



Received: 09-03-2023	Accepted: 31-12-2024	Published: 31-12-2024
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## Teacher's Interpersonal Communication in Learning Assistance to Children with Cancer

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### Abstract

This research was conducted to determine how the teacher's interpersonal communication in learning assistance to children with cancer at Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia Bandung. The research method used is qualitative with a case study approach. The subjects of this research are teachers who teach at Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia Bandung. This research data was collected using observation, interview, documentation, and literature study techniques. The results of this study are that the implementation of interpersonal communication in dealing with children who are challenging to learn, teachers persuade and motivate students to be enthusiastic about learning through various strategies, one of which is giving rewards, implementing educational games, or providing additional assignments to strengthen children's understanding of the material. Mentoring with interpersonal communication involves paying attention to children's physical and emotional needs, such as inviting them to eat, asking about health, and providing emotional support. Flexible approaches, such as play, discussion, question and answer, and personalized approaches, create interactive learning.

**Keywords:** *Children with Cancer, Interpersonal Communication, Learning Assistance Methods*

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilakukan guna mengetahui bagaimana komunikasi interpersonal guru dalam pendampingan belajar kepada anak penderita kanker di Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia Bandung. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Subjek dari penelitian ini adalah guru yang mengajar di Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia Bandung. Data penelitian ini dikumpulkan dengan teknik observasi, wawancara, dokumentasi, serta studi literatur. Hasil penelitian ini bahwa implementasi komunikasi interpersonal dalam menghadapi anak-anak yang sulit untuk belajar, guru-guru membujuk dan memotivasi siswa agar semangat belajar melalui beragam strategi, salah satunya

*Lentera: Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah dan Komunikasi*

Vol. 8, No. 02, Desember 2024

P-ISSN: 2549-7391, E-ISSN: 2549-578X

<https://journal.uinsi.ac.id/index.php/lentera>

yakni memberikan reward, menerapkan permainan edukatif, atau memberikan tugas tambahan untuk memperkuat pemahaman anak terhadap materi. Adapun pendampingan dengan komunikasi interpersonal dalam praktiknya melibatkan perhatian terhadap kebutuhan fisik dan emosional anak-anak, seperti mengajak mereka makan, bertanya tentang kesehatan, dan memberikan dukungan emosional. Pendekatan yang fleksibel, seperti metode bermain, diskusi, tanya jawab, dan pendekatan personal, digunakan untuk menciptakan pembelajaran yang interaktif.

**Kata Kunci:** Anak Penderita Kanker, Komunikasi Interpersonal, Metode Pendampingan Belajar

## A. Introduction

Children with cancer are included in the category of children who have chronic health conditions. (Hendrawati et al., 2019) His journal mentioned the significant impact that children with cancer will experience anxiety and even trauma because efforts made for recovery must go through many complicated and painful treatments, such as chemotherapy, intra-spinal drug injections, radiotherapy, and surgery. Cancer treatment will cause many side effects, such as hair loss, indigestion, dry mouth, anemia, and weak memory. (Wicaksana & Rachman, 2019).

These conditions make children with cancer different from other normal children, according to (Dewi Kumalasari, 2019) Children with cancer are prone to stress due to the treatment process and the pain they feel. Even so (Qolbi, 2021) In his journal, he explains that education is the right of every human being, regardless of age, status, or any barriers.

Dewi, in her study, (Dewi Kumalasari, 2019) States that children with cancer who undergo the treatment process will experience school dropouts because the treatment takes a long time and causes painful side effects, so they lose their enthusiasm for the learning process.

Interpersonal communication activities are implemented through teachers' learning assistance to children with cancer. (Tutu, 2019) This learning assistance activity not only provides learning material but also includes preparing the mental and psychological state of the child himself, such as providing encouragement and positive affirmations so that children are not stressed by the sick conditions they experience. (Marwan et al., 2021). Apart from being implemented in the learning process, interpersonal communication is also carried out to provide motivation and enthusiasm for learning and maintain a stable condition both cognitively and psychosocially. (Irmawati et al., 2019). Whether or not achieving a goal depends on the motivation obtained; the more you want to succeed in learning, the more motivation you get must be much more significant. (Aina et al., 2021).

The focus of this research is located at Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia Bandung; in addition to the location of researchers in Bandung City, another reason underlying the selection of the cancer Foundation is that Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia Bandung is the only Cancer Foundation in Bandung that has my school program. The Bandung branch of YKAKI was established on 12 December 2012 and is located at Jl. Pandu No. 17, Pamoyanan, Cicenco District, Bandung City, West Java. Based on data taken from the official website of Yayasan Kasih Anak

**Lentera: Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah dan Komunikasi**

Vol. 8, No. 02, Desember 2024

P-ISSN: 2549-7391, E-ISSN: 2549-578X

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Kanker Indonesia at the link <https://ykaki.org/> explained that Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia has five main programs called Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia Peduli including:

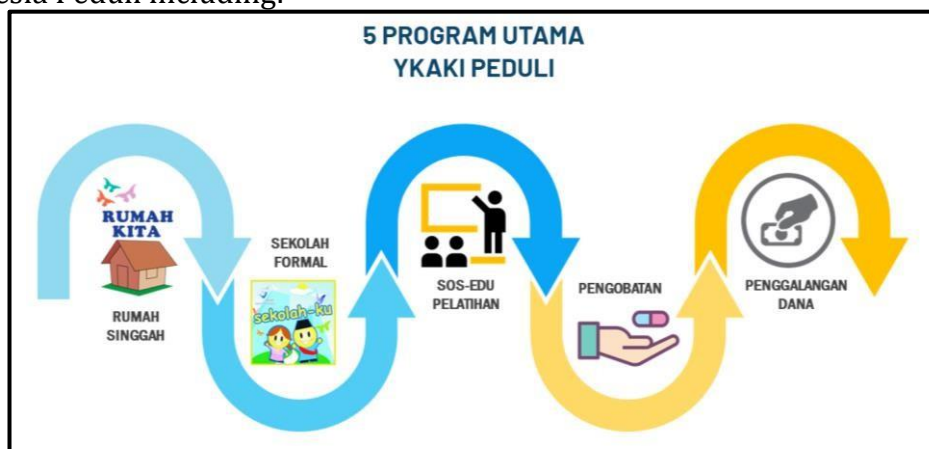


Figure 1: YKAKI Peduli Program

Of the five programs above, what interests researchers so that this research is carried out is my school program. My school program is implemented in all branches of Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia, with the aim that children with cancer who live in the Foundation or another designation is Rumah Kita, still get the right to education during the recovery and healing period, the process of learning activities is formal according to the standard government curriculum accompanied by professional educators (Bachelor of Education, Psychologist) and if it is declared cured then it can continue to the next level at the original school.

To further focus the research, the object of this study is elementary school children with a vulnerable age of 7-12 years. In his journal (Pratiwi, 2018) Explains that the vulnerable age of elementary school children is still in the ego phase towards themselves and the environment. This means that children at that time are still shrouded in high selfishness and only think about themselves. It is also confirmed by a journal written by (Suryana, 2021) Children with vulnerable ages of 7-12 years are delighted to play and move according to the child's wishes. That is why children aged 7-12 years at the elementary school education level are the focus of the object of this research.

Based on the exposure to the phenomenon above, researchers are interested in exploring the process of interpersonal communication in learning assistance carried out by teachers to children with cancer at Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia Bandung. It is well known that there are significant differences between children in general and children with cancer, both in terms of physical, mindset, and spirit of life. Nevertheless, in reality, children with cancer can adapt well to the learning process. This research was conducted at Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia Bandung, with the research subjects being teachers who teach there. In carrying out the implementation so that the objectives of this research can be achieved, this research uses qualitative research methods with a case study approach.

Based on what has been described previously, what makes this research relevant is the teaching process activities carried out at Rumah Kita Bandung and in hospitals with no more than three children, as well as the teaching process carried

**Lentera: Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah dan Komunikasi**

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P-ISSN: 2549-7391, E-ISSN: 2549-578X

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out by professionals and recognized by the government. For this reason, this research is expected to contribute knowledge so that the teacher's interpersonal communication method in assisting children with cancer to learn can be a reference to be implemented in a similar matter because the right to education must be obtained by all parties without exception.

Based on the explanation of the phenomenon and the things that have been explained previously, this research provided an overview and knowledge of the multidisciplinary aspects of the importance of interpersonal communication carried out by teachers in learning assistance for children with cancer.

## **B. Method**

Based on the previous explanation, this research is very suitable for using qualitative methods with a case study approach. (Sugiyono, 2020) The primary data sources in this study are the results of observations, interviews, and photo or video documentation of teachers who teach cancer children at Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia Bandung.

In this study, the researchers tried to confirm with parents or guardians of parents of children with cancer who live at Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia Bandung.

The validation and confirmation of the above targets will be carried out when in-depth interviews with the sources have been completed. This is done to validate and check for truth based on the data obtained from the interview results. The aim is to test the credibility of data about this research so that the data obtained is obtained from competent and credible parties. From the source data, it cannot be interpreted into something that has the same thing but must be described and described, categorized, and separated according to the similarities and differences that have been obtained.

## **C. Results and Discussion Communication**

In Latin, communication has an etymological meaning: it creates togetherness between communication actors. The word communication in Latin is similar to "community," which means "sharing." (Yasir, 2020) Communication is exchanging information, ideas, feelings, or messages between one or more parties. Its purpose is to convey the intended meaning from one party to another. Communication is limited to spoken words and involves body expressions, body language, writing, and other forms of nonverbal communication. (Ginting, 2015).

Some of the key elements in the communication process involve the sender (the person or group conveying the message), the message (the information conveyed), the communication channel (the medium or means used to transmit the message), the receiver (the person or group receiving the message), and the feedback (the response from the receiver that provides information about the extent to which the message has been understood) (Oktarina Yetty, 2017). Communication can be interpersonal (between two or more people), intrapersonal (communication with oneself), or mass (on a larger scale, such as through mass media). The effectiveness of communication often depends on how well the message is delivered

and received, as well as the understanding and involvement of the parties involved (Rachmawati, 2019).

### **Interpersonal Communication**

(Devito, 2011) It argues that interpersonal communication is a form of communication that is conveyed verbally or nonverbally, involving communication actors on a small and connected scale. Interpersonal communication is a form of communication that occurs between two or more people who are directly involved in face-to-face interactions. This process includes exchanging messages, information, and emotions between these individuals. Interpersonal communication involves various elements, both verbal and non-verbal, which are used to convey meaning and build mutual understanding. (Sofia et al., 2020).

Interpersonal communication involves at least two or more people exchanging messages. Each individual can simultaneously act as a message sender, receiver, or both. (Edi Harapan, Ahmad Syarwani, 2016) Interpersonal communication often occurs in interpersonal relationships, including family, friendship, romantic, or professional relationships. The quality of these relationships can affect how messages are received and understood. (Nurdin, 2020).

### **Symbolic Interaction Theory**

Symbolic interaction theory is important in interpersonal communication. This theory was initiated by George Herbert Mead in 1934 and explained in his book *Mind, Self, and Society*. It explains how humans create meaningful self-concepts and use language and symbols to create a society that can work together. (Iskandar & Syueb, 2018).

Individuals give meaning to particular objects, actions, or concepts based on the interpretation of symbols. These symbols can be words, symbols, or signs used in communication. The main focus of this theory is on social interactions between individuals. (Hutapea, 2019) Individuals generate meaning through interaction with others, and this meaning continues to evolve. (Xiao, 2018).

### **Interpersonal Attraction Theory**

(Anggraeni, 2014) in her research explained that interpersonal attraction is spontaneously created for other people because it has charm and positive traits. The greater the attraction, the more instinctively there is an action taken to try to approach and be kind to him. Interpersonal attraction is the attraction between two or more individuals in a relationship. This attraction can take many forms, including physical, emotional, or intellectual. The concept of interpersonal attraction often plays a key role in shaping social and romantic relationships (Rosmalina, 2018).

This theory recognizes that physical attraction can play an important role in attracting individuals to each other. Humans tend to be attracted to attractive and pleasant physical appearances (Fatwikiningsih, 2020). Similarities in values, interests, attitudes, and backgrounds can increase interpersonal attraction. People tend to feel more comfortable and connected with others with something in common (Darmawan et al., 2019).

### **Learning Motivation**

According to (Adman, 2017), In fostering the spirit of learning, there must be learning motivation owned by someone to encourage them to engage in learning process activities. In learning activities, every learner owns learning motivation because it is important in generating enthusiasm for learning. Learning motivation

*Lentera: Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah dan Komunikasi*

Vol. 8, No. 02, Desember 2024

P-ISSN: 2549-7391, E-ISSN: 2549-578X

<https://journal.uinsi.ac.id/index.php/lentera>

refers to internal and external drives or forces that encourage a person to learn and improve knowledge, skills, and understanding. Learning motivation can come from various factors, including personal needs, individual goals, parental expectations, and the educational environment (Sari, 2018).

People with clear and meaningful personal goals tend to be more motivated to learn. These goals can be academic achievement, career development, or personal satisfaction. (Ahmad Yani, 2021) Individuals' perceptions of what they expect to achieve from learning activities can motivate or inhibit them. They will likely be motivated to study more intensely if they believe their efforts will produce positive results (Darsyah, 2023).

### **The Initial Learning Process at Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia Bandung**

In the context of learning assistance for children with cancer at Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia Bandung, teachers have a crucial role in ensuring effective communication with children who have severe health conditions. Teachers use various evaluation methods to measure children's understanding of the subject, including repeating material, giving assignments, asking questions, and recording evaluation results. Communication practices in learning reflect basic principles in symbolic interaction theory, such as the use of symbols that are given meaning, continuous communication, the ability to modify symbols, and mutual respect for students' thinking abilities.

Practical learning assistance is evident in the small-group classroom, allowing for intensive communication and a sensitive approach to children's feelings. Teachers also communicate more carefully with children who are sick or experiencing physical changes. They use emotional and in-depth communication to support children's understanding.

In addition, teachers use various strategies to overcome students' learning difficulties, such as providing rewards and implementing educational games. Communication between teachers and parents is good, although there are variations in how children's information is conveyed to parents.

Based on theory and related research, the learning process for children with cancer is divided into planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. Teachers' interpersonal attraction to students with cancer succeeded in building effective interpersonal communication, primarily through persuasive approaches and rewards.

Overall, communication practices in learning assistance for children with cancer at Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia Bandung reflect a strong commitment to providing quality education to children who need special attention. A sensitive approach, effective communication, and cooperation between teachers, students, and parents are key factors in the success of this learning assistance.

The author makes a conclusion chart related to the explanation based on the overall exposure in this subchapter to be more concise but clear.

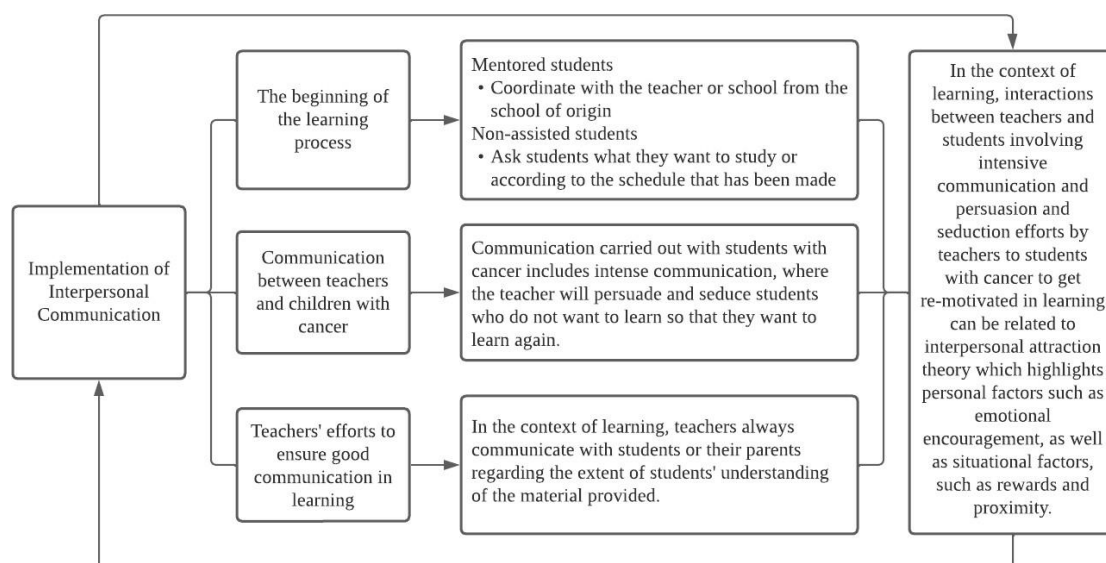


Figure 2. Interpersonal Communication Implementation Conclusion Chart

**Selection of Teacher Methods in Conducting Interpersonal Communication during Learning Assistance with Children with Cancer in YKAKI Bandung**

Teachers use various learning methods to assist children with cancer, such as questions and answers, discussions, lectures, games, and story narratives. This aims to create an engaging, interactive learning environment that aligns with the children’s interests and needs. These methods create a holistic learning experience and stimulate the development of children with cancer.

The primary learning methods are question-and-answer, discussion, and games, which allow for social interaction between teachers and students. Teachers involve students in the learning process, provide them with opportunities to actively participate, and shape students’ mindsets through communication and social interaction. Students learn meanings and symbols through interaction with the teacher, and continuous communication through these symbols strengthens the understanding of the material.

Teachers also adapt learning methods to the conditions, needs, and interests of students with cancer. The main choices are play, discussion, question-and-answer, and personal approach, reflecting the basic symbolic interaction principles. These adjustments shape students’ mindsets through communication and social interaction, aligning with symbolic interaction theory.

Communication between teachers and students with cancer can be explained as an interactive communication model, where students give direct feedback to the teacher. Students are interested in learning and getting an education, while teachers are interested in assisting students with cancer to get the same rights in education.

Overall, the teacher’s approach to choosing diverse communication methods and adjusting to students’ needs and conditions is key to increasing the engagement and learning success of children with cancer at this foundation.

The author makes a conclusion chart related to the explanation based on the overall exposure in this subchapter to be more concise but clear.

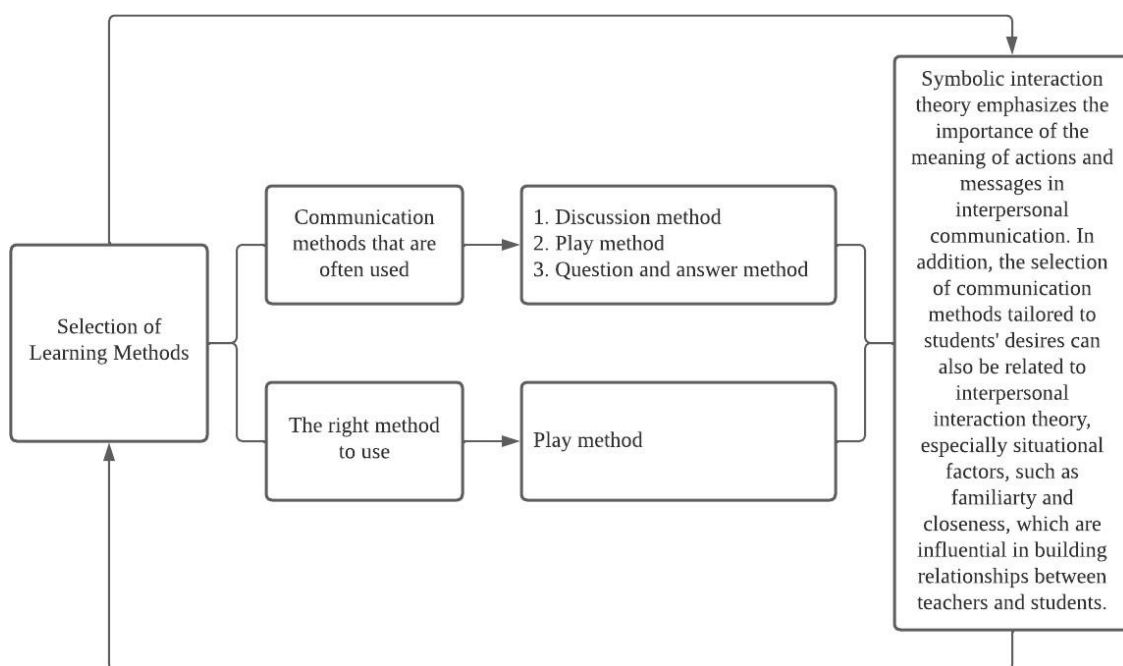


Figure 3, Teacher’s Method Selection Conclusion Chart

**Teachers’ Barriers to Interpersonal Communication in Learning Assistance for Children with Cancer at YKAKI Bandung**

There are several barriers, including difficulty adjusting to children’s mood changes, visual impairment, difficulty focusing, limited memory, and challenges in managing children who are unruly or have tantrums.

Teachers who assist children with cancer use a variety of strategies, such as providing space for the child to reflect on his or her behavior, controlling emotions, offering interesting alternatives, using a personal approach, giving the child alone time, and avoiding getting carried away with the child’s emotions. They also apply the basic principles in symbolic interaction theory, recognize children’s thinking abilities, and respect the uniqueness of each individual. The communication that takes place between teachers and children affects the way children understand and respond to learning. Teachers use meaning and symbols in learning assistance with children, creating ongoing communication using symbols such as personalized talk, empathetic listening, and consistent support.

In addition, teachers can modify learning strategies and change the symbols used according to children’s needs. The result is the building of interpersonal attractions that make students want to learn again despite obstacles in the teaching and learning process. This aligns with the understanding that teachers can build pleasant and effective communication that supports students’ smooth teaching and learning process.

To help children with cancer learn, teachers must continue to develop their interpersonal communication skills, identify children’s needs and characteristics, and use strategies that suit each situation. The discussion highlights the importance



of understanding, respect for differences, and adaptability in teacher-child communication in the education of children with cancer.

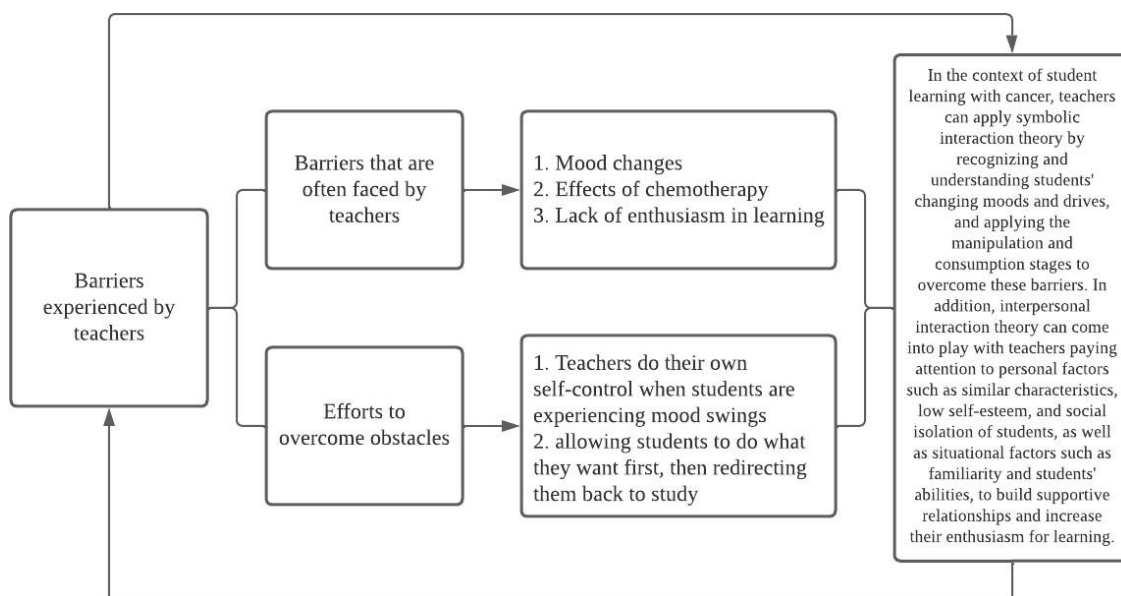


Figure 4. Conclusion of Teacher Barriers

**The Importance of Using Interpersonal Communication in the Learning Assistance Process with Children with Cancer in YKAKI Bandung**

Interpersonal communication is central to the learning assistance process for children with cancer at YKAKI Bandung. Blumer, Rose, and Snow’s theory (In Onibala et al., 2019) Asserts that communication and social interaction between teachers and children form mindsets and close relationships. Continuous communication through symbols that are given meaning allows the teacher to modify these symbols to gently influence the child, creating a similar understanding within the learning group.

The close relationship between teacher and child creates a more personalized communication, allowing the teacher to provide support in various aspects of the child’s life. Teachers teach and become figures that children trust and rely on.

Effective interpersonal communication between teachers and children reflects the basic principles in symbolic interaction theory, such as openness, empathy, support, positive regard, equality, and similarity. (Devito, 2011). Teachers at YKAKI Bandung fulfill all these aspects, creating strong relationships. Teachers also show concern for the physical and emotional needs of children, creating strong emotional bonds and a supportive environment for the growth and recovery of children with cancer.

Learning assistance for children with cancer is vital, and interpersonal attractions between teachers and students play a significant role in achieving learning success. The high interpersonal attraction of students towards teachers

usually occurs because students feel that the teacher accepts them well. Therefore, the interpersonal communication model is needed for learning assistance.

In conclusion, interpersonal communication builds close relationships between teachers and children with cancer, supporting their learning and recovery. This is based on the basic principles of symbolic interaction theory and is an important aspect of learning assistance for children with severe health conditions.

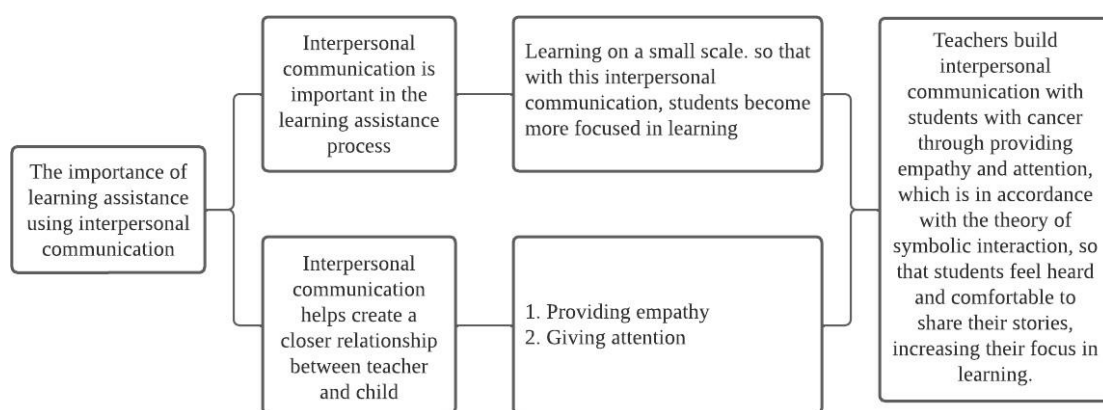


Figure 5. Conclusion Chart of the Importance of the Learning Assistance Process

Based on the results of the discussion regarding teacher interpersonal communication in learning assistance to children with cancer, the conclusion chart in this study is:

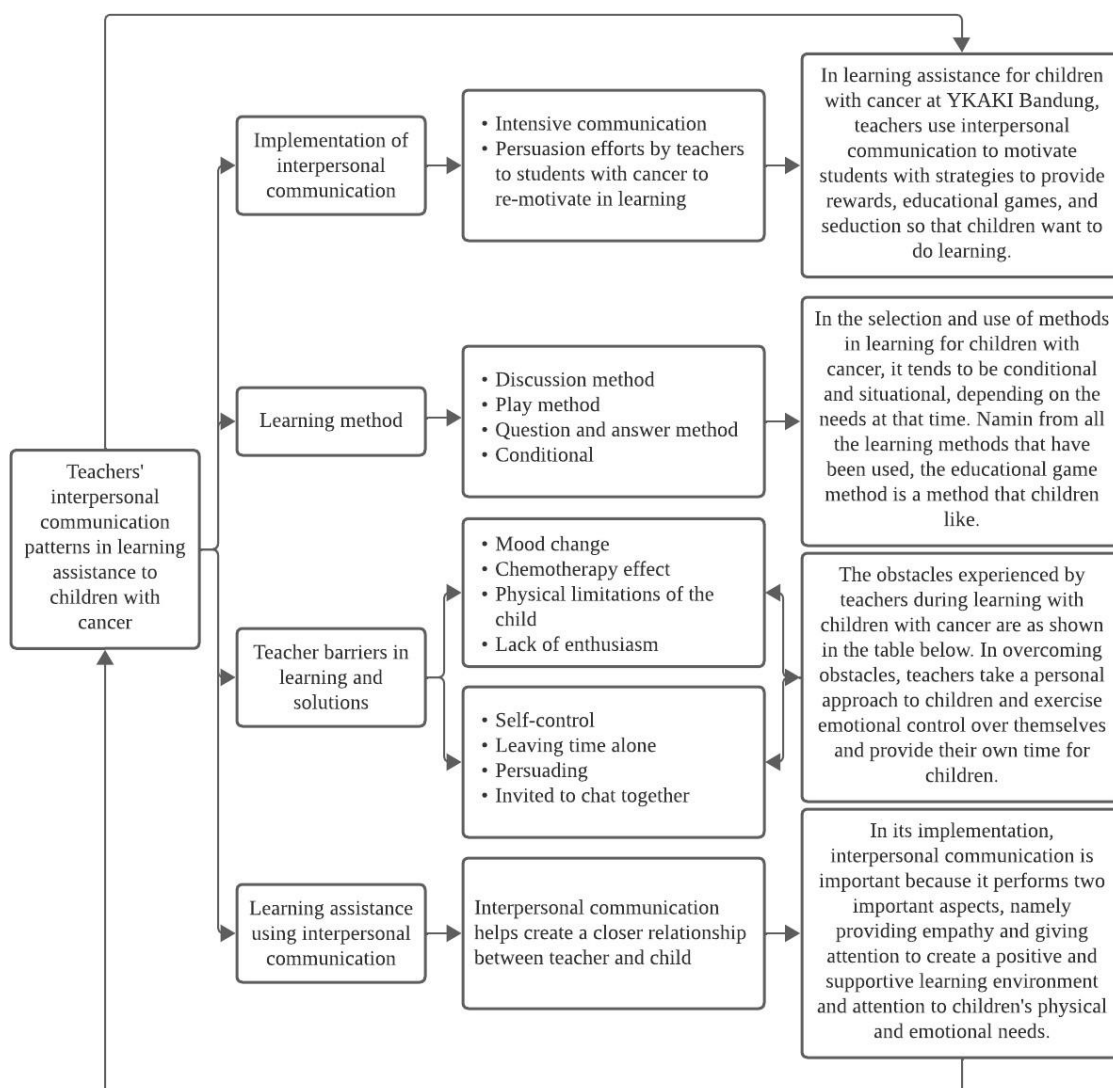


Figure 6, Conclusion Chart of Teacher’s Interpersonal Communication in Learning Assistance to Children with Cancer

**D. Conclusion**

Based on the discussion that has been carried out in the previous chapter, it can be concluded as follows:

1. In mapping and knowing the implementation of interpersonal communication carried out in learning assistance by teachers to children with cancer at Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia Bandung, researchers found that the implementation of interpersonal communication in dealing with children who are challenging to learn, teachers persuade and motivate students to be enthusiastic about learning through various strategies, one of which is giving rewards, implementing educational games, or providing additional tasks to strengthen children’s understanding of the material.

2. In mapping and knowing the methods used in interpersonal communication in mentoring conducted by teachers for children with cancer at Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia Bandung. It was found that in learning assistance for children with cancer at Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia Bandung, teachers use various methods and adjust to the conditions and needs of students. Flexible approaches, such as play, discussion, question and answer, and personal approach, are used to create interactive learning. Teachers also adapt tasks and methods from the students' home schools. An adaptive and interactive approach is key to increasing student engagement and learning success at the foundation.
3. As for the obstacles experienced by teachers during the learning process with children with cancer at Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia Bandung, it was found that these obstacles were in the form of distraction, mood changes, difficulty focusing, limited memory, and difficulty managing unruly children. In overcoming these obstacles, teachers use strategies of personal approach, emotional control, giving children their own time, and avoiding getting carried away by children's emotions. These approaches help create a conducive learning environment, build good relationships with the children, and help them overcome learning difficulties.
4. Interpersonal communication in providing learning assistance by teachers to students with cancer at Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia Bandung is essential. Mentoring with interpersonal communication in practice involves attention to children's physical and emotional needs, such as inviting them to eat, asking about health, and providing emotional support. This closeness and attention create a positive and supportive learning environment for children with cancer at Yayasan Kasih Anak Kanker Indonesia Bandung, so learning success is more likely to occur.

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P-ISSN: 2549-7391, E-ISSN: 2549-578X  
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