

INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING INTERVENTION AS AN EFFORT TO OVERCOME WORK STRESS AMONG EMPLOYEES OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES AND GENERAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT AT PT X

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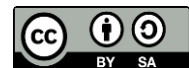
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Abstract

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of individual counseling interventions in reducing work stress levels among employees of the HR & General Affairs Department at PT X, who face high job pressure and role conflict. The research employed a descriptive quantitative method with two participants selected through purposive sampling based on the Job Stress Scale (JSS) results. The intervention consisted of four individual counseling sessions using Mindfulness, Grounding, and Assertive Training techniques. The N-gain score analysis showed a significant reduction in work stress levels, with subject NN decreasing from a score of 27 to 20 (N-gain = -0.53) and subject ESS from 24 to 15 (N-gain = -0.4375), resulting in an average decline from 25.5 to 17.5. These findings indicate that individual counseling effectively helps employees shift from passive to proactive coping mechanisms, enhance emotional regulation, and strengthen mental resilience against job-related stressors. Therefore, individual counseling can serve as an effective psychological strategy to reduce work stress while supporting employees' mental well-being and productivity within organizational settings.

Keywords: HR Employee; Individual Counseling; Work Stress



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INTRODUCTION

Work stress is defined as a state of physical and psychological tension that arises when job demands exceed an individual's ability or resources to manage them (Robbins & Judge, 2018). Research indicates that high levels of work stress not only affect employees' mental health—such as emotional exhaustion, anxiety, and reduced job satisfaction (Ningrat & Mulyana, 2022)—but also directly lead to decreased performance, increased absenteeism, and higher employee turnover rates (Trchalíková, 2023). Prolonged stress can lower productivity, increase absenteeism, reduce job satisfaction, and contribute to various physical health problems. Therefore, organizations need to identify effective stress management strategies at both the organizational and individual levels.

Human Resources (HR) is a crucial asset that determines an organization's competitiveness and long-term sustainability. In today's contemporary work environment—characterized by performance pressures, multi-role demands, and rapid organizational changes—work stress has become an inevitable and prominent issue. Employees in the Human Resources (HRD) and General Affairs departments hold central roles in administrative functions and operational leadership within organizations (Halsa et al., 2022). They frequently encounter complex job demands, such as heavy administrative workloads, interdepartmental conflicts, and pressure to implement organizational policies, all of which place them at significant risk of chronic work stress (Ayu Kade Rachmawati et al., n.d.). These conditions highlight the need for targeted interventions for this employee group to prevent declines in organizational performance and to maintain employee well-being.

Employees in the Human Resources and General Affairs Departments at PT X face unique job complexities compared to other departments, making them more vulnerable to work stress. Their roles encompass two critical areas: managing people (recruitment, compensation, and industrial relations) and overseeing office facilities. HR employees often serve dual roles—acting as enforcers of management policies while simultaneously mediating employee concerns (Umar et al., 2024). This pressure creates significant role conflict, as the demand to remain impartial frequently clashes with the need to protect the company's interests. In addition, sensitive administrative tasks (such as payroll deadlines and data confidentiality) and the need to manage emotionally charged conflicts among employees function as major stressors that require substantial psychological resilience. These conditions strongly suggest the presence of suboptimal work stress levels among employees in the HR and General Affairs Departments at PT X.

Although PT X has acknowledged the importance of employee well-being, the existing stress management methods remain general in nature and have not addressed the root causes of individual psychological issues. Workshops or social gatherings are often insufficient to alleviate the deep and personal psychological pressures experienced by employees. This gap highlights the need for a more targeted intervention. Individual counseling emerges as an effective approach because it provides a safe space, confidentiality, and evidence-based methods to help employees identify, understand, and develop adaptive coping strategies for the work-related stress they experience (Puspasari et al., 2024).

Numerous studies in industrial and organizational psychology have demonstrated the effectiveness of counseling interventions within workplace settings. Research by Elshifa (2024) found that work stress counseling is effective in improving employees' psychological well-being. Individual counseling helps employees engage in cognitive restructuring of stressors and develop stress-management skills, such as progressive muscle relaxation or improved time management (Widnyani, 2025). Counseling interventions may also be implemented in group formats to foster social support and a sense of solidarity, both of which are essential for reducing prolonged burnout symptoms (Setiawan, 2019).

Based on the urgency of addressing work stress within organizations and the specific vulnerability of employees in the HR and General Affairs Departments at PT X, this quantitative study is designed to evaluate the effectiveness of Individual Counseling Interventions in reducing work stress among HRD and General Affairs employees. The study will test the hypothesis that participants who receive individual counseling will show a greater reduction in stress scores compared to those in the control group (e.g., waitlist or standard services). The findings of this research are expected to provide empirical evidence that can support the development of more effective and contextually appropriate employee well-being policies.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a descriptive quantitative method. The choice of this approach is based on the primary objective of the research, which is to address work stress among employees in the HR and General Affairs Departments at PT X by providing an intervention in the form of counseling.

Research Target/Subject

In this quantitative research method, the research subjects serve as crucial sources of data. The subjects in this study were selected using a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a sampling method based on specific criteria determined by the researcher in accordance with the goals of the study (Sugiyono, 2017). The characteristics of the selected subjects are as follows: (1) Employees of PT X, (2) Members of the HR and General Affairs Departments, (3) Individuals with high levels of work stress, (4) Willing to participate in counseling. Based on these criteria, there are two subjects in this study, namely:

1. NN as Subject 1.
2. ESS as Subject 2.

These subjects were selected based on their high levels of work stress, as indicated by the results of the pre-test conducted earlier. The selected subjects are expected to demonstrate personal development and become more open and improved after completing the counseling sessions.

Research Procedure

The data collection process was carried out over approximately two months. The design of this study was developed based on the pre-test conducted at PT X. Prior to administering the pre-test, the subjects—employees in the HR and General Affairs Departments at PT X—underwent an initial observation phase, which involved observing the work environment, organizational culture, and directly engaging in on-site workplace activities.

Employees of PT X who exhibit high levels of work stress are selected as subjects and will participate in both a pre-test and a post-test to assess their stress levels before and after the intervention sessions. The assessment tool used for the pre-test and post-test is the Job Stress Scale (JSS) developed by Parker & DeCotiis (1983), which has been adapted by Hadiyanti et al. (2025).

The intervention to reduce work stress consists of counseling sessions conducted based on the needs analysis of both the company and the employees. The counseling intervention was carried out over four sessions, each lasting 45–60 minutes. The intervention took place at PT X, and employees were required to follow the guidance provided by the researcher. The intervention was delivered through individual counseling, involving the stages of orientation, exploration, working stage (productivity), termination, and follow-up.

Counseling is considered effective for addressing this type of issue because it enhances the client's ability to become more independent in making decisions. The emphasis lies in the client's capacity to identify issues that are personally significant and to develop strategies to address them. This study also provides an intervention for employees whose pre-test results fell into the low category; two employees will receive four counseling sessions each. This is in line with previous research by Attridge & Pawloski (2024), which states that counseling sessions can be conducted a minimum of three times and a maximum of seven times, depending on the client's needs.

At the end of the sessions, the researcher will combine the observational data and post-test results to determine the extent of improvement in reducing work stress following the counseling intervention.

Table 1. Counseling Intervention Design

Sesion	Activities	Objectives	Methods	Evaluation
1	Introduction, counseling contract, and informed consent; Assessment and exploration; Identifying emotional and physiological reactions; Exploring the client's initial coping strategies	To explore the client's initial psychological condition; To determine the counseling focus	Individual counseling using active listening and empathy techniques	The client is open to sharing; Counseling contract is established and understood; In-depth data on stress impact and initial coping strategies are collected for planning the next sessions
2	Exploring the client's progress after the first session; Identifying the client's social support system; Providing reinforcement and evaluation	To identify changes in the client's condition; To identify protective factors (environmental support)	Individual counseling with a supportive approach	Client's protective factors are identified; The client feels supported and shows improved insight; Adaptive coping strategies begin to be discussed
3	Evaluating the client's psychological progress; Strengthening protective factors that support recovery; Providing additional techniques for stress management	To evaluate the client's progress in the counseling process	Individual counseling based on experiential reflection, in-depth interview, observation, and documentation	Positive changes in emotional/physical conditions are measurable; The client is able to apply 1–2 new techniques; The client develops an action plan for using protective factors after counseling
4 & Post-test	(1) Contact and re-assessment of the client's current condition; (2) Exploring new challenges and how clients cope independently; (3) Analyzing the	To assess long-term progress and positive post-counseling changes; To evaluate long-term intervention effectiveness (preventing	Individual counseling; Active listening and empathy; Administration of JSS as a post-test	The client is open to sharing; Client's stress condition is stable and low (compared to pre-test); The client can independently use coping techniques; Final decision is

sustainability of relapse); To coping techniques in identify the need the workplace; (4) Re- for additional administration of the intervention Job Stress Scale (JSS) (booster session); To measure intervention effectiveness quantitatively (changes in job stress and psychological symptoms) and qualitatively (subjective progress)	made regarding full termination or booster session; Significant reduction in JSS scores and psychological symptoms indicates the success of the intervention
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The intervention in this study was carried out through individual counseling structured according to the stages proposed by Sofyan Willis (2011). These stages include: (1) Initial stage, focusing on defining the client's problems (2) Middle or working stage, emphasizing exploration and developing alternative problem-solving strategies; (3) Final stage, involving decision-making regarding the actions the client will take based on the counseling process.

The post-test phase and the continuity evaluation in Session 4 are designed to measure the intervention's effectiveness both quantitatively and qualitatively, ensure that the client's positive changes are maintained, and identify the need for follow-up sessions. This phase includes re-contact and reassessment of the client's current condition, exploration of challenges and the client's independent coping (relapse prevention), and analysis of coping technique application. Quantitatively, the effectiveness is measured through the re-administration of the Job Stress Scale (JSS) and other relevant psychological instruments, expecting a significant decline in JSS scores and psychological symptoms compared to pre-test results. Qualitatively, individual counseling (using active listening and empathy techniques) is conducted to assess subjective progress, ensuring the client remains open to sharing and displays stable or low stress levels. The final outcomes of this phase determine whether the intervention concludes fully or requires additional booster sessions to reinforce long-term effectiveness. The success criteria include the client's independence in applying coping techniques and empirical evidence that the intervention goals have been achieved.

Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques

The implementation and research procedures in this study employ a quantitative approach. This approach was selected based on the primary objective of the study, which is to examine the effectiveness of counseling interventions in reducing work stress among employees. The data collection technique used in this study is a questionnaire.

In this research, data were collected using a questionnaire instrument by providing a set of statements to respondents, which they were asked to answer. The scale used in this internship program is a Likert-type scale, which is designed to measure work stress levels. Sugiyono (2017) explains that when using a Likert scale, the variables to be measured must first be operationalized into specific indicators.

The instrument used to measure work stress is the Job Stress Scale (JSS) developed by Parker and DeCotiis (1983), which has been adapted by Hadiyanti et al. (2025).

Data Analysis Technique

The quantitative data analysis technique used in this study is descriptive quantitative analysis employing the N-gain score calculation. This method aims to determine the effectiveness of a specific intervention or treatment applied in the research. The N-gain score is calculated by comparing the pre-test and post-test results to obtain the gain score, which indicates the degree of improvement or change. Through the N-gain analysis, this study evaluates whether the implementation of the counseling intervention is effective in reducing work stress levels among employees in the HR and General Affairs Department at PT X.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

After conducting a preliminary study and observing the research environment, a work stress pre-test scale was administered to measure the level of work stress experienced by employees in the HR and General Affairs Department. Following the pre-test, categorization scoring was carried out to identify which employees fell into the very low category. To categorize the work stress scale, the researcher classified it into three categories using manual calculations based on the formula proposed by Azwar (2017). The following are the results of the descriptive quantitative pre-test method for subjects who met the criteria for high work stress.

Table 2. Score Categorization Calculation Formula

Range	Criterion
$X < M - 0,5\ SD$	Low
$M - 0,5\ SD < X \leq M + 0,5\ SD$	Medium
$X \geq M + 0.5\ SD$	High

Table 3. Employee Suspension Data Classification

Categorization	Criterion
$T < 21$	Low
$21 \leq T < 24$	Medium
$T \geq 24$	High

Table 4. HR & General Department Employee Data Categorization

Categorization	Criterion	Frequency
$T < 21$	Low	4
$21 \leq T < 24$	Medium	1
$T \geq 24$	High	3
Score		8

Referring to the results shown in the table above, it can be concluded that out of 8 employees in the HR and General Affairs Department of PT X, three employees fell into the high category, although one of them declined to participate as a subject, one employee was in the moderate category, and four employees were in the low category. The two individuals identified as having high work stress scores were selected to receive counseling interventions.

Before the counseling sessions began, the researcher first established rapport by providing clear information and assuring the participants that all counseling results would remain confidential. The first meeting was used as an initial stage to explore the issues related to what the clients experienced while working in the company. In the second session, the clients were more open in sharing the difficulties they encountered.

After the main problems were described, the subsequent stages focused on further exploring and examining the clients' concerns to help them develop new perspectives and alternative solutions regarding the issues they were facing. Following the stage of selecting and determining actions, the researcher and the clients reviewed the identified problems together, with the researcher confirming once again the concerns experienced by the participants.

Counseling Results with Subject NN

NN faced various pressures in her job, indicating significant symptoms of work-related stress. Overall, the problems she encountered can be grouped into two main aspects: (1) workload, time pressure, and work environment, and (2) personal and psychological impacts (anxiety).

1. Workload, Time Pressure, and Work Environment

NN felt that her workload was overwhelming, and urgent tasks often appeared in the middle of her already structured schedule, which disrupted her focus. There were constant demands to complete payroll tasks on time, and delays often triggered complaints from employees. This created intense work pressure and frequently caused her headaches. NN also perceived that the office management was not well-organized and that employee performance was not appreciated. She described the work culture as rigid, outdated, and tense.

2. Personal and Psychological Impacts (Anxiety)

The heavy workload and ongoing pressure made NN often feel exhausted and short of breath. During periods of multiple deadlines, she frequently experienced a "freeze" response or slowed functioning. Her personal issues also tended to influence her work performance. Lack of Company Support. NN reported that the company did not provide adequate support for employee well-being, such as counseling services or a space to share personal concerns. Coping Mechanisms. To cope with the pressure, NN tried to create daily to-do lists and log notes to prioritize tasks. She also relieved stress through her hobby of K-Pop fangirling and used AI (Artificial Intelligence) as a platform to express her feelings. Additionally, NN held certain mystical beliefs, such as fear of supernatural harm (e.g., "santet"), which influenced her behavior—for instance, refusing to store exposed food in the office refrigerator.

Overall, NN experienced a cycle of stress driven by workload demands, high expectations, and an unsupportive work environment. These factors had negative impacts on her physical and psychological well-being. Although she attempted to cope independently through personal strategies and hobbies, the lack of organizational support remained a significant contributing factor to her elevated work stress.

Table 5. Summary of Subject NN Counseling Session

Aspect	Session 1 (Problem Definition)	Session 2 (Exploration & Working Stage)	Session 3 (Termination & Skills Development)	Session 4 (Follow-Up) & Post-test
Session Goals	Establish rapport and identify the emotional and physical impact of work stress caused	Explore the root causes (culture, management, workload)	Provide psychoeducation and train NN in proactive	Evaluate the effectiveness of the newly learned techniques and

Aspect	Session 1 (Problem Definition)	Session 2 (Exploration & Working Stage)	Session 3 (Termination & Skills Development)	Session 4 (Follow-Up) & Post-test
	by organizational issues.	analyze NN's passive or reactive coping mechanisms.	emotional management skills for self-help.	assess NN's mental resilience toward her work environment.
Main Client Issues	1. Heavy workload, pressure, frequent headaches/shortness of breath. 2. Lack of appreciation, poor management, rigid culture. 3. Coping: to-do lists, fangirling, confiding in AI.	1. Performing tasks equivalent to three people, no staff support. 2. Supervisor focuses on rules/punishment. 3. Passive coping: "stay silent and let it happen," feelings of guilt. 4. Needs updated coping strategies.	Needs to internalize proactive techniques (mindfulness/grounding) to replace old passive/reactive coping habits.	Consistency in applying grounding techniques during deadline-related panic or freeze episodes.
Primary Counseling Techniques	Attending, reflection of feelings, exploration, minimal encouragers, light confrontation.	Clarifying, confrontation (cultural vs. personal issues), leading (focus direction), evaluating (older coping strategies), providing information (validating AI/hobby coping).	Providing information (psychoeducation), planning (self-practice), summarizing, evaluating (self-efficacy), closing the counseling process.	Planning, evaluating the impact of techniques, exploring challenges in application.
Key Outcomes	NN felt validated and became aware of her burden. The problem was identified as work stress caused by organizational conditions.	NN realized she had been blaming herself for organizational issues (internalization) and acknowledged the long-term ineffectiveness of her passive coping. She became open to learning new	NN understood and practiced mindfulness and grounding techniques to manage emotions and maintain focus under stress. Counseling goals were achieved.	NN maintained her stress score below 7 and consistently applied the learned techniques.

Aspect	Session 1 (Problem Definition)	Session 2 (Exploration & Working Stage)	Session 3 (Termination & Skills Development)	Session 4 (Follow-Up) & Post-test
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techniques.

This counseling process demonstrates a progressive transformation in how Subject NN manages organizational work stress—from relying on passive or reactive coping mechanisms to adopting more proactive strategies. The structured, stage-by-stage individual counseling approach aligns with previous research showing the effectiveness of counseling interventions in reducing work-related stress and enhancing employees’ psychological well-being (Elshiffa, 2024). Furthermore, the study by Puspasari et al. (2024) on Individual Counseling with Stress Management Techniques to Improve Employee Work Motivation reinforces the importance of workplace counseling interventions in addressing stress caused by hygiene factors such as workload. Their findings indicate that counseling not only helps employees manage pressure more constructively but also contributes to increased work motivation as individuals develop greater capacity to regulate stress effectively.

Furthermore, the use of specific techniques such as Mindfulness and Grounding—both components of awareness-based interventions—is supported by a substantial body of research (Cynthia et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2021) emphasizing their effectiveness in stress reduction. Numerous studies consistently demonstrate that mindfulness-based techniques significantly decrease work-related stress by enhancing present-moment awareness and non-judgmental attention to internal experiences (Cahyaningrum et al., 2024; Safitri & Yudiarso, 2023). This heightened awareness enables individuals to respond to workplace pressures more adaptively, a pattern reflected in NN’s progress throughout the intervention. The emphasis on shifting from passive to proactive coping is also consistent with theoretical perspectives in stress management literature, which highlight that the ability to recognize, regulate, and restructure stress responses is central to effective stress coping.

Counseling Results with Subject ESS

ESS is a staff member working in a company who experiences significant difficulties rooted in his personality traits, particularly his tendency to be reserved, easily pressured, and emotionally reactive. These traits trigger a cycle of stress that culminates in emotional outbursts in the workplace.

1. **Passive Communication and Limited Openness**
ESS demonstrates a “loss” personality style, characterized by being easily overwhelmed and reluctant to express his feelings openly. When confronted with work pressure or negative treatment from colleagues, he tends to internalize his emotions rather than communicating them. He also hesitates to voice boundaries or decline additional tasks from supervisors or peers, even when the workload exceeds his capacity. As a result, he frequently takes on responsibilities that are not proportionate to his role, leading to accumulated pressure and heightened work stress.
2. **Emotional Reactivity and Difficulty Managing Pressure**
Due to his limited emotional expression and lack of healthy outlets, ESS often experiences sudden emotional outbursts when his tolerance threshold is exceeded. These reactions are typically disproportionate to the triggering event, such as becoming extremely angry over minor issues. Such emotional explosions disrupt his professional relationships and create discomfort, or even fear, among his colleagues.
3. **Work Environment That Exacerbates the Problem**
ESS perceives his work environment as unsupportive. He is frequently subjected to insensitive jokes or teasing from coworkers. Given his timid nature, he is unable to defend himself or respond assertively, which deepens his discomfort and sense of

isolation. The stress is further intensified by his lack of effective coping strategies and the absence of emotional support mechanisms or safe spaces within the workplace.

Overall, ESS faces a recurring pattern of stress generated by limited emotional regulation and ineffective communication, compounded by a workplace environment that offers little support. His reserved and reactive personality makes it challenging for him to build healthy professional relationships and cope with organizational pressures.

Table 6. Summary of Subject ESS Counseling Session

Aspect	Session 1 (Problem Definition)	Session 2 (Exploration & Workung Phase)	Session 3 (Final Phase & Skill Installation)	Session 4 (Follow-Up)
Session goal	Identify the core issues (emotional outbursts, tardiness) and map the root cause (passive communication patterns).	Explore the stress cycle (Passive– Aggressive loop) and identify missing skills (Assertiveness).	Train ESS in assertive communication skills and early emotional management strategies (Grounding).	Evaluate the application of Grounding and Assertiveness in ESS's daily functioning.
Key Issues	Clients 1. Disproportionate emotional outbursts. 2. Frequent tardiness. 3. Passive pattern: suppressing pressure and inability to refuse additional tasks.	1. Emotional suppression triggers sudden anger over minor stimuli. 2. Interpersonal impact: strained workplace relationships. 3. Unsupportive work environment (target of jokes). 4. Lack of self-advocacy/assertiveness skills.	Need to internalize Grounding as self-help and develop assertiveness skills to set boundaries.	Consistency in using Grounding during escalating pressure and success in declining excessive requests assertively.
Main Counseling Techniques	Attending, Reflection, Exploration, Clarification, Leading (toward root cause).	Feeling Clarification (cycle), Confrontation (Passive vs. Aggressive patterns), Reflection (meaning/impact), Exploration (interpersonal dynamics), Leading (identifying missing skills)	Psychoeducation, Grounding, Simulation, Role-Playing Assertiveness, Planning (behavioral assignments).	Assessment (technique impact), Exploration (implementation challenges), Minimal Encouragement (to sustain progress).

Aspect	Session 1 (Problem Definition)	Session 2 (Exploration & Workung Phase)	Session 3 (Final Phase & Skill Installation)	Session 4 (Follow-Up)
Main Outcomes	Root cause identified as a closed personality prone to avoiding confrontation, resulting in accumulated stress.	ESS recognizes that his anger is misdirected emotional energy. Assertiveness is identified as the missing core skill.	ESS acquires concrete tools: Grounding (preventing emotional explosions) and Assertiveness (preventing emotional suppression).	ESS demonstrates reduced frequency of emotional outbursts and improved ability to set professional boundaries.

The counseling process for Subject ESS was structured across four sessions with the primary goal of reducing anger outbursts triggered by workplace-related stress and the client’s inability to demonstrate assertive behavior. The intervention focused on two core components: Grounding techniques for emotional regulation and Assertive Training to improve interpersonal communication and boundary-setting.

The effectiveness of the intervention implemented with ESS is strongly supported by previous psychological and counseling research, particularly within the domains of anger management and workplace behavioral adjustment.

A substantial body of literature indicates that Assertive Training is an effective method for enhancing interpersonal communication and reducing maladaptive behaviors associated with non-assertiveness (Azmi & Nurjannah, 2022). Assertiveness skills enable individuals to express their thoughts and feelings in a healthy way, increase self-confidence, and protect their personal rights without infringing on others (Jandhyala, 2024). In professional settings, assertive training has been shown to reduce people-pleasing tendencies and improve the quality of workplace relationships (Sholekah et al., 2025). These findings align closely with the positive improvements displayed by ESS, who gradually learned to decline excessive work demands more assertively, directly addressing the passive coping style that had previously contributed to emotional overload and anger outbursts.

Although research specifically combining grounding techniques with assertive training in workplace settings remains limited, numerous studies emphasize the effectiveness of grounding and other awareness-based interventions in anger management. Evidence from Anger Management Training literature highlights the importance of equipping individuals with early emotional regulation strategies, as uncontrolled anger can escalate into reactive aggression. Grounding techniques, which emphasize present-moment awareness, serve as an immediate emotional self-regulation tool that helps individuals shift from a reactive (explosive) state into a calmer and more controlled condition before implementing assertive responses.

Thus, the integration of grounding (as a preventive intervention for emotional escalation) and assertive training (as a healthy communication and boundary-setting tool) in the counseling process for ESS reflects an effective, evidence-based approach to modifying emotional and behavioral responses. This combined strategy is consistent with contemporary therapeutic models that emphasize both emotional regulation and behavioral skill-building to achieve sustainable change.

Table 7. Aspect of Stress and Influencing Factors in Individual Counseling

Work Stress Aspect (Robbins & Judge, 2017)		
Aspect	NN	ESS

Work Stress Aspect (Robbins & Judge, 2017)

Aspect	NN	ESS
Physiological	Increased heart rate (nervousness), faster breathing, unstable sleep patterns	Headaches, easily sweating
Psychological	Anxiety, irritability, frustration, tension, feelings of isolation	Tension, boredom, irritability due to persistent teasing, frustration, sensitivity, ineffective communication, feelings of exclusion or alienation, tendency to procrastinate
Behavior	Decline in performance	Decreased performance, job avoidance, frequent absenteeism, and tardiness
Influencing Factors		
Factor	NN	ESS
Environment	Dynamic work environment, deteriorating economic conditions leading to decreased motivation and causing fear of layoffs, insufficient lighting in the workspace	Economic and political uncertainty leading to decreased motivation and reluctance to work
Social and Organization	Excessive workload, high job demands not balanced with adequate feedback	Heavy task demands with tight deadlines, unpleasant coworkers who often tease him
Individual	Family issues, including the recent loss of a parent (father), feeling of lacking time with family, recent health problems requiring medical consultation, inadequate rest due to work demands	Introverted personality traits and heightened sensitivity; being one of the few men in the HR and General Affairs department makes him feel imbalanced or less capable of coping compared to others

Discussion

The discussion of the individual counseling outcomes conducted across four sessions with Subjects NN and ESS reveals a gradual therapeutic process in managing the impact of work-related stress originating from organizational and individual factors. In the initial stage, Subject NN—who experienced dizziness, increased heart rate, and anxiety—identified that the root of the problem lay in excessive workload and high job demands (Organizational Factors). This condition was further aggravated by passive–reactive coping mechanisms such as complaining or freezing under pressure. In contrast, Subject ESS, who exhibited anger outbursts, emotional tension, and frequent lateness, was found to have stress rooted in introverted and sensitive personality traits (Individual Factors) that intersected with an unpleasant work environment in which teasing and unfavorable social interactions frequently occurred (Social Factors). At this point, both subjects realized that their problems were not solely driven by external triggers but were also reinforced by ineffective internal coping patterns (passive coping in NN; passive–aggressive coping in ESS).

The results of the intervention demonstrate significant improvements in both subjects. Subject NN’s consistent use of the Grounding technique during deadlines or moments of freezing indicates the development of a new, more proactive coping mechanism, as reflected in their ability to maintain stress levels below a critical threshold. Changes in Subject ESS were

also evident, particularly in the reduced frequency of anger outbursts and, most importantly, the increased confidence and ability to assertively decline additional work assignments. The successful integration of Assertive Training for ESS is supported by numerous studies indicating that assertiveness training is effective in enhancing interpersonal communication and reducing aggressive or passive-aggressive behaviors, enabling individuals to respond more adaptively to social pressure. Overall, individual counseling proved effective in facilitating a shift from reactive to proactive coping, allowing both subjects to better manage the negative impacts of work-related stress arising from organizational and social factors.

Based on the table above, the comparison between pre- and post-individual counseling indicates a general improvement in the respondents. These changes include their increased ability to establish new routines, perform their work with greater intention and commitment, adapt more readily, demonstrate willingness to try new approaches, and engage in more positive thinking.

Therefore, it can be concluded that individual counseling resulted in overall positive changes in managing work-related stress. Following the counseling sessions, the next step is to administer a Post-Test, which re-assesses employees' levels of work stress using the same stress questionnaire employed during the Pre-Test. The measurement is conducted using the N-Gain Score Test, which illustrates the differences and improvements between the pre-test and post-test results. The calculation is presented as follows:

$$N - Gain = \frac{Nilai\ Posttest - Nilai\ Pretest}{Nilai\ Maksimum - Nilai\ Pretest}$$

Picture 1. N-Gain Score Formula

Table 8. Pre-test and Post-test Result of The Work Stress Scale

No	Subject	Job Stress Levels		
		<i>Pre-test</i>	<i>Post-test</i>	<i>Gain Score</i>
1	NN	27	20	-0,53
2	ESS	24	15	-0,4375
Average		25,5	17,5	

Table 9. Normalized N-Gain Score Criteria

Percentage	Classification
$0,70 \leq N-gain \leq 100$	High
$0,3 \leq N-gain \leq 0,70$	Medium
$0,00 < N-gain < 0,3$	Low
$N-gain = 0,00$	No Increase
$-1,00 \leq N-gain < 0,00$	There is an increase

(Sukarelawat et al., 2024)

Table 8 presents the results of the pre-test, post-test, and the N-gain score. For Subject NN, the pre-test score was 27, which falls into the *high* category based on the standardized norms of work-stress levels. After the treatment or intervention in the form of individual counseling, the post-test score decreased to 20, which is categorized as *low*. This indicates a reduction in the subject's work-stress level, as further supported by the N-gain score of -0.53 . According to the criteria of normalized N-gain, this value reflects a significant decrease.

For Subject ESS, the pre-test score was 24, which falls into the *high* category based on the standardized norms of work-stress levels. After the treatment or intervention through counseling as part of the company's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), the post-test score decreased to 15, which is categorized as *low*. This indicates a reduction in the subject's work-

stress level, which is further supported by the normalized N-gain score of -0.4375 . According to the N-gain criteria, this value reflects a notable decrease.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the pre-test and post-test results of the Work Stress Scale for both subjects, it can be concluded that the intervention successfully reduced work-stress levels significantly. The average work-stress score decreased from 25.5 (pre-test) to 17.5 (post-test). The effectiveness of the counseling intervention was evaluated using the normalized N-gain score, where the average N-gain score of -0.515 falls into the category indicating a decrease. This result is consistent with the individual findings, as both Subject NN (N-gain -0.53) and Subject ESS (N-gain -0.4375) demonstrated a moderate level of improvement. These findings lead to the conclusion that the intervention had a positive impact on managing work-related stress. The four-session individual counseling intervention implemented in the HR & General Affairs Department at PT X proved effective in reducing employees' work-stress levels. Both research subjects (NN and ESS) exhibited significant positive changes across physiological, psychological, and behavioral domains. Subject NN successfully transitioned from passive coping mechanisms to more proactive strategies through the application of Grounding and Mindfulness techniques, which helped stabilize emotional responses and improve focus when facing work pressure. Meanwhile, Subject ESS experienced a reduction in anger outbursts and demonstrated improved ability to establish professional boundaries through the implementation of Assertive Training in combination with Grounding techniques.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; Investigation.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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