

POLITEKNIK KESEHATAN KEMENKES PALANGKA RAYA: HEALTH FORUM AND INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR  
THE NEW NORMAL: Creating a Pleasant Virtual Communication

# A New Drug-Free Life: The essence of professional's presence in drug survivor's family

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*Figure 1 The Galilee Foundation for Drug Rehabilitation Palangka Raya*

The story begins at the Galilee Foundation Drug Rehabilitation Center in Palangka Raya City in July 2018. We are a team that provides professional assistance to drug survivors at the Pantis (in Indonesia, rehabilitation homes for drugs users are termed Pantis). One of the four-drug survivors enrolled in our study was Jeremy, 19 years old. We were helping Jeremy to reconnect with his family. This activity was a part of the social reintegration activity of the drug rehabilitation program.

Social reintegration is an international mandate as stated in article 38 of the Single Convention on Narcotics Drugs. "The Parties shall give special attention to and take all practicable measures for the

prevention of abuse of drugs and early identification, treatment, education, after-care, rehabilitation, and social reintegration of the persons involved and shall coordinate their efforts to these ends.” (United Nations, 1961). The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) continuously calls on government of countries and territories around the world to coordinate and formulate policies according to the needs of their countries regarding the prevention, curation, rehabilitation, and social reintegration of drug abuse as an important component in a strategy to reduce drug demand and reduce the impact of drugs (International Narcotics Control Board, 2017).

In Indonesia, social reintegration has not received adequate attention and placed nowhere in national rehabilitation programs. The relapse is high, i.e., 60-70%. Drug survivors are sent back to the family while they and their families are not well prepared to reunite. No guidelines or training are available for the implementation of social reintegration. The term “social reintegration” is unfamiliar to the program managers. There is a term “post-rehabilitation”, which is two months after rehabilitation when drug survivors are prepared to return to the community. Unfortunately, this activity does not involve the families and therefore has little impact on restoring the communication gap between drug survivors and their families (<https://fk.ugm.ac.id/reintegration-social-tanggulangi-bahaya-narkoba>; <https://bnn.go.id/kambuh-relapse>; <https://republika.co.id/berita>, accessed October 14, 2020).

Jeremy comes from a broken home family. Her father left his wife, Jeremy, and two younger siblings to marry another woman. Jeremy got angry with his father and started taking drugs. One day Jeremy rode a motorcycle under drugs and got into an accident. He broke his left thigh and underwent surgery for pen implants. In an interview at the Panti, Jeremy expressed his disappointment with his father. When Jeremy was at the Panti, his mother married a divorced man. Jeremy said not close to his stepfather, but he thought it was good for her mother as she had a life partner to share the sorrow.



***Figure 2 Jeremy with his female cousin after inserting a pen into his left thigh post a traffic accident in 2014***

Damage to emotional relationship with families is a common problem among drug users/addicts of narcotics, psychotropic substances, and addictive substances. Even if they have completed a rehabilitation program and are awarded “drug survivor”, the damage is usually unhealed (McVey & Quarles, 2013). This is a true sadness as experts always recommend that when a family is unable to repair damaged relationship among its members because of limited knowledge, will and abilities, they need professional help (Shea, 1996, Wahlroos, 1995).

We made ourselves friends with Jeremy, we were there, and engaged in deep conversations with him. Jeremy, who was quiet, was encouraged to share his thoughts and feelings. We laughed together on many things; for example, when his mother gave him a little sum of money, Jeremy jokingly said his mother was going through a monetary crisis. We also reached his family and we're getting to know each other. Jeremy's mother was surprisingly a friendly and open person. She comes from a large family with 11 siblings; all of them live in the same city.

Jeremy's rehabilitation program was completed in July 2018, but his family, especially his mother, refused Jeremy to come home. Jeremy then enrolled in training for workers whose tuition fee was seven million rupiah (approximately US dollars 475) as a preparation to work in Panti. During an interview at Panti, Jeremy said that he wanted to devote his life to the Panti.

We provided the basic knowledge, tips and tricks on how to engage in emotional communication with the family. We also practiced the tips and tricks with them, to make the family in turn could sit together and freely talk about problems in a comfortable atmosphere. We emphasized that the main goal of family conversation is understanding, not agreement (Bechtle, 2014; Hendricks, 2009). When we were away, contact was made via WhatsApp. In the beginning, we usually initiated the chatting, and after a while Jeremy's mother did).



*Figure 3 Jeremy (inset) in Wuling Motors, with boss and other*

Four months has passed. In November 2018, the family welcomed Jeremy to come home. Jeremy then started working at Wuling Motors, a car sales agency. Jeremy to start the responsibility of managing his money. Jeremy decided to buy a motorbike by an installment scheme, deducted from his monthly salary. His boss also trusted Jeremy to deliver cars to a buyer living outside Palangka Raya. Such a situation sometimes made Jeremy's mother worried and she would wait until the son getting home. Her mother was supportive to Jeremy, she prepared Jeremy's daily meals.



*Figure 4 Jeremy with youngest sister, stepfather and younger brother*



*Figure 5 Jeremy with youngest sister, mother and stepfather*

The family relationship improved. His mother accepted the situation, so did the two younger siblings. His stepfather treated Jeremy and his younger siblings as his own kids. On September 10, 2020, Jeremy (who was then 22), married a girl of his choice, Anita, 18, y.o. The wedding receptions followed the health protocol of COVID-19. Jeremy and Anita are loving each other. Jeremy’s mother said the marriage would boost Jeremy’s responsibility towards his wife, which would be great for Jeremy.



*Figure 6 Jeremy married Anita on September 10, 2020*



*Figure 7 Jeremy with Anita, mother and stepfather*

Jeremy’s connection with his stepfather improved. Jeremy quit working at Wuling Motors as an impact of COVID-19 and worked with his stepfather as a builder. Jeremy’s new family lived at the same house. Jeremy no longer called his stepfather “uncle” it turned into “papa”. Jeremy’s mother said the hard times in her family’s life have passed, and she was grateful to God.



*Figure 8 Jeremy was enthusiastically helping us mounting the banner of International Seminar of Poltekkes Kemenkes Palangka Raya on October 22, 2020*

To end the story, in Jeremy's recovery process from drugs, the benefits of the presence of professionals as friend are long-stated by Goldstein and Kanfer (1975). This is a form of relationship enhancement method, plays a role in influencing client learning behavior. From Jeremy's side, his strong will and the support of the whole make Jeremy firm in continuing his drug-free life (Friedman, et al., 2014; Sillars, et al., 2004). This study result is in concordance with the finding of Triple R Project in European Union that social reintegration is important from the first-day drug users to undergo re habilitation (The Triple R Project Team, 2016).

### Consent

The photographed adults (identifiable) have given their consent for their pictures to be used in the dissemination and publication of this research.

### Conflict of Interest

None.

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