

## What is an Effective Self Help Guide? Literature Review and Meta Analysis

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Received October 02, 2021;  
Revised November 31, 2021;  
Accepted December 10, 2021;  
Published Online 2021-12-20

### Conflict of Interest

#### Disclosures:

The authors declare that they have no significant competing financial, professional or personal interests that might have influenced the performance or presentation of the work described in this manuscript.

**Abstract:** Self-help has become an interesting issue lately and is an alternative intervention that is of interest to individuals to help mental health problems experienced. Various models of self-help guides are available and can be accessed by individuals, including through the internet and social media. The purpose of this study was to determine the effective form of self-help for individuals who experience mental health problems. The research method used is literature review and as many as 8 of the 86 articles reviewed during the last two years. The articles that have been obtained were analyzed and synthesized using content analysis techniques to obtain an overview of self-help guidelines. The results showed that self-help guides were effective for individuals, including training materials, intervention practices, and manuals for helpers or therapists who support counselees to practice the guidelines.

**Keywords:** Self-Help, Counselor, Literature Review.



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**How to Cite:** Riskiyana Prihatiningsih, Indriyana Rachmawati, Diniy Hidayatur Rahman. 2021. What is an Effective Self Help Guide? Literature Review and Meta Analysis. *Bisma*, 5 (3): pp. 242-251, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.23887/bisma.v5i3>

## Introduction

Self-help is currently an alternative that is in great demand by individuals in solving problems they are experiencing. Kocabiyik & Bacioglu (2021); Genc & Kara (2021) stated that individuals prefer self-help-based interventions to cope with mental health experiences caused by cultural factors and pandemic conditions. Differences in cultural factors, different evaluations of autonomy, and relativity encourage individuals to choose to use self-help to help solve problems experienced because of individuality and independence which are increasingly difficult to obtain as a result of meeting the basic needs of each individual. Demir et al. (2020); Bird et al. (2020) added that individual characteristics, such as willingness and specific components of mental health literacy, such as knowledge of available help and the therapeutic

relationship process, influence efforts to seek psychological help. This is because individuals are aware of the importance of self-awareness, environmental awareness, and problem solving.

#### Self-help

There is no exact definition to explain self-help, self-management, or self-care, in fact the three terms are often used interchangeably (Richards, 2004; Lucock et al., 2011). Although it does not have an agreed definition, basically self-help is an individual self-intervention in which it contains elements of negotiating to manage affective disorders experienced through service programs to overcome mental health. Self-help relates to interventions for individuals who have mental health problems, friendships, self-confidence, spirituality, stress, and academic success or personal achievement (Tanrikulu, 2011). This means that self-help is used to overcome problems related to individual personal and social conditions. Bergsma (2008) added that self-help is an action to help individual personal or emotional problems without the help of others, this help can be in the form of self-help books to increase personal strength and function rather than relieve symptoms of psychological disorders experienced by individuals. This is because self-help is used to have a positive impact on individuals through messages conveyed and encourage individual active coping.

Matcham et al. (2014) stated that effective interventions in self-help involve relaxation therapy, goal setting, and cognitive restructuring. These three things are considered to be able to help individuals to relieve symptoms of depression, stress, anxiety, and fear experienced. Furthermore, self-help can be said to be more cost-effective for individuals who need overall mental health services (Garnefski, 2013). This is because the self-help intervention program can be delivered via the internet, so that it can be reached by individuals who are hampered by geographical and social conditions to obtain services. However, Marquis (2019) stated that self-help services, both in the form of books and other media, were criticized by social scientists because they could create new problems. This condition can occur because practicing the results of self-help reading for individual mental health is still questionable, its relevance to oneself and the individual's needs for the services obtained.

Counselors and counselor educators should be able to work together, advocate and implement assistance and training services to increase individual positive attitudes, through assistance services that are tailored to the needs and reach all individuals (Gutierrez et al., 2020; Yee et al., 2020; Noble, et al., 2020; Noble, et al., 2020; Noble, et al., 2020; Yee et al., 2020; Noble, et al., 2020). ., 2021). Assistance services in the form of training that can be provided by counselors can improve mental health and individual positive attitudes, namely self-help. Self-help is the first step that individuals can use to increase positive attitudes in life and achieve the expected psychological well-being. Thus, the purpose of this study is to find out an effective self-help guide for individuals.

## Method

### Research Design

The research method used is a literature review on effective self-help guidelines for individuals. Literature review is a research methodology that offers various types of general reviews, guidelines on conducting and evaluating literature review papers to be summarized and synthesized (Ramdhani et al., 2014; Snyder, 2019). The steps in the literature review carried out in this study based on the steps presented by the expert, can be described as follows: (1) choosing a self-help topic to be studied; (2) search and collect articles according to self-help topics; (3) analyze and synthesize the self-help literature obtained; (4) constructing a written review about an effective form of self-help for individuals. The literature search that was studied used [eric.ed.gov](http://eric.ed.gov) and [google scholar](http://google.scholar), the keywords used were self-help, and focused on education in schools. The explicit criteria in the self-help literature review are the topic, the year of publication of the 2020-2021 article, 8 out of 86 articles were obtained, and the research setting. If there are journal articles that do not meet these criteria, they are not included in the literature review, even though they are on the same topic. The findings are then analyzed and synthesized to obtain an effective self-help guide for individuals. The analytical technique used is content analysis to compare the literature discussion from the obtained sample papers. The sample paper in question is a journal of previous research that discusses self-help to obtain an effective form of self-help for individuals. The articles that have been reviewed can be seen in table 1.

**Table 1. Summary of Reviews of Articles *Self-Help* for Individuals**

No.	Topic	Year	Research Setting	Results
1	Kwon, P., Pattinson, MC, Faust, E., Hobaica, S., Tse, J., Sainz, R., . . . & Keiser, GH (2020). A Resilience Intervention to Increase Academic Persistence Among Undocumented Students in Higher Education. <i>Journal of Hispanic Higher Education</i> , 19(4), 452-471.	2020	Students	Develop a guide <i>self-help</i> resilience by leveraging social support, hope for the future, and emotional openness. Social support is an important aspect to help individuals apply guidelines <i>self-help</i> resilience. Social support helps accelerate changes in an individual's ability to survive and can increase the two components of resilience, namely hope and emotional openness.
2	Mgqwashu, EM, Timmis, S., De Wet, T., & Madondo, NE (2020). Transitions from rural contexts to and through higher education in South Africa: negotiating misrecognition. <i>Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education</i> , 50(7), 943-960.	2020	Students	Families and communities influence abilities <i>self-help</i> individual through the practices, values and norms taught. Individual life experiences, individual origins, and values received become the background for abilities <i>self-help</i> . The example taught by family and society influences the formation of doubt, self-esteem, adaptation, work ethic, dedication, and commitment. In addition, the interaction of identity and help can overcome inequalities and develop new identities. Furthermore, a sense of responsibility towards roles and tasks has little effect on the individual, if not based on regularity and anticipation.
3	Russell, A., Gaunt, DM, Cooper, K., Barton, S., Horwood, J., Kessler, D., ... & Wiles, N. (2020). The feasibility of low-intensity psychological therapy for depression co-occurring with autism in adults: The Autism Depression Trial (ADEPT)—a pilot randomized controlled trial. <i>Autism</i> , 24(6), 1360-1372.	2020	Autism	The <i>self-help guide</i> consists of materials, training and manuals for therapists that support individuals to use the materials. The initial session contains orientation to guidance <i>self-help</i> , the role of the therapist, and opportunities for the therapist to learn about individual needs in order to adapt. At the end of the session set individual intervention goals. Sessions two and three focused on mapping everyday situations and behaviors using visual images and diaries. Session 4 reviews and assesses positive feelings. Session 5 gathers information about feelings, situations, and behaviors to increase the chances of a positive mood aligning with individual goals and individual needs. In addition, it discusses providing support and encouragement to implement the activity plan. Record needed information about feelings, behaviors, and situations using a diary as well as consistent between-session tasks. Sessions 6-8 are used to finalize and refine the schedule of activities to extend new situations and new behaviors. Session 9 reviewed the principles and objectives of the intervention. Each session lasts 30-45

4	Gaigg, SB, Flaxman, PE, McLaven, G., Shah, R., Bowler, DM, Meyer, B., ... & South, M. (2020). Self-guided mindfulness and cognitive behavioral practices reduce anxiety in autistic adults: A pilot 8-month waitlist-controlled trial of widely available online tools. <i>Autism</i> , 24(4), 867-883.	2020	Autism	minutes, but the initial session for planning can last 90 minutes. <i>Self-help</i> online and mindfulness-based cognitive behavioral therapy provides a cost-effective method of supporting individuals' mental health. This model is an online self-help tool available to teach individuals CBT strategies in order to manage difficult feelings and anxiety. Individuals who use this model experience a decrease in anxiety, and this process lasts for 3-6 months.
5	Ye, Z., Yang, X., Zeng, C., Wang, Y., Shen, Z., Li, X., & Lin, D. (2020). Resilience, social support, and coping as mediators between COVID-19-related stressful experiences and acute stress disorder among college students in China. <i>Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being</i> , 12 (4), 1074-1094.	2020	Students	Use the internet and social media as strategies <i>self-help</i> for students, such as fostering resilience, positive emotions, and problem-focused coping strategies.
6	Smith, AC, Fowler, LA, Graham, AK, Jaworski, BK, Firebaugh, ML, Monterubio, GE, ... & Fitzsimmons-Craft, EE (2021). Digital Overload among College Students: Implications for Mental Health App Use. <i>Social Sciences</i> , 10(8), 279.	2021	Students	tools for <i>Self-help self-help</i> , including applications that provide positive affirmations, meditation videos, text messages and snapchat, social media, mental health blogs, youtube videos of people sharing health stories mental, and soothing music. Next, use a journaling and note-taking app to write mental health tips that you want to remember and process thoughts.
7	Ray, EC, Arpan, L., Oehme, K., Perko, A., & Clark, J. (2021). Helping students cope with adversity: the influence of a web-based intervention on students' self-efficacy and intentions to use wellness-related resources. <i>Journal of American college health</i> , 69(4), 444-451.	2021	Age 18-21 years	Individuals with high self-efficacy are involved in activities <i>self-help</i> and have a great intention to utilize existing resources. activities <i>Self-help</i> conducted by practicing intervention and keep a journal of activities, even if carried out online. <i>Self-help</i> is able to help solve the individual's common problems and mental health problems. In addition, it helps lower the individual's cognitive barriers to seeking help, and considers the persistent stigma associated with obtaining mental health resources. Furthermore, through the practice of activities <i>self-help</i> can reduce stress that arises.
8	Sahin Baltaci, H., Kucuker, D., Ozkilib, I., Karatas, UY, & Ozdemir, HA (2021). Investigation of Variables Predicting	2021	Student	<i>Self-help</i> through online platforms can help individuals reduce anxiety and the number of individuals experiencing anxiety. This is due to teaching individuals to be aware of social anxiety experienced, teaching skills to

Depression in College Students. Eurasian Journal of Educational Research, 92, 211-225.

deal with social anxiety, and reviewing the effectiveness of implementing interventions carried out.

## Results and Discussion

This study aims to determine an effective self-help guide for individuals. The results showed that self-help guidelines were effective for individuals, covering 3 things, namely materials, training or practicing interventions, and manuals or instructions for therapists who supported individuals to practice the guidelines. As for a further description of the implementation of self-help, it can be seen in fig. 1.

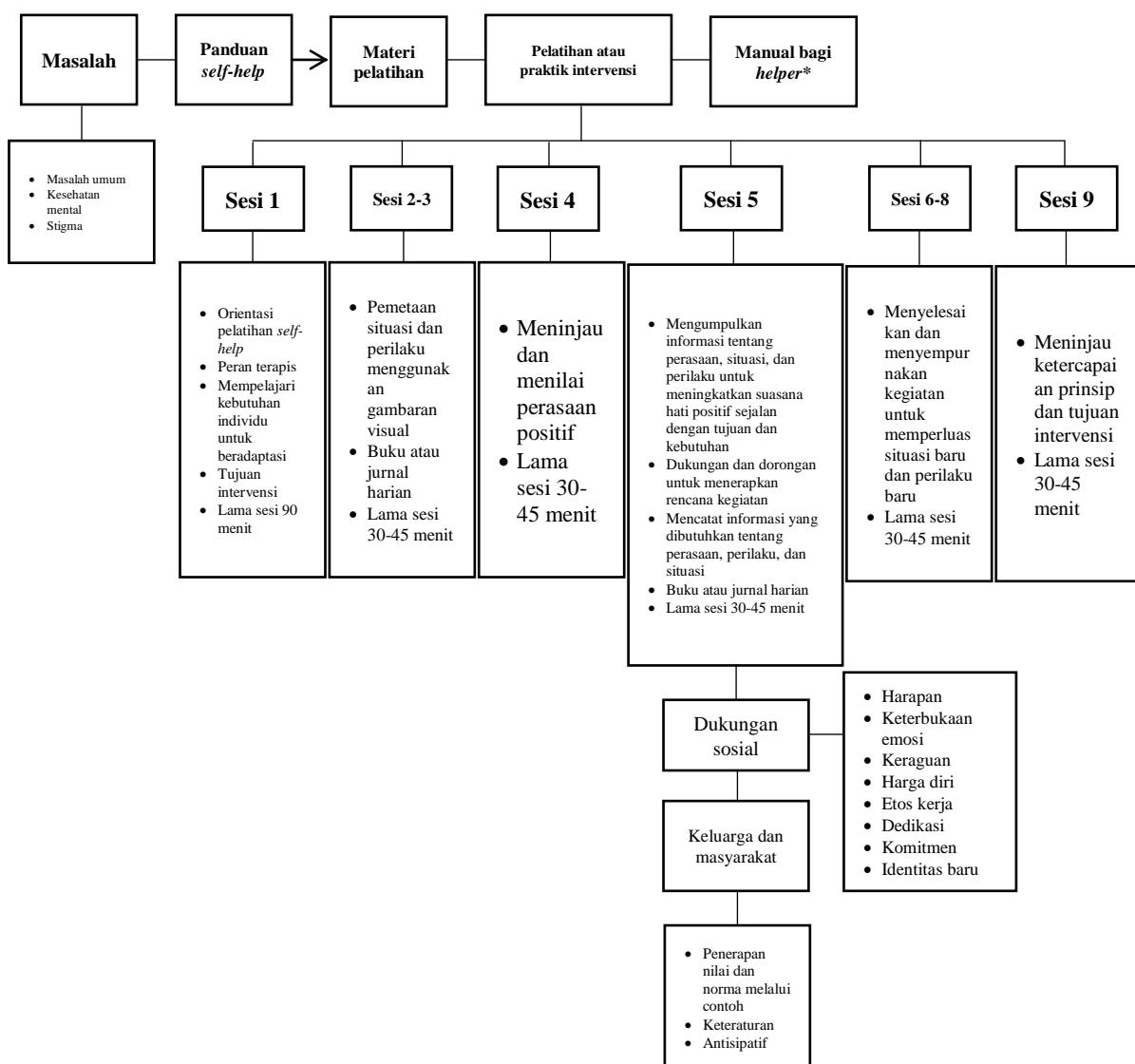


Figure 1. Guide Model Self-Help

Fig. 1 can explain that self-help guides are effective to help overcome Individual mental health problems consist of training materials related to the topic to be discussed, intervention training or practice, and manuals for helpers or therapists who support individuals to practice self-help guidelines. This manual for helpers is intended to empower social support around individuals to achieve the desired changes. This social support is needed by the individual in session five and can be obtained from the family and community.

In the training or intervention practice section, it is divided into 9 sessions, the initial session is held for 90 minutes, while sessions 2 to 9 are carried out for 30-45 minutes. Each session has a number of tasks that individuals need to perform to achieve the desired change. In the first or initial session, individuals are orientated about self-help training, the role of the therapist and the individual being treated, studying the need for adaptation, and the goals of the intervention. Sessions 2 and 3 begin to map out situations and behaviors that cause stress or stress or problems using visual images. Then, take notes in a daily book or journal about the conditions that occur when doing visual images. This session was conducted twice to obtain an adequate visual picture of the problems encountered. Session 4 individuals were asked to review and assess the positive feelings that arise, even though they are faced with problems that hinder psychological growth for the better. Furthermore, in this session, individuals are still asked to write down or record the conditions experienced in a daily book or journal.

Session 5 contains activities to gather information about feelings, situations, and behaviors to increase a positive mood in line with the expected goals and needs. In this session, social support is needed to help individuals achieve the desired expectations, emotional openness, eliminate doubts, self-esteem, work ethic, dedication, commitment, and acquire a new identity. This social support can be obtained by individuals from families and communities, through examples of the application of values and norms, regularity, and anticipatory attitudes. The support obtained in the end causes the individual to be willing to implement an activity plan to overcome the problems experienced. Furthermore, it is necessary to record the information needed about feelings, behaviors, and situations for individuals using a daily book or journal. In sessions 6 to 8, individuals are asked to complete and refine change activities in order to expand on new situations and new behaviors. Finally, in session 9, individuals review the achievement of the principles and objectives of the intervention to be achieved.

### Discussion

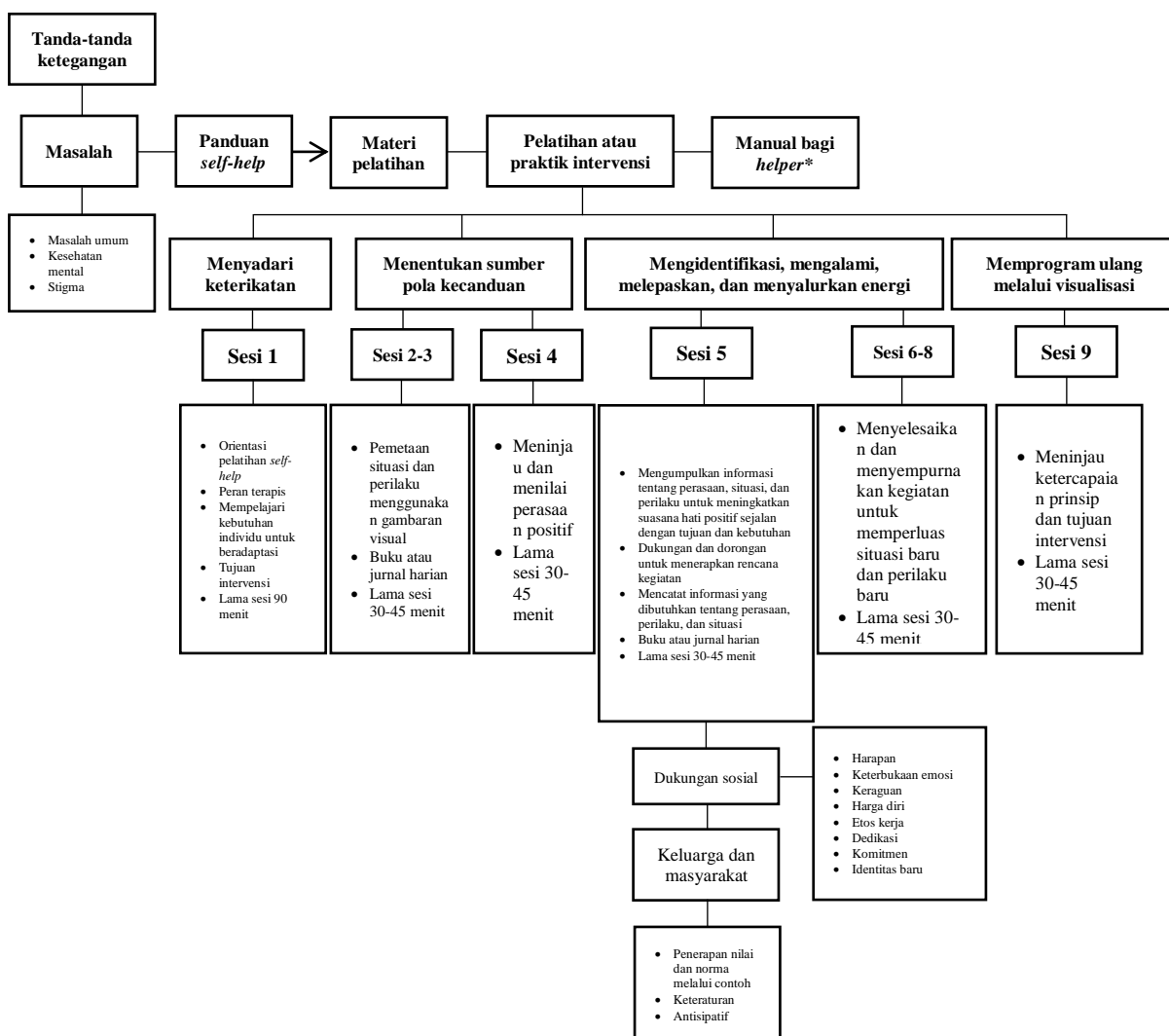
*Self-help* is a new trend to help individuals overcome mental health problems they are experiencing. Zhang & Chen (2020) stated that the basic reason that drives individuals to choose *self-help* is because they are not sure about the policies of educational institutions in providing mental health services for individuals. This shows that self-help is an alternative to the help needed by individuals to maintain mental health. This condition encourages the need to develop guides *self-help* effective for individual problems. Richards (2004) adds that self-help models need to provide interventions that are efficient, intensive, and not limited to specific mental health problems, unless proven ineffective. This goal can be achieved if the results of the interventions that have been carried out are monitored carefully, gradually in each session, so that the intensity of the intervention can be changed according to the counseling response. This means that in applying *self-help*, individuals do not necessarily carry out or practice their own interventions without encouragement from other individuals or helpers. Thus, further strengthening the results of the study that based on a literature review of guides *self-help* effective for individuals, 3 things need to be included in the guidelines, namely training materials, intervention practices, and manuals for helpers or therapists who support counsees in practicing the guidelines. Smith et al. (2021) stated that self-help guides should provide psycho educational modules, behavior change exercises, self-monitoring logs, and optional training. This helps individuals in helping themselves to overcome mental health problems.

The training materials contain problems that can be overcome with the self-help guide, implementation of interventions, and manuals or instructions for use. This intervention practice includes 9 sessions, each session has a number of tasks that must be done by the counselee and uses a diary to record the intervention activities that have been carried out. The stages of activity in each session can be seen in chart 1 above. Goodwin Jr. (1981) in his previous research stated that there are five steps in the method *self-help*, namely recognizing signs that can trigger the emergence of tension; aware of the attachment between signs of tension and self-awareness; determine the source of the addiction pattern; identifying, experiencing, releasing, and redistributing energy; and reprogramming via visualization. Recognizing signs of tension, including changes in body temperature, breathing patterns, negative emotions that arise, as well as

disharmony within the individual with the environment and other people. This disharmony condition becomes the basis for obtaining the services needed.

Recognizing the connection between signs of tension with awareness to understand self-change, modify, and rationally eliminate thoughts. Furthermore, the tension experienced by individuals can break thoughts, emotions and behavior, even if continuously allowed to cause individuals experiencing addiction to focus on the things that cause tension. Individuals need to understand the pattern of emergence of the formation of these addictions and the expectations that exist within themselves. Next, identify, try to feel, release, and channel the resulting energy. This helps individuals to free themselves from the difficulties experienced and increases the ability for self-actualization. Lastly, reprogram the visualization to change the conditions that aren't working well within itself. The counselor's job at this stage is to provide gradual reinforcement of the new condition and integrate it into a habit, through practice, effort, and involvement.

Reviewing the opinion of Goodwin Jr. together with the results of this study, a new model of an effective self-help guide for individuals on figure 2.



**Figure 2. Model of an Effective Self-Help Guide for Individuals**

The guiding model in Figure 2 above incorporates the point of view of Goodwin Jr. who has reviewed self-help measures from 1981. Basically the self-help model positions individuals to obtain needed interventions, well-being, and self-function (Luccock et al. 2011). Interventions that are obtained and carried out by individuals as part of the process to achieve recovery from mental health problems experienced, as a result of the emergence of signs of tension in themselves.

The themes of self-help guides can vary, including self-development, individual relationships, self-identity, and coping with stress (Bergsma, 2008). The theme of self-development relates to self-improvement, including self-management, the art of living, and how to achieve goals. Individual relationship themes relate to closeness and communication skills. The theme of coping with stress provides practical ideas for finding ways to relax, increase resilience, and reduce stress. Meanwhile, the theme of self-identity relates to making the right choices in life and self-improvement.

Basically, self-help is intended to help individuals improve the mood they are experiencing and does not have to be done face-to-face, namely direct information from the counselor to the counselee. Limitations of physical, geographical, and social conditions can access self-help via the internet (Garnefski et al., 2013). Easy access to self-help can help with mental health problems more than waiting for services to be provided. Genc & Kara (2021) added that the challenging situations and personal reasons that happened to individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic prompted individuals to start receiving mental health services online. Self-help becomes the need for individual psychological assistance to achieve better mental health. Finally, Tanrikulu (2011) states that it is necessary to consider cultural values for the purposes of individual intervention in order to help in personal and social aspects. This shows that developing self-help by taking into account the cultural conditions of the individual can facilitate the personal and social development of the individual.

## Conclusion

This study found an effective form of self-help guide for individuals, including training materials, intervention practices, and manuals for helpers or therapists who support counselees in practicing the guidelines. These three things need to be in the guide to help individuals achieve better self-development. In addition, notes or self-monitoring for each change in the session need to be recorded by the individual to determine the achievement of self-development.

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#### Article Information (Supplementary)

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##### Conflict of Interest Disclosures:

The authors declare that they have no significant competing financial, professional or personal interests that might have influenced the performance or presentation of the work described in this manuscript.

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**First Publication Right:** BISMA The Journal of Counseling

<http://dx.doi.org/10.23887/bisma.v5i3>

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Word Count:

