback, this is the stage where the participants are given feedback. The feedback should be given directly after the role play to make sure that the participants understand how well they performed the role play.

4. Transfer training, this is the stage where the participants transfer the skills acquired in the training to their everyday lives.

4. Social Skills Training for Therapy on Socialization Difficulties

Social skills training are given to individuals that have problems in a number of social skills. The social skills that frequently become problematic for people are the ability to make pleasant conversations and implicit or explicit absence of social skills. This is what led Michelson et al (1985) to suggest that social skills training were designed to enhance communication abilities and individual social skills.

Social skills comprise of skills to praise others, complain when disagreeing upon a certain issue, denying another person's requests/demands, exchanging experiences, demanding personal rights, giving suggestions to others, problem or conflict resolution, interact or work with others of the opposite sex and a number of other behaviors according to the social skills that aren’t possessed by the clients (Michelson, et al. 1985). The social skills training is given based on the behaviors intended to be altered of the particular individual (Bulkeley and Cramer, 1990).

As with the case with other psychological skills training, social skills training were developed in the 1970s. This approach viewed that individuals are undergoing a learning phase contrary to the approach viewing individuals as clients in need of therapy. This training assumed that the individuals, as targets of this training, lack the particular abilities important to achieve an effective and satisfying living.

Within the social skills training a number of behavioral models are displayed. The subject or client is asked to observe, and then imitate the behaviors displayed. This implies that social skills training contain the principles of social learning as proposed by Bandura (in Hergenhahn, 1976). The individuals watch, observe, and then imitate the behaviors that are taught. Should the individual imitate the behavior correctly then the trainers would give reinforcements.

The task of the trainers is not to make interpretations, reflections, or giving reinforcements, however the trainer actively teaches the desired behaviors to the participants. The trainer does not give interventions, as with psychotherapy however they are more involved in training. The training is directed on specific behaviors not values, attitudes, or insight and uses a behavioral approach designed to develop observable behaviors.

This training could be done by role playing, imitating models from a video, imitating models role played by peers, and setting in-vivo (Bulkeley and Cramer, 1990). A number of the techniques used in social skills training:

1. **Modeling**, conducted by displaying examples of specific behavior skills that could be trained by the trainer. The model could be displayed directly by the therapist, an actor/actress, through a video, or a combination of real life models...
and videos. In order to achieve this objective, the specific stages are arranged to be played by the model, either directly or indirectly through a video. The skills taught may be single skills or a combination of skills. Single skills only contain one particular basic skill, for instance the skill to start a conversation, have a conversation, end a conversation etc. A combination of skills referring to the application of the basic skills to overcome the problems in everyday life.

2. **Role-Play**, is conducted by listening to the instructions given out by the model or through the video. Afterwards, it is usually followed by a discussion on the activities which had been modeled. Practicing the process of verbalization is very important, conducted through discussion on the events that are problematic to the participants. The trainer may conduct this part of the training by displaying a situation/model, and then ask the participants on what they would do, should they encounter those situations. After the discussion had finished, the role play training is started.

3. **Feedback to Correct Performances**, which is conducted by giving reinforcements to the participants that correctly displayed the desired behaviors. This could either mean that they have performed the in-vivo roles correctly or were able to display the correct target behaviors.

The social skills training may be done either individually or even groups. A number of advantages from doing the training in groups for instance are time, energy and cost efficiency. Other than that, because the training is directed for those that have difficulties in socializing, therefore by following the training in groups, which could be considered as a miniature of the actual social life, every member would have the opportunity to practice the behaviors in the groups as well as to feel the emotions followed by those behaviors. Each group member is allowed to give feedback, reinforcements and motivation. The advantages of training in groups, is that the participants feel some universality, meaning that the participants are able to sense that other people also experience the problems they encounter. This makes the participants feel as if they are not alone in dealing with the problems (Yalom, 1975). This feeling will increase the person’s self-disclosure (Meichenbaum, 1975) and will further increase the motivation to change.

There are a number of conditions that must be fulfilled in order to conduct the social skills training in groups. The size of the group should not exceed 12 people (Kelly, 1982; Michelson, et al. 1985). Groups that are too large will have negative impacts, as each participant will have lesser opportunities to practice. The homogeneity of the group must also be considered. A homogenous group is more preferable to heterogeneous groups. Meaning that the differences of the participant’s strengths and weaknesses are not too large. This is to prevent the possibilities that participants with higher capacities to develop boredom, and so that participants with lesser capacities don’t feel a sense of inferiority.

The training may be conducted using therapy formats, consisting of a number of meetings or in the format of a workshop which is done in one or two full days. Determining which format to use heavily depends on the participants of the training. For participants that have socialization difficulties along with other clinical problems, the
therapy format is preferable. A meeting held everyday for 2 hours for a total of 10-12 meetings is the correct choice. For participants that intend to enhance their skills or to seek for experience, the 1-2 day workshop format would be beneficial.

In Indonesia, the social skills training package has been formulated by Ramdhani (1992). This training package is a modification of the social skills training developed by Michelson et al (1985), psychological social skills training developed by Goldstein (1981), and assertion training developed by Rees and Graham (1991). This training is given through video to ease the trainer in giving examples of the behaviors that are to be used as models.

The intersession meetings in the meetings need to explain about issues related to social skills training, consisting of difficulties is socialization, basic assumptions on applying the social skills to help individuals that have difficulties in socializing, as well as the objectives of social skills training. In the training sessions; each participant is urged to actively try, practice, and give feedback to others, in order to create a warm atmosphere between the participants and the trainers. This makes the introduction in the initial stage of the training between the trainer and the participants, or between participants and other participants very important. The introduction is started off by the trainer and then followed by each participant.

Giving hope to the participants is very important in the training. The session of giving hope to the participants is done in the start of the training, however the chances for new hopes to emerge during the progress of the training is also possible. Before giving the opportunities for the participants to express their hopes, it is recommended that the trainer expresses his/ her hopes before the participants. The hopes of the participants to be achieved may be discovered by inviting the participants to fill in the behavior target forms (picture 5.a). The form is filled in individually by each participant. This allows the participant to learn the processes occurring within themselves while the training is in progress.

**BEHAVIOR TARGETS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nama</th>
<th>: ______________</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alamat</td>
<td>: ______________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situational Description</th>
<th>Skala (0% - 100%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Now</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1. Behavior Target Form**
Another method to gather the hopes of the participants is to invite them to fill in the Social Behavior Scale (*Skala Tingkah Laku Sosial/ STLS*) (Picture 5.b.), the Anxiety Scale (*Skala Kecemasan/ SK*), or the Self Concept Scale (*Skala Konsep Diri/ SKD*). All three of these scales have been subject to scientific scrutiny and all prove to have sufficient levels of validity and reliability. This article will display some examples of the items in the STLS to discover the participants’ socialization abilities. STLS consists of 48 items and its validity and reliability has already been confirmed by scientific research.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>TS</th>
<th>STS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>I am very well acquainted with my neighbors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>I only have a few friends, either in campus or in my home environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>I have a lot of friends and I remember almost all their names</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2. Social Behavior Scale (STLS)**

After guiding the hopes of the participants, the trainer could directly guide the participants to begin the social skills training. The training consists of 13 behavioral examples which often are encountered in every day life. These behaviors are 1) ways to ask for confirming purposes, 2) ways to give and receive praise 3) ways to complain and deal with complaints, 4) ways to refuse, 5) ways of asking for help, 6) ways of expressing uncertain feelings, 7) ways of suggesting behavioral change, 8) ways of demanding rights 9) ways of engaging in pleasant conversations, 10) ways of empathy 11) ways to interact with others of different status, 12) ways to interact with people of the opposite sex and 13) ways of interacting and joining a group.

Below an example of a dialogue is displayed on the ways of asking for confirming purposes. In interacting with others, misunderstanding frequently occurs due to incomplete information. Asking to confirm is one of the skills that a person should have. One of the failures of seeking information on the reasons a person reacts in certain ways could be in the form of passive and aggressive reactions. Imagine that a friend of yours once borrowed your college note book without asking your permission. The asking skill for this purpose, to ask without giving the impression of accusing is very important. Pay attention to the example below.

Sus : Hey Very, can we have a chat?
Very : Ok sure, what’s the matter Sus?
Sus : Would you know… (Doubtful) my note book is kind of gone… ehm.. ehm… ehm… I hope no one had taken it… (Acting doubtful and afraid to directly look Very in the eyes)
Very : Oh… your book… right… the one with the blue cover? Sus, yeah… ee…e
Very : The book is with me… on Sunday I went to your place but you weren’t there… I’m just borrowing it (showing the book with blue cover) because I’m working on an assignment from Mr. Dodo
Sus : I thought the book was lost
Very : Oh no… no… the book’s with me… safe and secure, I’ll give it back later on
Sus : Let me think… actually… I think I might need it too… (Sus actually needs the book now)
Very : Next week?… what do you think Sus?… because I haven’t finished my assignment… I just need to make some finishing touches…
Sus : Next week?… (Doubtful)… ok then… (Feeling forced to do so)
Very : Thanks Sus
Sis : Don’t mention it… (Leaves Very and feeling confused)

What is apparent from the dialogue above is that Sus’s reaction is passive. She doubtfully asks about her book. This may disadvantage her, because this may result in Very to repeat his actions in the future, or he may even not give the book back because he feels that Sus doesn’t need the book because he doesn’t understand that Sus needs the book at this moment. This is contrast to the aggressive behavior displayed below:

Ruru : Tik (Looking Utik in the face while widening her eyes), it was you who took my religion book, wasn’t it?
Utik : What… get real… don’t make false accusations like that… You really like putting blame on people… I was just borrowing it
Ruru : I don’t care just give it back this instant (raising her voice)
Utik : Ok… ok… I’ll give it back to you now…. Here (giving back the book feeling annoyed)
Ruru : Huuuh… borrowing without permission… (leaves Utik)
Utik : (Silent, angry, and grumbles to her friends)

In the dialogue above, Ruru fails to deliver the question to Utik. Ruru’s question “It was you who took my religion book wasn’t it?” gave the impression of aggressive behavior accusing Utik as taking Ruru’s book. Apart from that, Rurus way of demanding to get her book back by saying “I don’t care just give it back this instant” gives an arrogant impression of Ruru. This makes Utik angry, hurt, and will possibly lead Utik to take revenge on Ruru in the future. This type of interaction may lead to fractured relationships.

The dialogues above display examples of aggressive and passive behaviors. Below is an example of assertive behavior.

Situation : Very and Bintang were having a dialogue, when suddenly Etha showed up.
Etha : Ver… (Etha carefully calls Very while apologizing to Bintang for disrupting their conversation)
Etha : Is it true that you borrowed my physiology note book? I have searched everywhere at home… but its not there… Yushi said that it’s possibly in your place

Very : Oh… (trying to remember) yeah… Tha, I’m so sorry, at the time I had an assignment to do and I didn’t enter campus the week before, I meant to borrow your book but you weren’t at home…

Etha : Yeah, actually it doesn’t really matter, however in the future ask for permission or leave a note on my table.

Very : Ok (with regrets) I was in a hurry

Etha : When do you think you’re going to return it?

Very : This evening… would that be ok? What time are you leaving campus?

Etha : This evening I will be at home. Could you return it to my home?

Very : Yeah sure, I’ll come to your place at about 4.

Etha : Ok… thanks… (While waving goodbye to Very and Bintang)

The dialogue above is contrast to the three dialogues before. The first dialogue lead to uncertainty on when Very will return Sus’s book. The second dialogue led both Ruru and Utik to feel hurt with one another. Ruru’s aggressive attitude of being angry, and accusing Utik of taking her book made Utik angry so that she returned it aggressively to Ruru.

The last dialogue demonstrated an example of an assertive dialogue played by Etha. Etha who wanted to speak with Very, who was in the middle of a conversation with Bintang, didn’t forget to apologize to give the impression that he didn’t cut in their conversation. Another statement from Etha “Yeah actually it doesn’t matter” gives the impression that Etha understands Very’s condition. This led Very to be able to receive Etha’s advice to ask for permission or leave a note on the table when borrowing his book. This ascertains the possibility that Etha will receive his book back. On the other hand Etha was able to remind Very not to continue to repeat his wrongful actions in the future.

Other examples of social skills training is training to deal with certain situations that are frequently problematic which are to praise and to be praised. To praise someone is to give something positive and pleasant to other people. What must be understood is that people are glad when they are praised about themselves, thus giving and receiving praises gives a pleasant feeling. There are both correct and incorrect ways of delivering or receiving praise. The things to remember in delivering and receiving praise are sincerity and perfect timing.

Pay attention to the example below:

Situation : Sus, Ruru, and Yushi are talking about their hobbies while looking at Sus’s artwork

Yushi : Wow… Sus, turns out you’re into photography aren’t you? How long have you been doing this hobby?

Sus : Ya… quiet a while… for two years now

Yushi : (Amazed at the photos) is this also your work?

Sus : Yeah, I did this one 2 months ago (with entusiast)
Yushi : Ohh (Nods with amazement)

What appears in the dialogue above is that Yushi is amazed at Sus’s works, however he is not able to verbally express his amazement. Non-verbal language is very important referring to the communication without verbal expression. The meaning of non-verbal language remains vague and sometimes the receiver could not understand the meaning of the message being delivered. Try to compare with the dialogue below.

Situation : Ruru, Sus, and Dida are taking a look at Sus’s photos.
Sus : (while explaining the background of the photos) I made this one when receiving a camera from my father in my birthday
Dida : (nods) that’s quite good… actually how long have you been involved in photography?
Sus : Not too long, around 2 years
Dida : (expresses amazement) Wow… this one Sus (points at one of the photos) this one’s great… where did you do this one?
Sus : Thanks, I did this one in… Parangtritis, as for this one… I did this in Jembatan Merah.
Dida : Wow… you have a lot of unique photos, I’m so glad… can you teach me some time?
Sus : Sure, whenever you want, we could go hunting together
Dida : Then it’s a deal right? you know I’m serious right?

The sincere praise delivered by Dida to Sus made both of them feel pleasant. If we compare to the dialogue before, Yushi was also amazed at Sus’s photos but Yushi wasn’t able to express it leading to an uncertain dialogue, meaning that Yushi ended the dialogue in silence and Sus just smiled uncertainly. Also try to compare the two dialogues with the one below:

Situation : Mita and Utik were walking out of their class, and suddenly they passed by Aji.
Mita : Hello Ji… you’ve got classes don’t you?
Aji : Yeah I do what about you? What class did you just have?
Mita : No I didn’t have classes… I just finished attending the award ceremony from the rector. Utik was the national poetry reading champion for the university student’s level… O right you haven’t known Utik yet have you Ji, Have I introduced you to Utik or not Ji? You seem to be amazed at her poems.
Aji : (Looks at Utik)
Mita : Tik, let me introduce you to Aji, he’s a friend of the same year.
Utik : (shakes Aji’s hands) Utik
Aji : I’m Aji… Mita mita, turns out the she is as beautiful as her poems… (Constantly staring at Utik)
Utik : Thanks
Aji : Tik, I think you’re just great, as a person and also your poems
Utik : Ah you over exaggerate too much (feeling uncomfortable), Mita lets head back home
Mita : We’ll head back first yeah Ji
Aji : Lets head back together; I don’t think I’ll enter class…

From the dialogue above, Utik appears to be unhappy with the praise given by a person that she had just met. Aji’s ways of praise seemed impolite and aggressive. This led Utik to feel as if Aji wasn’t sincere and that he just wanted to tease her around.

In the social skills training, each skill is modeled by a passive, aggressive and assertive model. This will enable the participants to distinguish between the three models, and will further make them able to sense the emotions followed by the behaviors. The social skills training in this article has already been scientifically researched in its realibility by Ramdhani (1993).

5. Closing

Lately behavior modification techniques have been largely practiced, and its success has also been scientifically researched, either from abroad or in Indonesia. Stravinsky, et al (1987) conducted research on the effectiveness of social skills training to improve performance of clients suffering from social dysfunctions. It was reported that performance improved and that anxiety levels decreased. This research is in line with the theory stating that subjects with difficulties in adaptation are caused by the presence of anxiety upon themselves (Wolpe and Lazarus, in Bireman, 1987) or vice versa, difficulties in adaptation may result in anxiety (Twentyman, in Bierman, 1987), thus by improving an individual’s social interaction performance therefore their anxiety levels will decrease.

Other research had been conducted by Jupp, et al (1990), conducting research towards shy and socially isolated children that are given similar packages of training. This research demonstrated that the child’s self concept improved along with the child’s social behaviors. The improvement of self concept will reduce the child’s tendencies to make negative judgments upon themselves. This implies that the subject no longer experiences difficulties in having social interactions.

The social skills training developed by Ramdhani has been researched to be effective in helping teenagers that have difficulties in socializing (Ramdhani, 1993). The research demonstrated an improvement of self concept and social behaviors for the teenagers undergoing the training. Self concept is measured using the Self Concept Scale (Skala Konsep Diri/ SKD), as for teenage social behavior is measured using the Social Behavior Scale (Skala Tingkah Laku Sosial/ STLS).

Similar research had been conducted to different subjects, in this case, university students that have difficulties in socializing (Ramdhani, 1994; 1995). The research demonstrates improvements in social behavior, self esteem, and decreased levels of anxiety. Apart from studying the effectiveness of subjects that have difficulties in
socializing, the training was also developed to complement assertive training to decrease interpersonal anxiety levels.

References


