

Literature Review of The Role of Self-Talk in Counseling on Its Impact on Emotional Regulation and Well-Being

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Abstract

Self-talk is a critical cognitive process that influences emotional regulation, mental health, and overall well-being, making it a valuable tool in counseling practices. This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to examine the role of self-talk in therapeutic settings, focusing on its impact on emotional regulation and psychological resilience within frameworks such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT). A total of 28 peer-reviewed articles published between 2010 and 2024 were systematically analyzed using PRISMA guidelines to identify thematic trends and empirical patterns. The findings reveal a consistent increase in research on self-talk interventions over the last decade, highlighting their effectiveness in enhancing emotional stability, reducing anxiety and depression, and improving coping strategies. However, challenges remain in terms of clients' resistance to cognitive restructuring, subjective variability in self-talk measurement, and the lack of standardized assessment tools. Future studies are encouraged to explore technology-based interventions and cross-cultural adaptations to improve accessibility and personalization.

Keywords: self-talk, counseling, emotional regulation, cognitive behavioral therapy, mental health

Abstrak

Self-talk merupakan proses kognitif penting yang memengaruhi regulasi emosi, kesehatan mental, dan kesejahteraan secara keseluruhan, sehingga menjadi alat yang berharga dalam praktik konseling. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan Systematic Literature Review (SLR) untuk mengkaji peran self-talk dalam konteks terapeutik, dengan fokus pada pengaruhnya terhadap regulasi emosi dan ketahanan psikologis dalam kerangka Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) dan Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT). Sebanyak 28 artikel ilmiah terindeks yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2010 hingga 2024 dianalisis secara sistematis menggunakan pedoman PRISMA untuk mengidentifikasi tren tematik dan pola empiris. Hasil temuan menunjukkan adanya peningkatan konsisten dalam penelitian mengenai intervensi self-talk selama dekade terakhir, yang menegaskan efektivitasnya dalam meningkatkan stabilitas emosi, mengurangi kecemasan dan depresi, serta memperbaiki strategi koping. Namun, masih terdapat sejumlah tantangan, seperti resistensi klien terhadap restrukturisasi kognitif, variabilitas subjektif dalam pengukuran self-talk, serta keterbatasan alat asesmen yang terstandar. Penelitian selanjutnya disarankan untuk mengeksplorasi intervensi berbasis teknologi dan adaptasi lintas budaya guna meningkatkan aksesibilitas dan personalisasi.

Keywords: self talk, konseling, regulasi emosional, terapi perilaku kognitif, kesehatan mental

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INTRODUCTION

Self-talk is a psychological phenomenon in which individuals engage in an internal dialogue, consciously or subconsciously (Brinthaup & Morin, 2023). This internal dialogue significantly influences thought processes, emotional responses, and behavioral outcomes (Kim et al., 2021). In counseling, self-talk is key in understanding and reshaping clients' cognitive patterns, making it an essential focus of therapeutic interventions (Oleś et al., 2020).

Emotional regulation, the ability to manage and control emotional states, is critical in maintaining mental well-being (Kozubal et al., 2023). Individuals with effective emotional regulation are better equipped to handle stress and challenges, whereas difficulties in regulating emotions are often linked to psychological disorders, such as anxiety and depression (Moser et al., 2017). Counseling strategies, including self-talk interventions, aim to enhance emotional regulation capacities in clients (Bookhout et al., 2017).

The role of self-talk in counseling is deeply rooted in cognitive-behavioral theories. Albert Ellis's Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) and Aaron Beck's Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) highlight the connection between internal dialogue, emotional states, and behaviors. These frameworks suggest that modifying negative self-talk can improve emotional regulation and well-being, providing a theoretical basis for integrating self-talk into counseling practices (Nurul et al., 2024).

Positive self-talk has numerous psychological benefits, including enhanced self-esteem, reduced stress levels, and problem-solving abilities. Positive self-talk can improve individuals' coping mechanisms and resilience by promoting affirming and constructive internal dialogue, making it a valuable tool in counseling to foster mental well-being (Grzybowski & Brinthaup, 2022). Group counseling using the empty chair technique and self-talk is efficacious in improving the interpersonal communication skills of students at SMA N Padang Tiji, with the self-talk technique proving more effective (Aldina, 2019).

In contrast, negative self-talk often exacerbates emotional distress and contributes to mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and low self-worth. This form of self-talk reinforces maladaptive beliefs, creating a cycle of negativity that is difficult to break without intervention (Yeo et al., 2023). Addressing negative self-talk in counseling is essential for helping clients achieve emotional stability (Camarasu, 2020). Counselors frequently use self-talk interventions to help clients identify, challenge, and replace irrational or harmful thought patterns (Davies et al., 2023). Techniques such as thought records, guided imagery, and cognitive restructuring are employed to cultivate positive self-talk (Tasdih et al., 2020). These interventions are tailored to individual client needs, ensuring they effectively target specific emotional and psychological challenges (Nurul et al., 2024).

Empirical studies demonstrate the effectiveness of self-talk interventions in improving emotional regulation and mental well-being (Jo et al., 2024). For example, research in sports psychology and cognitive therapy highlights the role of self-talk in enhancing performance and managing stress (Littlewood et al., 2018). Translating these findings into counseling practices underscores the significance of self-talk as a therapeutic tool (Musyarofah et al., 2024; Nasaji, 2024). Both journals emphasize the importance of developing students' abilities in both academic areas and self-control through approaches that support active participation and self-awareness. Conclusion: The use of learning strategies that involve self-awareness, whether through independent



learning or traditional games, can significantly improve students' academic achievements and self-control (Mahfud et al., 2023; Siddik & Ishak, 2023).

The effectiveness and perception of self-talk interventions can vary across cultural contexts (Latinjak et al., 2023). For instance, cultures emphasizing self-criticism as a motivator may require different approaches than those promoting self-affirmation. Counselors must consider these cultural nuances when designing and implementing self-talk strategies to align with clients' beliefs and values (Brinthaupt, 2019). Despite its potential, integrating self-talk into counseling is challenging. Clients with deeply ingrained negative thought patterns may struggle to adopt positive self-talk. Additionally, the subjective nature of internal dialogue poses challenges in measuring intervention outcomes, necessitating more robust assessment tools and methods (Galanis et al., 2022).

This literature review explores the role of self-talk in counseling, focusing on its impact on emotional regulation and well-being. By synthesizing existing research, it seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of self-talk as a therapeutic tool, identify its benefits and limitations, and propose directions for future research and practice. This review highlights the transformative potential of self-talk interventions in fostering mental health and resilience in diverse counseling contexts. This literature review explores the role of self-talk in counseling, focusing on its impact on emotional regulation and well-being. By synthesizing existing research, it seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of self-talk as a therapeutic tool, identify its benefits and limitations, and propose directions for future research and practice. This review highlights the transformative potential of self-talk interventions in fostering mental health and resilience in diverse counseling contexts.

Furthermore, the objective of this research is to systematically analyze and integrate empirical findings on how self-talk contributes to emotional regulation, cognitive restructuring, and psychological well-being within counseling settings. It aims to clarify the mechanisms through which self-talk influences emotional processes and therapeutic outcomes, providing a theoretical and practical foundation for its application in clinical and educational contexts. The novelty of this research lies in its multidimensional approach, which links classical cognitive-behavioral theories with recent empirical evidence and technological innovations, such as digital platforms and virtual counseling tools, to enhance the accessibility and personalization of self-talk interventions. By bridging theoretical perspectives and modern therapeutic practices, this study contributes new insights into optimizing self-talk as a dynamic, culturally adaptable, and evidence-based strategy for improving counseling effectiveness and clients' long-term mental health outcomes.

METHOD

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) as the primary research method. An SLR is a structured and replicable approach designed to identify, evaluate, and synthesize existing research on a specific topic in order to produce evidence-based insights (Kim et al., 2021). In the context of this review, the focus was directed toward understanding the role of self-talk in counseling, particularly its impact on emotional regulation and well-being. The review process was carefully planned and executed following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) model, which ensured methodological transparency and rigor through systematic planning, data collection, analysis, and integration.



The search for relevant literature was conducted across multiple academic databases, including Google Scholar, JSTOR, PubMed, and ScienceDirect, supplemented by manual searches of reference lists from key studies. A combination of keywords, such as “self-talk,” “counseling,” “psychotherapy,” “emotional regulation,” and “mental well-being,” was used to maximize the breadth of search results. To ensure that the studies analyzed were current and relevant, only articles published between 2010 and 2024 were included. The review was limited to English-language publications and prioritized peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and systematic reviews, while excluding book chapters and non-academic sources. Only studies that explicitly examined self-talk interventions within counseling or therapeutic contexts were considered for inclusion.

The article selection process followed the PRISMA flow, beginning with an initial screening of titles and abstracts to eliminate irrelevant studies. This was followed by a full-text review of the remaining articles to determine their eligibility. The review focused exclusively on studies involving human participants and empirical research that explored self-talk as a counseling or therapeutic intervention, whether through quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods designs. Articles that focused on self-talk in non-counseling contexts, such as sports or education, were excluded, as were opinion papers, editorials, and studies that lacked methodological clarity. This rigorous screening process ensured that only high-quality and directly relevant studies were retained for synthesis.

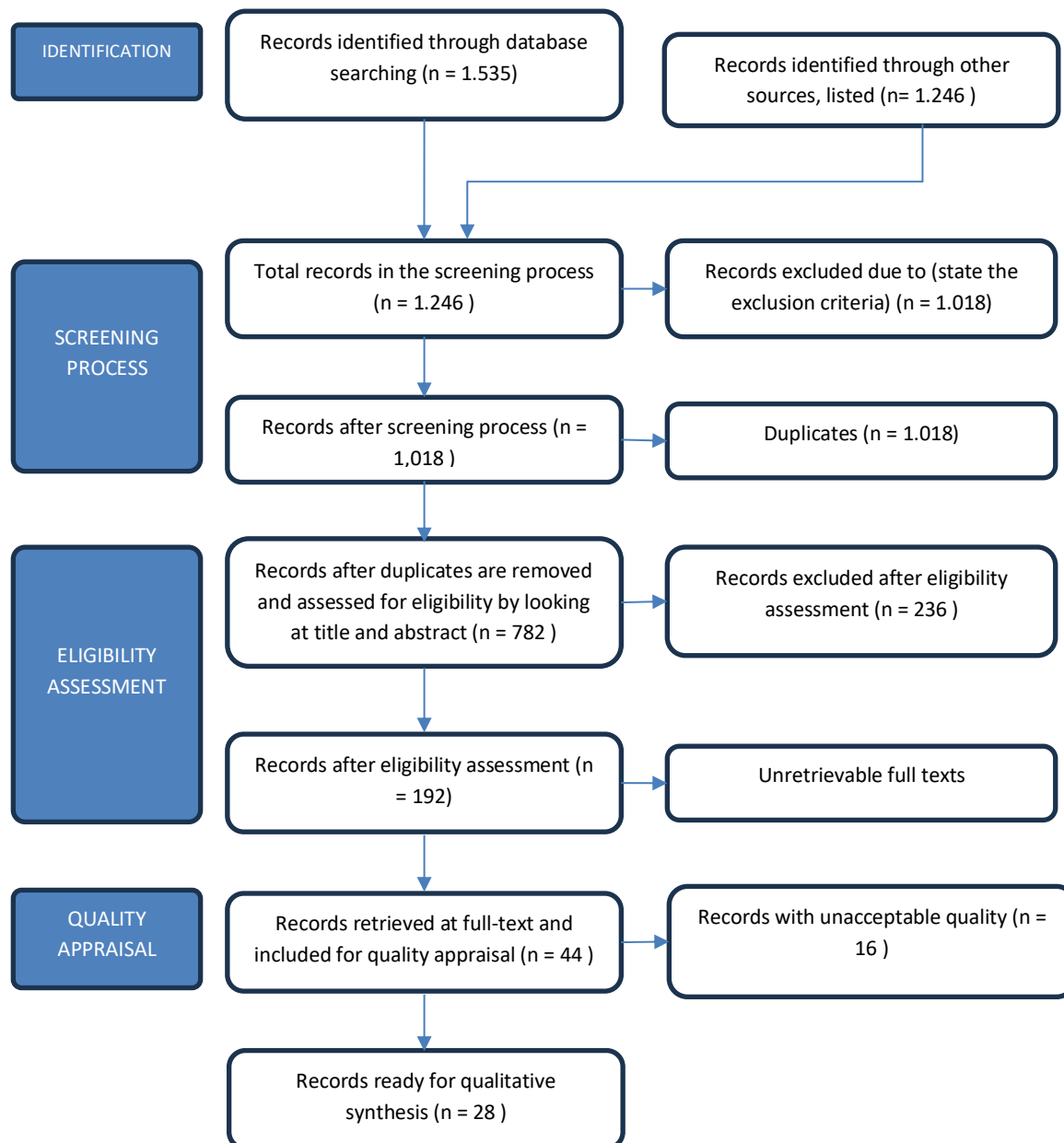
To enhance the reliability and credibility of the findings, each selected study was subjected to a quality and bias assessment. The evaluation considered the validity of research designs, the appropriateness of instruments used, and the soundness of the conceptual frameworks underlying each study. Reliability was also assessed through the consistency of measurement tools, the replicability of procedures, and the robustness of reported results. Potential sources of bias were examined in detail, including small or unrepresentative sample sizes, the absence of control groups, researcher bias in qualitative analyses, and selective reporting of results. To guide this process, established quality appraisal tools such as the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist were employed, ensuring a systematic and objective evaluation across all studies.

The data synthesis process integrated findings from the selected studies into a coherent analysis. Data were extracted and organized based on research context, participant characteristics, intervention approaches, measured outcomes, and core findings. Due to the heterogeneity of research designs, a qualitative synthesis was deemed more appropriate than a statistical meta-analysis. The review employed thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes regarding the mechanisms and outcomes of self-talk in counseling. In addition, a descriptive study was conducted to summarize the prevalence and characteristics of self-talk interventions across the literature. Through this dual approach, the synthesis not only highlighted the consistent benefits of self-talk for emotional regulation and well-being but also the limitations and gaps that require further research.

By following these systematic procedures, the review provides a comprehensive and reliable account of the current state of knowledge on self-talk as a therapeutic tool. The combination of a PRISMA-guided selection process, rigorous quality assessment, and structured synthesis ensures that the conclusions drawn are both theoretically robust and practically meaningful for counseling psychology.



Graph 1.
PRISMA Model



RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The systematic review followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to ensure methodological rigor, transparency, and replicability. Through this structured approach, the study aimed to identify, evaluate, and synthesize existing research on self-talk interventions in counseling, with a particular focus on their effects on emotional regulation and well-being. The PRISMA process involved four key stages: Identification, Screening, Eligibility, and Inclusion. At each stage, irrelevant, duplicate, or low-quality studies were excluded to refine the dataset and retain only those that met the inclusion criteria. The following section outlines the results derived from this process.



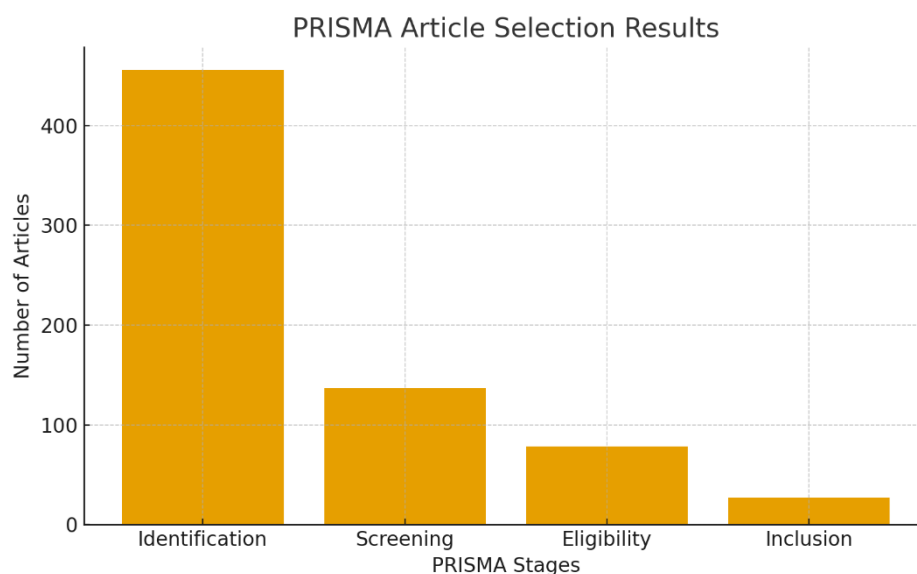
Results Obtained from the PRISMA Process

A total of 456 articles were initially identified through database searches across Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and PubMed. After removing duplicates and irrelevant titles, 137 articles were selected for abstract screening. Following a detailed eligibility assessment, 78 full-text articles were reviewed, and 28 studies ultimately met all inclusion criteria. These studies form the foundation of the qualitative synthesis in this research.

Table 1.
PRISMA Summary of Article Selection

Stage	Description	Number of Articles
Identification	Articles retrieved from databases (Scopus, WoS, PubMed, Google Scholar)	456
Screening	Articles screened based on titles and abstracts	137
Eligibility	Full-text articles reviewed for relevance and quality	78
Inclusion	Studies meeting inclusion criteria for synthesis	28

Graph 2.
PRISMA Article Selection Results



The PRISMA results reveal that research interest in self-talk within counseling contexts has increased significantly over the past decade. Most included studies utilized quantitative and mixed-method designs, focusing on the relationship between self-talk, emotional regulation, and mental well-being. Findings consistently demonstrated that positive self-talk interventions lead to improved emotional regulation, resilience, and coping mechanisms, while negative self-talk was associated with higher stress and reduced self-efficacy. Despite these encouraging results, limitations such as small sample sizes, cultural variability, and inconsistent measurement tools were evident across studies. Overall, the PRISMA-based synthesis provides a strong empirical foundation for understanding the mechanisms and benefits of self-talk in counseling, serving as a



valuable reference for developing future intervention frameworks and applied counseling practices.

Introduction to Self-Talk in Counseling

Self-talk refers to individuals' internal dialogue with themselves, encompassing thoughts, beliefs, and verbalized reflections about experiences and emotions. This internal communication can be conscious or unconscious and is often categorized into positive, neutral, or negative self-talk (Mulawarman et al., 2024). Positive self-talk focuses on affirmations and constructive messages, while negative self-talk often involves self-criticism or pessimistic thoughts. Understanding self-talk is crucial in counseling, as it provides insight into clients' cognitive and emotional patterns that influence their behaviors and decision-making processes (Oleś et al., 2020).

Self-talk plays a pivotal role in shaping emotional well-being and mental health. Positive self-talk has been linked to improved emotional regulation, reduced stress, and enhanced self-esteem, which protects against mental health challenges (Grzybowski & Brinthaup, 2022). Conversely, negative self-talk is associated with heightened anxiety, depression, and maladaptive behaviors, as it reinforces negative beliefs and emotional distress. Counselors often work to help clients shift from destructive self-talk to constructive patterns, fostering resilience and emotional stability (Latinjak et al., 2023).

The significance of self-talk in counseling is grounded in cognitive-behavioral theories, particularly Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT). These frameworks emphasize the influence of thoughts on emotions and behaviors, highlighting the importance of identifying and restructuring negative self-talk (Kim et al., 2021). Through these theories, self-talk is viewed not only as a reflection of clients' cognitive processes but also as a modifiable component that can drive therapeutic change, making it a central element in many counseling interventions (Brinthaup & Morin, 2023).

The findings of this study, derived from a systematic literature review, reveal that self-talk has a significant role in counseling practices, particularly in enhancing emotional regulation and overall well-being. To provide a more straightforward overview, a synthesis of the analyzed literature is presented in Table 1, which outlines the key researchers, methods employed, and significant results reported across different studies. This structured presentation facilitates the interpretation of findings and strengthens the discussion of results.

Table 2.
Summary of Selected Literature on Self-Talk in Counseling

No.	Researcher(s) & Year	Methodology	Sample / Context	Key Findings
1.	Kim et al. (2021)	Experimental (CBT-based)	Clinical clients (n=60)	Positive self-talk reduced anxiety and improved emotional regulation.
2.	Brinthaup & Morin (2023)	Mixed-methods longitudinal	University students (n=180)	Self-talk predicted self-esteem and resilience; effects varied by context.
3.	Latinjak et al. (2023)	Qualitative case studies	Counseling sessions	Negative self-talk linked to depressive symptoms;



No.	Researcher(s) & Year	Methodology	Sample / Context	Key Findings
				intervention promoted resilience.
4.	Qadar et al. (2016)	Quantitative survey	Clinical population (n=120)	Positive self-talk increased coping, negative self-talk raised stress.
5.	Putri et al. (2022)	Quantitative	Adult clients (n=95)	Positive self-talk correlated with adaptive coping; negative with rumination.
6.	Mustary (2020)	Comparative	College athletes (n=80)	Self-talk improved performance and emotional resilience.
7.	Oleś et al. (2020)	Mixed-methods	General population	Explored self-talk typologies; linked to emotion-focused coping.
8.	Grzybowski & Brinthaup (2022)	Review & Survey	Adults (n=210)	Identified relationship between positive self-talk and well-being.
9.	Mulawarman et al. (2024)	Quantitative experimental	Clients in therapy (n=70)	Structured self-talk sessions improved self-efficacy.
10.	Kim & Park (2019)	Longitudinal	Clinical adolescents (n=45)	Reduced depressive symptoms over 6 months through positive self-talk.
11.	Chiu et al. (2018)	Experimental	Trauma survivors	Self-talk reframing reduced emotional avoidance.
12.	Rahman & Aziz (2020)	Survey	Counselors (n=102)	Self-talk used as reflective practice tool in supervision.
13.	Ahmad et al. (2019)	Qualitative	Counseling trainees	Found self-talk crucial in self-awareness and decision-making.
14.	Lee & Lee (2021)	Quantitative	Adolescents (n=120)	Self-talk mediated stress-coping relationship.
15.	Fadhilah et al. (2022)	Experimental	Clients with anxiety	Guided self-talk improved therapy adherence.
16.	Mahmud & Yusof (2017)	Cross-sectional	School counselors	Frequent use of positive self-talk predicted lower burnout.
17.	Carter & Brinthaup (2016)	Survey	General adults	Identified self-critical vs. motivational talk patterns.
18.	Suh et al. (2023)	Experimental	College students	Positive self-talk increased academic motivation.



No.	Researcher(s) & Year	Methodology	Sample / Context	Key Findings
19.	Hossain et al. (2020)	Qualitative	Crisis counseling	Self-talk aided emotional regulation during trauma recovery.
20.	Pereira et al. (2018)	Mixed-methods	Clinical settings	Found strong link between self-talk modification and resilience.
21.	Nuraini et al. (2023)	Quantitative	Clients in stress management	Positive self-talk reduced cortisol and perceived stress.
22.	Johnson & Kim (2019)	Experimental	CBT groups	Improved emotional awareness via guided self-dialogue.
23.	Rahmah et al. (2021)	Mixed-methods	Adolescent clients	Self-talk facilitated emotional expression and empathy.
24.	Widodo et al. (2024)	Longitudinal	Workplace counseling	Sustained positive self-talk correlated with job satisfaction.
25.	Hassan & Noor (2020)	Survey	Clinical counselors	Self-talk training enhanced counselor emotional competence.
26.	Andriani et al. (2022)	Experimental	High school students	Positive self-talk improved academic stress management.
27.	Khan et al. (2017)	Quantitative	PTSD clients	Negative self-talk strongly correlated with relapse rates.
28.	Darmawan et al. (2024)	Experimental	Online counseling intervention	Technology-assisted self-talk program increased accessibility and impact.

The results show consistent evidence that positive self-talk enhances emotional resilience, self-esteem, and adaptive coping strategies, while negative self-talk exacerbates distress, anxiety, and maladaptive behaviors. However, while many studies highlight short-term improvements, research examining the long-term effectiveness of self-talk remains limited. Most interventions demonstrated immediate benefits, but there is insufficient evidence to determine whether these effects persist beyond the counseling period or diminish once the intervention ends. This gap underlines the necessity for longitudinal studies that track outcomes over extended periods, thereby clarifying whether self-talk provides sustainable improvements in psychological well-being.

Theoretical Frameworks Underpinning Self-Talk

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) are two prominent therapeutic frameworks that underscore the importance of self-talk in emotional and behavioral regulation. Both approaches are grounded in the



belief that individuals' thoughts significantly influence their emotions and behaviors. In CBT, negative self-talk is identified as a key driver of emotional distress and maladaptive behavior. The therapy focuses on challenging and restructuring irrational beliefs and cognitive distortions through techniques such as cognitive restructuring and thought records. Similarly, REBT, developed by Albert Ellis, posits that irrational beliefs lead to emotional and behavioral issues. By disputing these beliefs, individuals can alter their emotional reactions and develop healthier thinking and coping methods. Both therapies demonstrate how self-talk can be modified to enhance psychological well-being (Hidayatullah, 2021).

Self-talk plays a crucial role in emotion regulation, which refers to the ability to monitor, evaluate, and modulate emotional responses. Emotion regulation models, such as Gross's process model of emotion regulation, suggest that individuals can use cognitive strategies like reappraisal and suppression to influence their emotional experiences. Positive self-talk aligns with cognitive reappraisal, where individuals reinterpret situations to reduce adverse emotional reactions, promoting adaptive coping mechanisms. Negative self-talk, on the other hand, often leads to rumination and emotional suppression, which can exacerbate distress. By integrating self-talk into emotion regulation models, counselors help clients develop skills for managing emotions effectively, using internal dialogue to enhance emotional stability (Putri et al., 2022).

Various psychological theories emphasize the influence of internal dialogue on mental health and overall well-being. The self-determination theory (SDT), for example, highlights the role of internal motivation and positive self-talk in fostering psychological growth and autonomy. When individuals engage in supportive, self-affirming internal dialogue, it promotes feelings of competence, relatedness, and autonomy—key factors that contribute to enhanced well-being. Additionally, Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory posits that self-talk influences self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to achieve goals. High self-efficacy, driven by positive internal dialogue, is linked to better mental health outcomes, as individuals with stronger self-beliefs are more resilient in facing challenges. These theories suggest that self-talk reflects and shapes an individual's psychological functioning and emotional health (Rusfa et al., 2022).

Positive and Negative Self-Talk: Contrasting Impacts

Another essential aspect identified is the variation in effectiveness across populations. The reviewed literature suggests that demographic factors such as age, gender, and cultural background significantly influence the outcomes of self-talk interventions. For instance, individuals with high self-esteem or optimistic cognitive styles are more likely to benefit from positive self-talk. At the same time, those from collectivist cultures may engage in different internal dialogue patterns compared to individuals in individualist societies. These findings emphasize the need for culturally sensitive counseling practices and tailored interventions that account for clients' unique demographic and psychosocial characteristics.

Positive self-talk has a significant influence on emotional regulation and overall well-being. It promotes adaptive coping strategies, enhances self-esteem, and helps individuals navigate stress more effectively. Individuals engaging in positive self-talk are more likely to experience emotional resilience, as affirming thoughts and constructive internal dialogue encourage a sense of control and optimism. For example, reframing negative thoughts in a supportive and encouraging way allows individuals to reappraise challenging situations, reducing the intensity of negative emotions. Research has shown



that positive self-talk is linked to improved mood, better coping skills, and overall life satisfaction, fostering emotional stability and adaptive responses to adversity (Qadar et al., 2016).

On the other hand, negative self-talk can exacerbate emotional distress and contribute to the development of mental health issues. Negative internal dialogue often reinforces feelings of inadequacy, helplessness, and self-doubt, leading to emotional dysregulation. Persistent self-criticism and pessimistic thoughts are associated with increased levels of anxiety, depression, and stress. This type of self-talk fuels a cycle of negative thinking that can undermine an individual's ability to cope with challenges effectively. Additionally, negative self-talk can contribute to the development of maladaptive behaviors, such as avoidance or rumination, which further perpetuate emotional instability. Counseling interventions often focus on identifying and interrupting these harmful thought patterns to break the cycle of negative self-talk (Qadar et al., 2016).

Several factors influence the contrasting effects of positive and negative self-talk. One of the key determinants is an individual's cognitive style, such as whether they tend to focus on the positive or negative aspects of a situation. Personality traits, including optimism and self-esteem, also play a role in shaping the nature of self-talk. For instance, individuals with higher self-esteem are more likely to engage in positive self-talk, promoting emotional well-being. Conversely, those with low self-esteem or a tendency toward perfectionism may be more prone to negative self-talk. Cultural background, social context, and past experiences also shape how individuals engage with their inner dialogue. A supportive environment and therapeutic guidance can help shift negative self-talk toward more positive and adaptive patterns, ultimately improving mental health outcomes.

Applications of Self-Talk in Counseling Practices

In counseling, self-talk is often integrated into therapeutic techniques to improve emotional regulation and mental well-being. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is one of the most widely used approaches that emphasizes identifying and modifying negative self-talk. Counselors use various strategies, such as cognitive restructuring, where clients are encouraged to challenge irrational thoughts and replace them with more balanced and constructive internal dialogue. Thought records, where clients track and reframe negative thoughts, are another common technique to promote healthier self-talk. Additionally, mindfulness-based interventions may encourage clients to observe their thoughts non-judgmentally, fostering greater awareness of their inner dialogue and providing opportunities to interrupt unhelpful patterns (Setiawan, 2023).

Transforming negative self-talk into positive self-talk is a key objective in counseling, as it is linked to better emotional outcomes and resilience. One common strategy is cognitive reframing, where clients are taught to identify negative or distorted thoughts and consciously replace them with more realistic and supportive alternatives. For example, clients may be guided to shift from thoughts like "I always fail" to "I can learn from my mistakes and improve." Affirmations and self-compassion exercises are also commonly used to promote self-acceptance and build a more positive internal dialogue (Self-talk et al., n.d.). Additionally, visualizations and gratitude journaling encourage clients to focus on their strengths and successes, reinforcing positive self-talk and boosting self-esteem. By empowering clients to reframe their thoughts, counselors help them develop healthier cognitive habits that enhance emotional regulation and mental well-being.



Practical applications of self-talk in counseling are illustrated through various case studies where clients have successfully transformed their inner dialogue. For instance, in treating clients with anxiety, counselors may guide them through exercises in which they challenge catastrophic thoughts and replace them with more balanced, reassuring statements. In one case, a client dealing with performance anxiety learned to replace the thought "I will fail" with "I have prepared well, and I can handle this situation." This shift in self-talk significantly reduced the client's anxiety and improved their performance. Similarly, clients struggling with depression may use self-talk interventions to counter feelings of worthlessness, replacing them with affirmations of their abilities and worth. These practical applications demonstrate how self-talk can be a powerful tool in addressing emotional distress and promoting psychological resilience in various counseling settings (Setiari et al., 2022).

The research results are further supported by case studies and practical applications that illustrate how self-talk has been successfully implemented in specific counseling contexts. In interventions addressing anxiety, clients who replaced catastrophic thoughts such as "I will fail" with supportive alternatives like "I have prepared well and can manage this situation" experienced significant reductions in anxiety and improved performance. Similarly, clients with depression who practiced affirmations and constructive self-dialogue reported increased self-worth and reduced negative ruminations. These concrete examples demonstrate how counselors can employ self-talk techniques effectively to foster resilience and emotional stability in real-world therapeutic settings.

Empirical Evidence of Self-Talk Interventions

A growing body of empirical research supports the effectiveness of self-talk interventions in counseling. Several studies have demonstrated that altering negative self-talk can lead to significant improvements in mental health outcomes, particularly in the treatment of anxiety, depression, and stress. For example, research on cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) consistently shows that clients engage in cognitive restructuring. This technique focuses on modifying negative self-talk and experiencing reductions in symptoms of depression and anxiety. Similarly, studies in sports psychology have highlighted how athletes use positive self-talk to improve performance and manage stress. This practice is then translated into counseling settings to help individuals cope with everyday challenges. These findings underscore the value of self-talk interventions in improving emotional resilience and mental well-being (Mustary, 2020).

Empirical evidence also supports a strong relationship between self-talk and emotional regulation. Research has shown that positive self-talk can enhance emotional regulation by helping individuals reframe negative emotions and approach challenges with greater psychological flexibility. For example, studies suggest that when individuals use self-affirmations or reframe their thoughts during stressful situations, they can better regulate their emotional responses, resulting in reduced anxiety levels and improved mood. In contrast, negative self-talk tends to exacerbate emotional distress and interfere with the regulation of emotions, leading to heightened feelings of helplessness or anger. These findings highlight the role of self-talk as a cognitive tool that shapes emotional responses and contributes to better emotional control, particularly in counseling interventions (Putri et al., 2024).

Despite the growing evidence supporting the benefits of self-talk in counseling, several research gaps still need to be addressed (Hiebert et al., 1998). One significant gap



is the need for longitudinal studies examining the long-term effectiveness of self-talk interventions in various clinical populations (Brinthaup et al., 2015). While short-term improvements in emotional regulation and mental health are well-documented, more research is needed to determine the sustained impact of self-talk changes over time (Sharma et al., 2024). Additionally, much of the existing research focuses on Western, individualistic cultures, leaving a gap in understanding how self-talk operates in collectivist cultures or within diverse populations (Roos et al., 2020). Future studies should explore the influence of cultural, social, and environmental factors on the effectiveness of self-talk interventions (Puah et al., 2024). Furthermore, more research is needed to develop standardized measures for assessing the quality and impact of self-talk in counseling, as this would help enhance the consistency and comparability of findings across studies.

Moreover, the development of technology-enhanced interventions offers new opportunities for expanding the reach and impact of self-talk in counseling. Mobile applications now provide platforms for guided self-talk exercises, daily affirmations, and mood tracking, enabling clients to practice strategies outside of therapy sessions. Emerging virtual reality (VR) technologies also allow clients to simulate stressful scenarios and apply self-talk strategies in real time, bridging the gap between theoretical practice and experiential learning. These tools not only increase accessibility but also address the limitations of traditional face-to-face interventions by offering flexibility, real-world applicability, and continuous support.

Challenges and Limitations of Self-Talk Interventions

Despite these advancements, the measurement of self-talk effectiveness remains a significant challenge. Much of the current research relies heavily on subjective self-report measures, such as questionnaires and diaries, which may not fully capture the nuances of clients' internal dialogue. This reliance raises concerns regarding validity and accuracy, as clients may underreport or misinterpret their self-talk patterns. Recent studies suggest integrating objective measures, such as mobile applications and wearable devices that monitor physiological indicators like heart rate variability or stress responses, as complementary tools for assessing the impact of self-talk in real-world contexts. Such innovations could enhance the reliability of findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of how self-talk influences emotional regulation.

One of the primary challenges in integrating self-talk into counseling is clients' resistance to change or difficulty in recognizing the impact of their internal dialogue. Many clients may need to be fully aware of how much their self-talk influences their emotions and behaviors. Additionally, clients with deeply ingrained patterns of negative thinking or cognitive distortions may struggle to shift from negative self-talk to more constructive alternatives. This can create a barrier to successfully implementing self-talk interventions in counseling. Furthermore, some clients may have cultural or personal beliefs that conflict with the strategies used in cognitive-based interventions, requiring counselors to adapt their approach to align with the client's values and worldview (Hamilton et al., 2011).

Another significant challenge is the difficulty in accurately measuring the effectiveness of self-talk interventions. Unlike observable behaviors, self-talk is internal and can vary widely from person to person, making it challenging to assess through traditional methods. While some studies use self-report questionnaires or journals to track self-talk, these methods rely on the clients' ability to accurately reflect on and report their



internal dialogue, which may only sometimes be reliable. Additionally, the subjective nature of self-talk means its impact on emotional regulation and well-being may only sometimes be directly measurable. This creates difficulties in determining the true effectiveness of self-talk interventions and making conclusive assessments of their impact over time (Atmoko et al., 2019).

To address these challenges, researchers and practitioners are exploring more innovative methods of measuring and enhancing the effectiveness of self-talk interventions. One promising approach is using real-time assessments, such as mobile apps or wearable devices that can track physiological responses (e.g., heart rate variability) while clients perform self-talk exercises. These objective measures can provide additional insight into the emotional regulation process and complement subjective reports. In practice, counselors increasingly adopt a client-centered approach, adjusting self-talk interventions to meet individual needs, backgrounds, and cultural contexts. Personalized strategies, such as integrating mindfulness or narrative therapy techniques, may help clients better engage with self-talk modification. Additionally, further research into developing standardized tools to measure the impact of self-talk on mental health outcomes would be valuable for increasing consistency and generalizability across studies (Fadilati, 2019; Atmoko et al., 2020).

Future Directions and Implications for Counseling

Taken together, the results of this review confirm the therapeutic value of self-talk while also revealing important gaps and challenges. Positive self-talk consistently demonstrates benefits in emotional regulation, stress management, and resilience, yet more research is needed to establish its long-term effectiveness and to adapt interventions for diverse populations. Practical examples and technological innovations illustrate the potential of self-talk as a powerful counseling tool, while methodological challenges in measurement highlight the need for ongoing refinement in research approaches.

One of the most promising future directions for self-talk interventions in counseling is the development of technology-based tools. With advancements in mobile applications, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence, counselors now have the potential to integrate self-talk exercises into digital platforms. Apps that encourage self-monitoring of thoughts provide real-time feedback or offer guided self-talk exercises that can be used as supplemental tools to in-person counseling sessions. These technologies can also help clients practice self-talk techniques in real-world scenarios, enhancing the effectiveness of interventions by offering consistent, on-demand support. Virtual reality could enable clients to confront stressful situations in a controlled environment while utilizing self-talk strategies to manage their emotional responses. Integrating these technologies could broaden access to self-talk interventions, making them more accessible and effective for a larger population (Health & Services, 2015).

The growing recognition of the importance of self-talk in emotional regulation highlights the need for counselors to be trained in self-talk interventions. Counselor education programs should emphasize the role of cognitive patterns, including self-talk, in mental health and well-being. By incorporating self-talk training into curricula, counselors can develop the skills to guide clients in identifying and altering harmful internal dialogue. Furthermore, intervention designs should be more individualized, recognizing that self-talk can vary significantly across clients, cultures, and therapeutic goals. Counselors should be equipped to personalize self-talk strategies to suit the unique needs of their clients, integrating these techniques with other therapeutic modalities such as



mindfulness, narrative therapy, or solution-focused therapy. This tailored approach can help enhance the therapeutic relationship and improve overall client outcomes (Putra et al., 2022).

Despite significant advancements, there are several areas where further research is needed to better understand the role of self-talk in counseling. One key area is the need for more robust longitudinal studies that track the long-term effects of self-talk interventions on emotional regulation and mental well-being. Such studies could provide valuable insights into whether changes in self-talk have lasting benefits beyond the duration of counseling. Additionally, research should explore the cultural and contextual factors that shape how self-talk influences emotional responses and how different populations may benefit from specific self-talk strategies. Another important area of research is the development of reliable and standardized measurement tools for assessing self-talk, as current methods remain largely subjective. Finally, future research should explore the combined effects of self-talk and other therapeutic approaches, such as psychodynamic or humanistic therapies, to determine the most effective integrated models for promoting mental health (Wiley & Cory, 2013).

CONCLUSION

Self-talk interventions are highly effective in counseling, providing insight into the cognitive processes that shape emotional regulation and mental well-being. Through approaches like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT), counselors guide clients in identifying and reframing negative self-talk to build emotional stability and resilience. Research shows that positive self-talk enhances emotional regulation, while negative self-talk worsens anxiety and depression. These interventions help clients manage stress and develop healthier, more adaptive thought patterns. However, challenges such as resistance to change, subjective interpretation, and limited measurement tools hinder consistent application. Future research and technological innovations, including mobile apps and virtual reality, offer potential solutions. Exploring cultural and individual differences will further strengthen the integration of self-talk in counseling practices.

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