

## **Reducing Social Anxiety in Adolescents: The Efficacy of Group Counseling with Grounding Techniques**

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**Abstract:** This study examines the effectiveness of group counseling using grounding techniques in reducing social anxiety among seventh-grade students at State Junior High School 40 Medan, Indonesia. Social anxiety, characterized by an intense fear of social situations and concern over negative evaluation by others, has become increasingly common among adolescents, particularly in school environments. A total of 8 students identified as having moderate to high levels of social anxiety were selected through purposive sampling to participate in a four-session intervention program. Quantitative data were collected using a standardized social anxiety questionnaire administered before and after the intervention. Statistical analysis using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test revealed a significant decrease in social anxiety levels following the intervention ( $p = 0.012$ ), demonstrating the practical effectiveness of grounding strategies in alleviating symptoms of social discomfort and fear associated with peer interactions. These findings provide empirical support for integrating somatic and mindfulness-based techniques into school counseling services, especially for adolescents who are vulnerable to social anxiety. The study offers a promising direction for mental health practitioners and school counselors in developing non-pharmacological, easily applicable methods to support student well-being.

**Keywords:** Adolescent Mental Health, Grounding Techniques, Group Counseling, School-Based Intervention, Social Anxiety

### **A. Introduction**

Adolescence is a complex and challenging phase of development, where individuals experience significant changes both physically, emotionally, and socially (Umi Kalsum, 2023). One common psychological issue experienced by teenagers is social anxiety, which is an excessive fear of social situations or negative judgments from others (Javadian, 2022). Social anxiety can have serious impacts on adolescent life, including decreased self-confidence, limitations in forming social relationships, and obstacles in the learning process (Topan Iskandar, 2023).

In recent decades, mental health issues among adolescents have become a global concern, especially regarding the increasing prevalence of social anxiety (Rusman,

Hashim, & Zaharim, 2023). Data from World Health Organization showed 10–20% teenagers around the world experience anxiety, with social anxiety being one of the most common forms (Yandri, Firman, & Afdal, 2023). Social anxiety is characterized by excessive fear in social situations, discomfort when interacting with others, and constant worry about negative evaluations from the environment. If left unaddressed, this condition can hinder psychosocial development, academic achievement, and the overall quality of life for adolescents (Amri & Rusman, 2023).

In Indonesia, the phenomenon of social anxiety is also becoming increasingly evident among students, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic has extended the period of social isolation and worsened face-to-face interaction skills. Research of (Dones & Yamat, 2025) shows that many students experience difficulty in adapting to the school social environment, which is marked by withdrawn behavior, nervousness when speaking in public, and reluctance to engage in group activities. Similar conditions were identified in seventh-grade students at State Middle School 40 Medan, where the results of observations and initial assessments indicated that several students exhibited symptoms of social anxiety, such as avoiding eye contact, speaking in a very quiet voice, and showing refusal to participate in activities that involve social interaction.

In this context, the role of guidance and counseling services in schools is vital to provide the right psychological support. One of the approaches that has been developing in modern psychotherapy and is beginning to be applied in educational settings is grounding techniques. Grounding is an emotional regulation strategy that emphasizes an individual's connection to the present moment through body awareness, breathing, and the environment. This technique is considered effective in reducing anxiety symptoms as it helps individuals stay focused on the 'now' and not get lost in negative thoughts or threatening imaginations (Omar & Kirkman, 2024).

Research by (Bahri & Kholidin, 2024) Identifying several factors that have been identified as potential triggers includes negative social experiences, peer pressure, and a lack of social skills. Negative self-evaluation and excessive worry also contribute to the onset of social anxiety in students. If social anxiety is not addressed promptly, it risks leading to withdrawal from social environments, a decline in academic performance, and can develop into more serious mental health issues.

One of the emotion regulation techniques that has begun to gain attention in the context of psychotherapy is grounding, which is a technique that helps individuals refocus on the present moment through sensory awareness, breathing, and connection with their surrounding environment. Grounding has proven effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety and dissociation, especially in individuals with trauma and generalized anxiety disorder (Najich, Rahman, & Atmoko, 2024). Then the research conducted by (Regina, Garvin, & Sherly, 2025) evaluating the effectiveness of psychoeducational grounding techniques in reducing anxiety in 30 adolescents aged

14-17 years. Therefore, this research focuses on addressing the gap related to the exploration of techniques and other counseling modalities specific to this age group by examining the effectiveness of group counseling services that implement grounding techniques in an effort to reduce social anxiety among seventh-grade junior high school students.

However, there is a significant research gap in the application of grounding techniques, particularly in the context of group counseling in junior high school environments in Indonesia. Most grounding studies are still limited to adult populations and individual therapy settings, and are conducted in Western countries. There are not many studies that empirically test the effectiveness of grounding techniques as part of group guidance interventions in formal school environments in Indonesia, especially in addressing social anxiety experienced by school-aged adolescents. Indeed, group counseling approaches that integrate grounding techniques have great potential in fostering self-awareness, enhancing social acceptance, and naturally reducing anxiety symptoms without side effects.

Thus, the novelty of this research aims to test the effectiveness of group counseling with grounding techniques in reducing social anxiety among seventh-grade students at State Middle School 40 Medan. This study is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of a contextual guidance intervention model, as well as to provide practical contributions for guidance counselors and education practitioners in addressing adolescent mental health issues in schools in a more adaptive and responsive manner to the times.

## **B. Methods**

This research adopts a quantitative approach with a Pre-Experimental design. The design used is The One Group Pretest-Posttest, which involves observing one group of subjects before and after the intervention is given. The choice of this design is based on its ability to measure the changes that occur in subjects before and after the intervention in order to assess the effectiveness of the intervention more accurately (Sugiyono, 2022).

The population of this study includes all students of class VII-F at State Middle School 40 Medan, totaling 28 students. The sampling was conducted using Non-Probability Sampling technique, specifically Purposive Sampling (Lubis & Siregar, 2023). The criteria for sample determination are based on certain considerations by the researcher, namely students who are indicated to have social anxiety problems. All selected samples are then placed in one group to receive treatment and measure the effectiveness of group counseling with grounding techniques in reducing social anxiety among students.

The data collection technique used in this research is a questionnaire using a Likert scale format. The Likert scale is used to measure the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of an individual or a group of people about social phenomena. With the Likert scale, the variables to be measured are broken down into variable indicators. (Creswell, 2020) The social anxiety scale for junior high school students has four answer choices: strongly agree (SS), agree (S), disagree (TS), and strongly disagree (STS).

This research instrument uses an instrument that has been taken from previous research by (Nasution & Siregar, 2023). The questionnaire was then adopted according to the research issues that had been tested for validity and reliability. This questionnaire uses the CVR (Content Validity Ratio) computation. The values used to calculate the CVR are obtained from the results of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). SMEs are a group of experts who state whether items in the scale are essential to the psychological attributes being measured and whether they are relevant to the measurement goals. An item is assessed as essential if it can effectively represent the measurement objectives (Siregar, 2023).

The results obtained from the SME on the social anxiety scale show that all CVR coefficient values are above zero (0), thus all items are declared valid. To calculate the reliability coefficient on the social anxiety scale, the Alpha Cronbach's technique is used, which is expressed between the numbers 0 to 1.00. A reliability coefficient value close to 1.00 indicates high reliability, while a value close to 0 indicates low reliability of the measuring instrument. In the analysis results of the social anxiety scale, the reliability obtained is 0.885.

**Table 1. Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
,885	21

**Table 2. Blue Print on the Scale of Social Anxiety**

Aspect	Item Number		Number
	Favorable	Unfavorable	
Fear of negative evaluation	1, 2, 3, 19	10, 11, 12	7
Social avoidance and new difficulties	4, 5, 20, 21	13, 14	6
Social avoidance and general difficulties	6, 7, 8, 9	15, 16, 17, 18	8
Total			21

The procedure in this research in the first phase involves administering a social anxiety questionnaire as a pretest to students to measure the level of social anxiety before treatment is given. Secondly, group counseling is conducted using grounding techniques, consisting of three sessions, each lasting 45 minutes and held weekly. Thirdly, a social anxiety questionnaire is administered as a posttest to the students after the intervention is completed to measure the level of social anxiety after receiving group counseling using grounding techniques.

The non-parametric statistical test used in the data analysis technique of this study with a one-sample difference test (Wilcoxon signed-rank test) is employed because the data is not normally distributed and the sample used is relatively small, utilizing the SPSS software application.

### C. Results and Discussion

In order to see who is experiencing social anxiety issues, the initial measurement used a pre-test conducted by distributing a questionnaire to class VII-F with a total population of 28 students. After that, it was found that 8 students were categorized as having high and moderate levels of social anxiety. The following is the calculation result of the social anxiety pre-test questionnaire for students of class VII-F.

**Table 3. Pre-Test Data on Social Anxiety Issues in Seventh Grade Students of Class VII-F**

No.	Code Name	Social Anxiety Issues	
		Total	Category
1.	DAC	68	High
2.	RV	68	High
3.	ANC	67	High
4.	DS	65	High
5.	LCS	65	High
6.	SNND	65	High
7.	JB	64	High
8.	NM	53	Currently

From the data obtained in the table above, there are 8 students who experience social anxiety with a high category with a range of  $\geq 76\%$ , of which 7 chose this category; in the medium category with a range of 51-75%, there is 1 person who chose this; and in the low category of  $\leq 50\%$ , no one chose it. This indicates that although the majority of students experience a significant level of social anxiety, there is individual variation in the level of this issue. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct group counseling services using grounding techniques to help students cope with their difficulties in social interaction and reduce the anxiety levels they experience.

Based on the results of the pre-test data analysis, it was found that there are 8 students who show a high and moderate level of social anxiety. As many as 7 students were identified in the high category, with scores ranging from 64 to 68, and 1 student was in the moderate category, with a score of 53. The students with the highest scores of 68 are DAC and RV, indicating significant symptoms of social anxiety. Overall, these students demonstrate a relatively high level of social discomfort in daily interactions in the school environment.

This result serves as the basis for determining the subjects in the implementation of group counseling interventions using grounding techniques, with the aim of helping students manage and reduce the symptoms of social anxiety they experience. This

data also reinforces the urgency of implementing a structured guidance program that is based on the actual psychological needs of students. After the intervention has been completed, 8 research samples were directed to fill out the same questionnaire again. This is useful for observing changes in subjects after being given the intervention. From the processed results, the following outcomes were obtained:

**Table 4. Post-Test Data on Social Anxiety Issues in Seventh Grade Students of Class VII-F**

No.	Code Name	Social Anxiety Issues	
		Total	Category
1.	DAC	34	Low
2.	RV	40	Low
3.	ANC	42	Low
4.	DS	38	Low
5.	LCS	37	Low
6.	SNND	36	Low
7.	JB	36	Low
8.	NM	39	Low

The results of the post-test conducted after the group counseling intervention using grounding techniques showed a significant decrease in the level of social anxiety experienced by students in class VII-F at State Middle School 40 Medan. A total of 8 students who had previously been identified as experiencing social anxiety in the high and moderate categories now all showed a decrease in symptoms down to the low category. The post-test scores obtained by the students ranged from 34 to 42, with details such as student DAC, who previously had a score of 68, now scoring 34, and other students like RV, ANC, and NM also showing consistent score reductions.

This change reflects the effectiveness of group counseling interventions based on grounding techniques, which systematically help students manage emotions, enhance self-awareness, and reduce excessive anxiety in social situations. The fact that 100% of participants experienced a drop to the low category indicates that this approach not only succeeded on an individual level but also had a positive impact on the group.

To ensure the validity of the data, the researcher also conducted a normality test on the pre-test and post-test data using the Shapiro-Wilk statistical method. The results of this evaluation determine whether the data distribution can be analyzed using parametric or non-parametric tests. In its interpretation, if the significance value (sig.)  $> 0.05$ , then the data is said to be normally distributed, whereas if sig.  $< 0.05$ , then the data is not normally distributed. This testing is an important part of determining the advanced statistical analysis approach to significantly test the effectiveness of the intervention. Overall, these findings reinforce the suspicion that the grounding technique in the context of group counseling is an effective, simple, and applicable intervention to reduce social anxiety in adolescents in the junior high school environment.

**Table 5. Results of Normality Test**

Result	Tests of Normality					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	0.344	8	0.006	0.698	8	0.002
Posttest	0.129	8	0.200	0.983	8	0.976

To determine the appropriate type of statistical test in analyzing the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of students' social anxiety, the researcher first conducted a normality test on the data. The purpose of the normality test is to find out whether the data distribution follows a normal curve, which is a prerequisite for using parametric statistical tests. The testing was carried out using two methods, namely Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk, with a primary focus on the results of the Shapiro-Wilk test considering the small sample size (N = 8). The results of the test showed that the pre-test data was not normally distributed, with a significance value of 0.002 (< 0.05). This indicates that the distribution of social anxiety scores before the intervention did not follow a normal distribution. Conversely, the results of the normality test on the post-test data showed a normal distribution, with a significance value of 0.976 (> 0.05). This indicates that after the students participated in the group counseling intervention using grounding techniques, the distribution of their social anxiety scores improved in pattern and spread more evenly, following a normal distribution curve.

This finding has important implications in the selection of statistical analysis methods. Because the pre-test data is not normally distributed, parametric statistical approaches such as the t-test cannot be used. Therefore, the researcher used a non-parametric statistical test, namely the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, which is more suitable for analyzing paired data under conditions of non-normal distribution. This analysis was conducted with the help of IBM SPSS Statistics version 23, to significantly test the effectiveness of the intervention on reducing students' levels of social anxiety.

**Table 6. Results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Analysis**

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>	
	Posttest-Pretest
Z	-2.524 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp Sig. (2-tailed)	.012

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on positive ranks.

To test the effectiveness of group counseling interventions using grounding techniques in reducing social anxiety levels among students, the researcher used the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, which is a non-parametric test used to compare two paired data when the data distribution is not normal. Based on the analysis results displayed in the statistical test table, a Z value of -2.524 and an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.012 were obtained, which is below the significance level of 0.05. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and

post-test scores, thus the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is accepted. In other words, providing group counseling services using grounding techniques has proven effective in reducing the level of social anxiety among seventh-grade students of State Middle School 40 Medan.

The results of this study indicate that group counseling interventions using grounding techniques are significantly effective in reducing social anxiety levels among seventh-grade students of State Middle School 40 Medan. Based on initial measurements through a pre-test conducted with a questionnaire for 28 students, it was found that 8 students (28.57%) experienced social anxiety problems in the high (7 students) and medium (1 student) categories. This shows a real need for psychological guidance services among students who experience discomfort in social interactions in the school environment.

After the implementation of the intervention in the form of group counseling services based on grounding techniques, a re-measurement (post-test) was carried out using the same instrument. The results showed a very significant decrease, with all participants (100%) experiencing a decline in social anxiety scores and moving to the low category. The post-test scores ranged from 34 to 42, which is significantly different from the pre-test scores that ranged from 53 to 68. Descriptively, this change reflects the success of the grounding technique in helping students manage emotions, reducing fear and nervousness, and increasing confidence in social situations.

The normality test conducted using the Shapiro-Wilk method showed that the pre-test data was not normally distributed (sig. = 0.002), while the post-test data was normally distributed (sig. = 0.976). Therefore, a non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was used to analyze the effectiveness of the intervention. The test results showed a Z value of -2.524 with a significance of 0.012 (< 0.05), indicating a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results.

Thus, these findings strengthen the evidence that grounding techniques in group counseling services are an effective, practical, and applicable intervention approach in the educational context. This technique can meet the psychosocial needs of students with social anxiety and can be integrated as part of the school guidance and counseling program to support the overall mental health of adolescents. This intervention not only shows effectiveness at the individual level but also has a positive collective impact, which serves as an important foundation in developing strategies for the prevention and handling of social anxiety disorders in junior high school environments.

The findings of this study indicate that group counseling intervention using grounding techniques is effective in reducing social anxiety in students, which can be physiologically explained through the Polyvagal Theory (Porges, 2011). This theory emphasizes that conditions of social stress, such as social anxiety, involve the

activation of the sympathetic nervous system and dorsal vagal, which triggers defensive responses such as fear, withdrawal, or freezing. Grounding techniques help activate the ventral vagal system, which is part of the parasympathetic nervous system that plays a role in creating a sense of safety, calmness, and social connection. Activation of this system enables individuals to regulate their emotions more adaptively and respond to social environments more calmly. Therefore, the decrease in social anxiety among students in this study not only reflects psychological changes but also physiological recovery of the autonomic nervous system, in accordance with the Polyvagal Theory framework.

The characteristics of social anxiety in middle school students are as follows. Fear of judgment: Middle school students with social anxiety often have a strong fear of speaking in front of the class, participating in group discussions, or even eating in the school cafeteria because they worry about being teased or judged negatively by their peers (Nurjanah & Saputro, 2022). Social situation avoidance: They tend to avoid events, extracurricular activities, or informal interactions with peers. This avoidance can lead to social isolation and the loss of opportunities to develop important social skills (Salsabila & Mulia, 2025).

Physical symptoms: When in social situations that trigger anxiety, students may experience physical symptoms such as palpitations, cold sweats, trembling, blushing, nausea, or shortness of breath. These symptoms often exacerbate anxiety because they fear that others will notice them (Lilis, Herdi, & Marjo, 2024). Impact on academics: Social anxiety can affect academic performance, for example, students may not dare to ask the teacher, struggle in group work, or experience difficulties during oral presentations, even if they understand the subject matter (Larbona & Wahyuni, 2023). Self-comparison and low self-esteem: Students with social anxiety often have negative self-perceptions and tend to compare themselves unrealistically with their peers, feeling that they are not good enough or less competent in social interactions (Utami, 2022). At the middle school stage, the transition from childhood to adolescence often involves increased social pressure and the need to fit in with peer groups. The school environment becomes the primary arena for social development, making social anxiety a serious obstacle at this age.

Group counseling is an effective approach because it provides social support, an opportunity to share experiences, and practice social skills in a safe and supportive environment (Berg, Landreth, & Fall, 2024). In the context of social anxiety, group counseling can reduce feelings of isolation and normalize students' experiences of anxiety. Interaction and feedback from other group members can help students test and change their irrational thoughts about social situations (Miers & Warner, 2023).

Grounding techniques, as a core component of this intervention, play a crucial role in helping students manage their anxiety. Grounding is a coping technique that helps individuals refocus on the present and reality, distancing themselves from distressing

thoughts or feelings that trigger anxiety (Ding & Li, 2023). This technique often involves focusing on the senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste) or light physical activity to divert attention away from anxiety triggers. The application of grounding techniques in group sessions allows students to actively practice ways to calm themselves when anxious in social situations, such as during presentations in front of the class or interacting with others. With repeated practice, students can internalize these techniques and use them independently when facing situations that trigger social anxiety (Gkintoni & Kourkoutas, 2024). Then the group counseling service using grounding techniques with 4 sessions is aimed at reducing social anxiety issues among students.

In the first session, group counseling began with introducing the basic concepts of social anxiety to the students. This explanation includes the definition of social anxiety as intense anxiety in social situations due to fear of negative evaluation from others, as well as various manifestations of its symptoms, both physical (e.g., heart racing, shaking, blushing) and behavioral (avoiding eye contact, difficulty speaking). The importance of understanding that social anxiety is a common condition and can be managed is emphasized to reduce stigma and build hope. After the initial understanding of social anxiety is established, the session continues with the introduction of basic grounding techniques, particularly mindful breathing. Students are taught to focus on the sensation of their breath as an anchor to bring their attention back to the present moment, which is a fundamental step in calming the nervous system activated by anxiety. This mindful breathing technique aims to train students to manage their physiological responses to anxiety, allowing them to feel calmer and more in control in challenging situations (Fisak & Griffin, 2023).

The second session deepens the students' understanding of social anxiety by encouraging them to identify specific triggers and personal symptoms they experience. Students are guided to recognize the situations or events that most often trigger their social anxiety, as well as how that anxiety manifests in their thoughts (for example, "I will definitely embarrass myself"), feelings (for example, panic, shame), and physical responses. After this self-identification, the focus shifts to the introduction and practice of the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique. This technique is very effective because it utilizes all five senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste) to divert attention from troubling thoughts and feelings and bring full awareness to the surrounding environment. For example, students are asked to name five things they see, four things they touch, three things they hear, two things they smell, and one thing they feel within themselves (for example, heartbeat or breath flow). This exercise helps students to "ground" themselves during moments of rising anxiety, thereby reducing the intensity of social anxiety symptoms and refocusing on the current reality (Alemdar & Karaca, 2024).

In the third session, the group counseling program moved to more active and kinesthetic grounding techniques, which involve the sense of touch (tactile) and body

movement. Students were taught how touching and feeling the texture of certain objects can serve as a strong anchor to break the cycle of anxious thoughts. For example, they can squeeze a fabric or feel the texture of a table surface. Focusing on these tactile sensations helps shift attention from internalized anxiety to the concrete physical world. Additionally, this session emphasized the importance of conscious body movement as a form of grounding. One of the practices taught is walking slowly with full awareness, feeling each step of the feet touching the floor, and observing the coordination between body movement and breath. This intentional rhythmic movement helps calm the nervous system, reduce physical tension, and enhance awareness of the body in space and time. The goal of this session is to provide students with more varied and adaptive grounding tools, so they can choose the most effective technique according to the situation and level of anxiety they are experiencing (Schleyer & Zona, 2022).

In the fourth session, group counseling focuses on reflection and program closure, ensuring the integration of grounding learning in students' lives. Students are invited to evaluate changes and the management of social anxiety and share experiences of success and challenges. As a core part, students will create their personal 'Toolbox' that contains the most effective grounding techniques suited to each of them. This serves as a practical guide for managing anxiety in the future. The session concludes with a personal activity 'Letter to Self.' This is a form of cognitive-reflective grounding, where students will write messages of support, reminders of strengths, and commitments to continue applying grounding, becoming a source of lasting self-compassion (Yoduke, Daulima, & Mustikasari, 2023).

However, there are some studies that are not relevant to these findings, namely a systematic study by (Walder & Frey, 2025) reviewing the effectiveness of digital interventions (applications and online portals) for adolescents with symptoms of social anxiety. The meta-analysis results showed a moderate effect (Hedges  $g \approx 0.51$ ). However, the approach was self-guided and did not involve group interaction or sensory regulation such as grounding. Thus, even though it is still within the domain of adolescents, the mechanisms and settings of the interventions differ significantly from the grounding counseling you use.

Research by (Shahid, Kelson, & Saliba, 2024) conducting a review of self-directed VR for general anxiety, including social anxiety. They found that VR is effective, safe, and can be used independently, but does not involve group components or direct grounding interaction and sensory awareness. The main difference lies in the approach of immersive technology versus direct bodily regulation and social relationships in group counseling.

This comparison shows that, although various digital, technological, and pharmacological approaches demonstrate potential in reducing anxiety, group counseling with grounding offers a unique combination: social engagement, sensory

regulation, and interpersonal support. This method is more adaptable for implementation in schools, requires minimal technology, and is more practically and contextually appropriate.

The findings of this research indicate that group counseling services using grounding techniques are effective in significantly reducing students' social anxiety. This has important implications in supporting the Merdeka Belajar (Independent Learning) goals that emphasize holistic development of learners, including mental health aspects. Therefore, educational policies need to integrate grounding technique-based counseling programs into the school curriculum, provide training for teachers and counselors, and build a stronger psychosocial support system. Additionally, it is necessary to develop learning modules on mental health and conduct regular evaluations to ensure that this program is sustainable and targeted effectively. Thus, schools can become a safe space for students to grow, learn, and manage stress and anxiety independently.

#### **D. Conclusions**

The results of this study indicate that group counseling with grounding techniques is significantly effective in reducing social anxiety levels among seventh-grade students of class VII-F at State Middle School 40 Medan. Based on the pre-test results, 8 students were identified as experiencing social anxiety in the high and moderate categories. After participating in a series of grounding-based group counseling sessions, the post-test results showed that all subjects experienced a decrease in scores and moved to the low category. The effectiveness of this intervention was confirmed through the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, which produced a significance value of 0.012 ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating a significant difference between the conditions before and after the intervention. Theoretically, this finding reinforces the understanding that grounding techniques focusing on emotional regulation and sensory awareness can function effectively in educational contexts, particularly in addressing adolescents' social anxiety. This technique has also proven to be applicable and suitable for implementation in group counseling as it can accommodate the emotional needs of students collectively and culturally.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that schools adopt and integrate grounding techniques in counseling services as part of a strategy to improve students' mental health. Some concrete steps that can be taken include training guidance and counseling teachers and school counselors to master somatic-based intervention techniques such as grounding, so they can implement this approach consistently and professionally. Incorporating grounding exercises into the daily school routine, such as mindfulness exercises before starting lessons, to create a calmer and more focused classroom climate. Involving parents actively in reinforcing the application of grounding techniques at home, through socialization or brief training provided by schools. To strengthen the generalization of these findings, further research is

recommended to use a pure experimental design (Randomized Controlled Trial/RCT) with a larger and more representative sample size, as well as involving long-term follow-up to assess the stability of the intervention effects over time. Thus, the results of this research not only provide theoretical contributions to the development of effective counseling strategies but also offer practical contributions for schools in designing interventions that are adaptive to the challenges of adolescent mental health in the modern era.

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