



**EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION TO REDUCE STIGMA TOWARD
PERSON WITH SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS (SMI): A SCOPING REVIEW**

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ABSTRACT

Stigma against individuals with mental health disorders remains a significant barrier to recovery, exacerbating patient conditions, fostering social discrimination, and limiting access to adequate healthcare services. Objective: This study aims to identify effective education-based interventions to reduce societal stigma toward individuals with severe mental illness (SMI) through a literature review. Method: A scoping review was conducted by searching literature in Scopus, PubMed, ProQuest, and Science Direct. Included studies (2019–2024) explored educational interventions to reduce mental health stigma. Excluded were incomplete, duplicate, review, and retracted articles. Results: Of the 2,277 identified articles, eight studies met the criteria for further analysis. Findings indicate that educational methods, such as conventional psychoeducation, case studies, problem-based learning (PBL), and contact-based education, effectively reduce stigma against individuals with SMI. All interventions focused on improving mental health knowledge. Educational strategies varied based on target audiences, delivered through offline approaches (lectures, case studies, PBL) and online methods (educational videos). Combining online and offline approaches further enhanced knowledge and attitudes toward individuals with SMI. Conclusions: Several educational strategies have been developed to address stigma, whether through online education, face-to-face offline interactions, contact with individuals with mental illnesses, or a combination of these methods. By implementing the right educational methods, stigma toward individuals with (SMI) can be addressed across various target groups.

Keywords: education; intervention; severe mental illness; stigma

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INTRODUCTION

One of the key factors in the success of a recovery process is presence of stigma. Stigma creates barriers to the optimal provision of mental health services, leading to inappropriate management and worsening of the patient's condition (Soebiantoro, 2017). Moreover, stigma generates a negative label on individuals due to societal perceptions, affecting their thoughts, behaviors, and actions. This impact is observed across various stakeholders, including family, friends, government, healthcare providers, and employers, as well as the affected individuals themselves, ultimately restricting the rights of those subjected to stigma (Ardiyani, 2019). Stigma against individuals with mental health disorders is a significant issue in Indonesia, considering the high prevalence of mental health problems. According to the World Health Organization (2022), approximately 300 million people globally suffer from mental health disorders such as depression, bipolar disorder, and dementia, including 24 million individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia. In 2016, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) estimated that more than 1.1 billion people worldwide were affected by mental disorders. Data from Riset Kesehatan Dasar (Riskesdas, 2018) showed that Bali had the highest prevalence of mental health disorders at 11.1%, followed by Yogyakarta (10.4%), West Nusa Tenggara (9.6%), West Sumatra (9.1%), South Sulawesi (8.8%), Aceh (8.7%), Central Java (8.7%), and South Sumatra (8%) (Sahputri et al., 2024). Furthermore, data from Riskesdas (2023) reported that East Java had 4.2 per mil households with family

members suffering from psychosis/schizophrenia, amounting to 50,588 individuals. Promotion and prevention efforts, as part of psychosocial approaches, are crucial at every stage of the recovery process for individuals with schizophrenia (ODS), as stipulated in UU No. 18 Tahun 2014 about Mental Health that contains the aims to eliminate stigma, discrimination, and human rights violations against individuals with severe mental illness (ODGJ), recognizing them as part of the community.

One of the factors contributing to stigma is the low level of education and limited public knowledge about mental health, which triggers negative labeling, prejudice, and discriminatory actions against individuals with severe mental illness (ODGJ), further exacerbating the condition and well-being of patients (Rahayu & Nugraha, 2024). The direct impact of stigma on patients with mental health disorders includes feelings of low self-esteem, shame about their condition, fear of rejection, and significant psychological distress. Additionally, many families and surrounding communities often perceive individuals with mental health disorders as a disgrace, leading to social exclusion and embarrassment for the family due to the stigma prevalent in society. The term 'crazy person,' frequently attributed to individuals with mental health disorders, reinforces stigma and discourages social interaction with them. Furthermore, the perception that ODGJ are dangerous, often taught by parents to their children, is a misconception that worsens the stigma (Febriyona et al., 2023). Addressing stigma requires appropriate approaches and multifaceted strategies to change societal attitudes and perceptions towards individuals with mental health disorders. The World Health Organization (WHO) explicitly recommends the development of programs aimed at reducing stigma and improving mental health care. Recent reviews of anti-stigma interventions in high-income countries have demonstrated short-term improvements in knowledge, awareness, and attitudes towards mental health disorders through educational initiatives (Thornicroft et al., 2016). Additionally, there is a lack of synthesized evidence to identify effective educational methods for combating mental health stigma. Therefore, this review aims to address this gap by identifying educational method based interventions through a literature review to reduce stigma towards person with severe mental illness (SMI).

METHOD

This study conducted a scoping review approach that aimed to identify educational method based interventions in reducing mental health stigma towards person with severe mental illness (SMI). Scoping review guidelines was undertaken to identifying literature through several stages including 1) identification of research question, 2) identification of relevant studies, 3) selection of studies, 4) charting the data, 5) collating, summarizing and reporting results (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005).

Search Strategy

Four academic databases were used in this study (Scopus, PubMed, Proquest, and Science Direct). Keywords were developed based on the research question (health education OR health promotion) AND (handling OR reduce) AND (stigma OR stigmatization OR negative stigma OR social stigma) AND (people with mental disorders OR mental illness OR psychiatric disorder).

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria in this study included qualitative and quantitative research designs published in English between 2019 - 2024. The searches was limited to topics exploring education focused intervention to reduce public stigma towards mental health disorders. Meanwhile, exclusion criteria include articles that are not full papers, duplicate articles, literature review articles and articles that were withdrawn due to publication ethics.

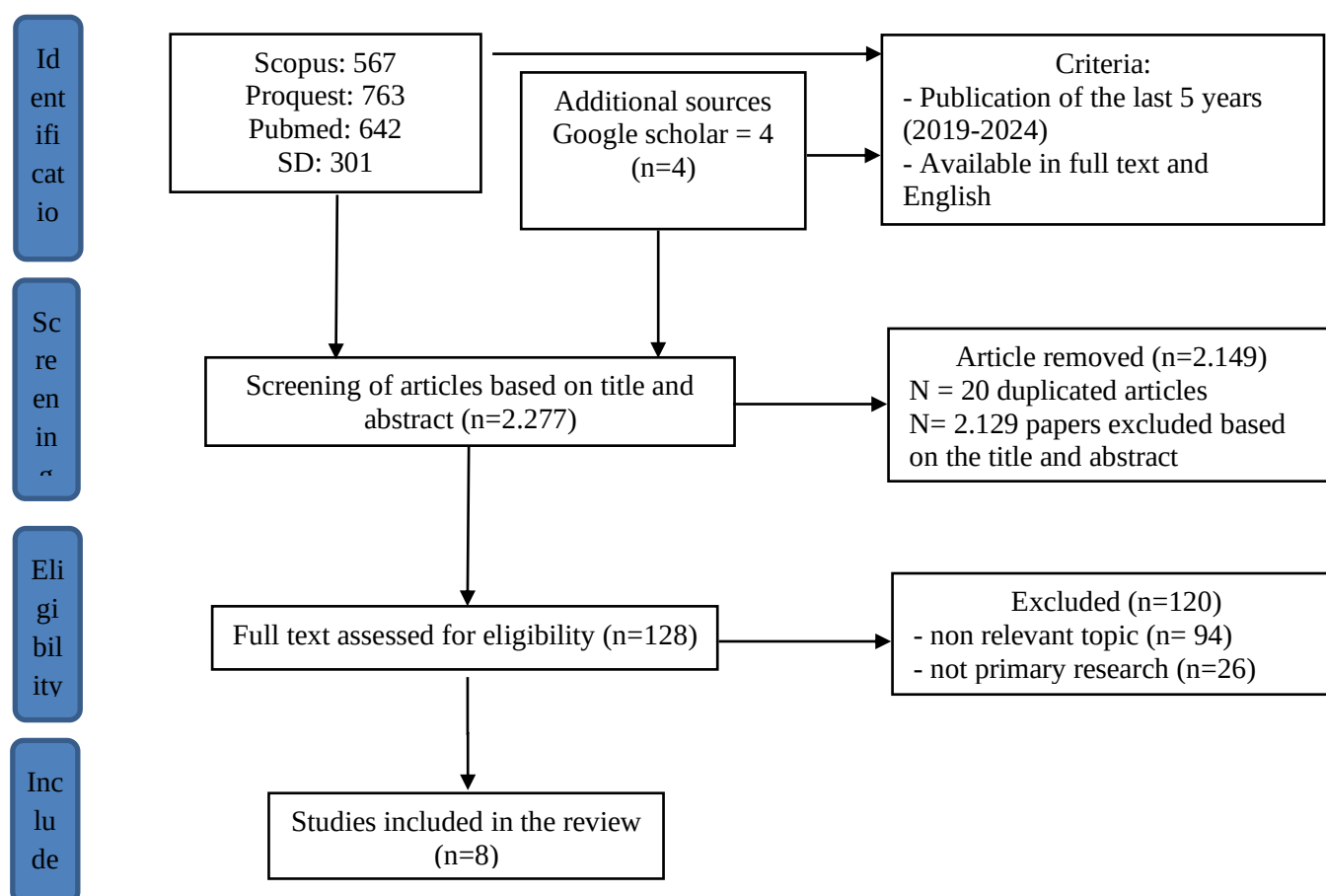


Figure 1. Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses flow diagram (PRISMA)

Data Extraction

Data extraction was conducted manually in a table that consists of the author's name, country, research objectives, sample, study design, type of intervention, and outcomes. The data extraction process was carried out by two individuals to enhance data accuracy and reduce bias.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted by at least two individuals to reduce bias. The analysis included descriptive qualitative analysis by identifying and describing the main themes that emerged from the research findings. The data analysis aimed to identify the types of educational methods used to prevent stigma against individuals with severe mental illness (SMI).

RESULT

A total of 2,277 articles were identified from four databases. The authors removed 20 duplicate articles based on the first selection and exclusion. Then, the authors evaluated the articles based on the title and abstract, there were 2,129 articles did not met the criteria. Next, 128 articles were identified and went through a full text review process based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. At the end of the process, 8 articles were involved in the scoping review (Figure 1). The characteristics of the study analysis results are shown in Table 1. The majority of study articles were published between 2020 and 2024 and were carried out in various countries such as Iran, Canada, Spain, the United States, and China. The majority of the articles were conducted using experiments with quasi-experimental and RCT to evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions provided.

Education to Combat Stigma Towards Person with severe mental illness (SMI)

The results show several educational methods used in an effort to reduce the stigma of person with severe mental illness (SMI). Health education is an effective method for reducing stigma by educating the general public about mental illness and correcting misunderstandings that cause public fear of individuals with severe mental illness (SMI). There are several educational methods used to reduce the stigma of people with mental health disorders, including face to face psychoeducation, case studies and problem based learning (Bahrami & Khalifi, 2022; Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2022), online video training (Zonoobi et al., 2024). Another effective method is contact based education (Amsalem et al., 2021, 2022; Brown, 2020; Whitley et al. ., 2020; Zhang et al., 2022) that combines psychoeducation and social contact concept.

Table 1.
Article Analysis

Author	Country of Origin	Aim	Sample	Study Design	Type of intervention	Result
(Bahrami & Khalifi, 2022)	Iran	To investigate the effect of psychoeducation on stigma of family caregivers of people with bipolar disorder	64 family caregiver	Quasi experiment	Face to face Psychoeducation	Significantly reduce affiliate stigma among family caregivers
(Whitley et al., 2020)	Canadian	To determine the feasibility of using education through participatory videos against the stigma of patients with mental health problems	1104 participant	Study protocol	Contact based education	Effectively improving knowledge about mental health problems
(Zonoobi et al., 2024)	Iran	To evaluate the effect of education on reducing stigma and changing behavior in patient with mental health problems	142 participant	Quasi experiment	Training session	Significantly reduce negative behavior towards mental health problems
(Brown, 2020)	USA	To evaluate the potential of media as educational interventions on stigma	two mass participant	Quasi experiment	Contact based education	Decreasing preference for social distance and negative emotions.
(Ozamiz-Etxebarria Et Al., 2022)	Spain	To evaluate the influence of case studies and problem-based learning in reducing the stigma of mental disorders.	111 college student	Quasy eksperimen	Case study and Problem-Based Learning	Effectively reduce negative attitudes toward mental disorders and knowledge about mental disorders significantly increased

Author	Country of Origin	Aim	Sample	Study Design	Type of intervention	Result
(Amsalem et al., 2021)	Amerika Serikat	To evaluate the efficacy of antistigma interventions	1.203 of participant	RCT	Contact based education	Effectively reduce stigma toward individuals with FEP (first episode psychosis).
(Zhang et al., 2022)	Tiongkok	To assess the feasibility of an intervention to reduce stigma among primary care and public health care staff in Beijing, China through a contact-based educational intervention.	121 health care staff	Quasy Experiment	Contact based education	Effectively reduce stigma among primary healthcare staff and the community
(Amsalem, Doron, et al. 2022)	Amerika Serikat	Intervensi video To evaluate the effect of participatory video to reduce stigma	1993 participant	RCT	Contact based education	Significantly reduce stigma towards people with mental health problems

DISCUSSION

The result of this study show that various education intervention to reduce stigma towards persons with severe mental illness (SMI) are effective. Interventions carried out with various target audiences ranging from schools, family, health facilities to communities with the aim of reducing stigma. For outcome measures, most studies reported significant improvements in stigma reduction. All education-based interventions focus on reducing stigma by increasing knowledge of mental health. Most of the major education was carried out through different strategies depends on the audience target. Offline interventions such as conventional education including lectures, case study, and problem based learning. Online intervention such as educational videos significantly reduce stigma toward people with mental health disorder. Combining online and offline methods, contact based education also shows an increase in knowledge and behavior towards persons with SMI. The educational method used in this study as a strategy for providing education or information has a different distribution of results. Providing conventional education, including offline psychoeducation, lectures, FGDs, and problem based learning, shows an increase in knowledge, but not all studies show a reduction in mental health stigma. Psychoeducation intervention including an understanding of the disorder, prevalence, symptoms, causes, treatments, how to take care of the client, introducing famous and successful people with mental disorder, concept of affiliate stigma and strategies to deal with stigma (Bahrami & Khalifi, 2022). From a family perspective, psychoeducation about stigma toward mental health is essential, as stigma against individuals with mental health conditions can hinder their recovery.

Previous research showed that psychoeducation significantly improved care givers knowledge how to handle people with mental health disorder (Fitriani & Suryadi, 2018). Psychoeducation can improve caregivers psychological well being by providing them knowledge and skill to manage their caregiving roles, thereby reducing stress and enhancing their quality of life (Ellin et al., 2023). Reducing affiliate stigma through psychoeducation not only supports caregivers but also enhances the care they provide to individuals with disabilities or mental health conditions. This is because caregivers who experience lower

levels of stigma are less likely to experience psychological distress, which can negatively impact their caregiving abilities (Hu et al., 2023). Additionally, psychoeducation also facilitated discussion and points of inquiry during the lecture as interactive discussion with the participants (Raghavan et al., 2024).

Stigma among health care personnel sometimes occur because people with mental disorders are perceived as different from other patients with medical condition. The research results show that training session as anti stigma educational package among medical students can significantly improve the attitudes toward treatment of mental illness (Zonoobi et al., 2024). Case study and problem based learning as educational intervention were effective in reducing stigma towards people with mental disorders (Ozamiz-Etxebarria Et Al., 2022). Previous study showed that implementing case-based courses can significantly reduce mental health stigma among healthcare students (Sevak et al., 2023). Case study presenting a real life cases that require healthcare professionals to reflect on their responses can help the to understand the impact of stigma (Kohlenberg, 2016). Previous research showed that PBL significantly reduced stigma among medical student (Arai et al., 2025). PBL is an educational strategy that focuses on students having autonomy and responsibility for developing the learning process. Problem based learning gives students better understanding of mental disorder and stigma by developing critical thinking and teamwork (Ibarluzea et al., 2018). This education package also bringing online program of short documentary video about treated patients with mental illness and writing reflection session. Direct contact helps healthcare professionals understand the lived experiences of these individuals, which is essential for reducing stigma (Henderson et al., 2022).

Contact-based educational (CBE) interventions that use a first-person perspective are increasingly recognized for their effectiveness in reducing stigma. CBE interventions typically involve disseminating accurate mental illness information, patient testimonials, and stories of success in recovery. Based on various studies, educational videos that combine patients' personal experiences and psychoeducation have proven effective in reducing stigma and increasing public understanding of mental health issues (Amsalem, Doron, et al. 2022). Individuals with mental health issues showcase their experiences, resilience, and recovery by writing scripts, filming, and producing educational videos about shared issues that impact them (Whitley et al., 2020). The result showed videos showing patient experiences can have a significant impact in changing society's negative perceptions of individuals with mental disorders. Personal stories shared by patients help reduce society's fear and prejudice towards mental disorders by showing that recovery is possible (Whitley et al., 2020). Previous study have shown that young adults or ethnic minorities groups often exhibit larger improvements in stigma reduction using CBE (Wong et al., 2018). CBE appears promising and offers many advantages for mass media implementation, including low costs, minimal resources, and ease of distribution. (Brown, 2020). The CBE interventions, based on intergroup contact theory, uses contact with stigmatized groups to provide knowledge, reduce anxiety, and enhance perspective-taking and empathy toward stigmatized groups to reduce stigma (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Combining lectures with contact-based education significantly improved attitudes and behaviors towards mental illness compared to conventional methods such as lectures (Zhang et al., 2022).

This study shows that various educational methods are effective in reducing stigma toward individuals with severe mental illness (SMI), such as conventional psychoeducation, case studies, PBL, and contact-based education. Educational interventions include lectures, case studies, role-plays, and direct interactions with individuals who have experienced mental health issues have been found to significantly reduce stigmatizing attitudes and increase

knowledge about mental health (Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2022; Waqas et al., 2020). The educational methods are tailored to the target audience, including families, healthcare personnel, and the general public. This psychoeducation method helps society understand the importance of early diagnosis, appropriate treatment, and social support for individuals with mental disorders while encouraging them to avoid discrimination and approach patients with empathy (Amsalem et al., 2021). Previous study suggest that repeated sessions and ongoing reinforcement may be necessary to sustain stigma reduction (Morgan et al., 2018). The effectiveness of these educational methods is also supported by the active participation of individuals, educational institutions, hospitals, and stakeholders. Programs that ensure meaningful and supportive contact tend to be more effective (Cerully et al., 2018).

CONCLUSION

Several educational strategies or methods have been developed to address stigma, including conventional education such as lectures, PBL, and case studies, online educational videos, and contact-based education. Stigma toward individuals with severe mental illness (SMI) prevents them from reintegrating into their families and communities, ultimately hindering the recovery process. Education provides information and introduces topics related to mental health problems, the challenges faced, how resilience develops, and the recovery process. However, the intervention must consider the educational topics, duration of the intervention, and its sustainability. By implementing the right educational methods, stigma toward individuals with severe mental illness (SMI) can be addressed across various target groups, including families, students, healthcare personnel, and the general public.

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