



## **COPING STRATEGIES FOR THE ELDERLY IN DEALING WITH FAMILY RELATIONSHIP GAP IN PEKIK NYARING VILLAGE**

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### **Abstract**

The increase in life expectancy in Indonesia, including in Central Bengkulu, has caused the number of elderly people to continue to increase and their need for family social support is getting higher. In Pekik Nyaring Village, some elderly people face gaps in relationships with their families due to distance from their homes, infrequent communication, and reduced emotional attention. This situation leads to loneliness, worry, and decreased psychological well-being. This research aims to uncover the coping strategies used by the elderly in dealing with family relationship gaps. The approach used is qualitative descriptive with purposive sampling technique. Six elderly people were selected as informants, and data was collected through in-depth interviews and observations. The analysis process includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The results of the study showed that the elderly applied two forms of coping strategies, namely problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused coping can be seen from the efforts of the elderly to fill their time with productive activities, interact with the surrounding environment, and participate in religious activities. Meanwhile, emotion-focused coping is seen through the attitude of accepting the situation, trying to be patient, managing emotions, and strengthening spirituality through prayer, reading the Qur'an, and dhikr. These findings emphasize the importance of family support and social environment to support the emotional well-being of the elderly and serve as a reference in the preparation of more targeted social interventions.

**Keywords:** *Elderly, Relationship Gap, Coping Strategy*

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## INTRODUCTION

According to the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 13 of 1998, the elderly are defined as individuals who are 60 years old or more. Elderly is the final stage in human development both in terms of Bio, Psycho, and Social (Girsang *et al.*, 2023). The elderly are vulnerable to various physical, mental, and social changes. As life expectancy increases, the elderly population in Indonesia continues to increase over time. According to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) (2023), 11.75% of Indonesia's population will be elderly in 2023, and this percentage is predicted to increase in the next few years (Anas *et al.*, 2025).

Bengkulu Province also experienced similar conditions. According to BPS data in 2022, there are 262,408 elderly residents in Bengkulu, or 11.26% of the total population. Males amounted to 124,661 (47.49%) of the total population, while females amounted to 137,747 (52.51%). In Central Bengkulu Regency, there are 12,457 elderly people (11.27% of the total population), spread across all sub-districts and villages (BPS Bengkulu Province, 2022). Based on this figure, the elderly constitute a sizable part of the population and therefore require special attention from families and communities.

The percentage of the elderly population varies, depending on the situation where they live. Some live alone (16.42 percent) and some live with a partner (66.30 percent) (BPS Bengkulu Province, 2022). The fact that the elderly who still have a partner are cared for by their partner suggests that in some cases, the responsibility for care is carried out by the people closest to them. On the other hand, for the elderly who no longer have a partner, treatment is usually carried out by their children and daughters-in-law. Given that children have an obligation to serve their parents, including caring for and supporting them (the elderly), cultural and religious elements are considered to play an important role in Indonesia. As mentioned earlier, family support helps seniors feel cared for, which ultimately improves happiness and mental health. The increasing awareness of the welfare of the elderly is evidenced by the increasing proportion of the elderly living with their spouses or relatives.

At the local level, Pekik Nyaring Village, Pondok Kelapa District, Central Bengkulu Regency, has a population of 4,162 people living in 1,154 families, there are 498 elderly, consisting of 256 men and 240 women (Profile of Pekik Nyaring Village, Central Bengkulu). Pekik Nyaring Village was chosen as the research location because it has a relatively higher number of elderly people than other villages in the same sub-district, such as Talang Pauh Village which has 203 elderly people, Panca Mukti Village with 290 elderly people, and Srikaton Village which has 105 elderly people. However, until now there is no global data available on the status of elderly residences in Pekik Nyaring Village. Therefore, the initial data of this study was obtained through elderly cadres in four blocks of Pekik Nyaring Village. Based on the initial data obtained, 30 elderly people live with their partners, while 37 elderly people live alone without a partner. These conditions show a variety of social and emotional support received by the elderly. Elderly people who live alone tend to experience loneliness, isolation, and decreased psychological well-being. Even the elderly who live with their families sometimes still feel a lack of emotional attention. This phenomenon becomes even more important when the elderly say that interaction with children rarely occurs due to geographical distance, busy work, and lack of intensive communication. This condition is the basis for the gap in family relationships.

Gaps in family relationships are one of the main problems faced by the elderly. Reduced interaction due to communication, emotional, and geographical problems leads to this gap. According to Weiss (1973) in (Anas *et al.*, 2025) Family relationship gaps can manifest in a variety of ways, from emotional separation to physical distance and inadequate communication. The results of observations also show that there are several forms of gap relations among the elderly in Pekik Nyaring Village. In the form of the elderly living far away from their children, some living alone, and some living only with their partners, the lack of communication between the elderly and children, the elderly lack attention and emotional support from their families even though they live nearby. This condition causes feelings of loneliness,

worry, and reduced emotional support. In line with research (Nurswifery, 2025) Seniors are more prone to deteriorating psychological health, feelings of meaninglessness in life, and even depression if they don't get treatment. For the sake of mental and social survival, this situation forces the elderly to rely on their coping strategies. Because of the limitations of interaction with family, the elderly are increasingly dependent on internal abilities and social resources around them to maintain emotional stability. In this context, personal resilience and social support play a role as a substitute for the lack of children's presence, so that the elderly are still able to live their days with a sense of security and respect even though family relationships are not as intense as they used to be.

In facing life's challenges, the elderly need certain strategies to adapt to changing conditions. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) distinguish two types of coping strategies: emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping. Based on the results of initial observations in Pekik Nyaring Village, it can be seen that some elderly people overcome the gap in relationships with various positive activities. Some seniors choose gardening, light work, and social relationships with neighbors as a form of problem-focused coping strategies. On the other hand, the elderly also show coping strategies that focus on emotions such as self-acceptance, emotional control, and spiritual practices in the form of reading the Quran, dhikr and surrendering to God. This phenomenon suggests that although the elderly cannot change their family conditions, they choose to control their emotions to deal with family gaps. These findings are in line with a study by (Hana Ishmah Khoirunnisa *et al.*, 2025) Titled "Coping Strategies for the Elderly in Self-Adjustment at the Semarang City Nursing Home", the elderly use various coping mechanisms, including those that focus on emotions such as self-control, positive evaluation, accepting responsibility, and seeking social support. Shows that the success of the elderly in maintaining psychological well-being depends not only on family conditions, but also on their ability to develop adaptive ways to manage emotional distress. By combining physical, social and spiritual activities, the elderly can build a safe

space for themselves to still feel meaningful and connected to the surrounding environment even though family relationships are experiencing distance.

This implies that the coping mechanism of the elderly is a significant factor that requires further research as family support declines. This research is interesting to be carried out looking at the significant number of elderly people, the existence of a real gap relationship phenomenon. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to describe the various types of relationship gaps faced by the elderly in Pekik Nyaring Village, Central Bengkulu, as well as the mechanisms they use to close these gaps. These tactics can be passive (such as accepting circumstances or distancing themselves from family) or active (such as starting conversations or attending family counseling). Thus, this study not only seeks to understand the forms of disparities that arise, but also tries to explore how the elderly reorganize their emotional and social lives to remain able to function optimally. This understanding is important because the ability of the elderly to adjust is often a key determinant of their success in maintaining mental health and quality of life, especially when the primary source of support from the family is in decline. In addition, the analysis of this coping strategy can provide an overview of the adaptation patterns of the elderly that may be unique in rural environments, so that the results of the research can be used as a basis for designing mentoring programs that are more suitable for their needs.

## METHODOLOGY

The main focus of this study is the coping mechanism used to deal with the gap in family relationships experienced by the elderly in Pekik Nyaring Village, Central Bengkulu. The district has a relatively large population of 498, making it an ideal location for research. As part of the descriptive qualitative technique, observation and face-to-face interviews were conducted with the elderly who met the requirements, namely those who were at least 60 years old with an informant age range between 65 to 74 years old and experienced a gap in relationships with family members. Six elderly informants were selected by purposive sampling

according to the informant criteria. Interviews were conducted face-to-face at the homes of the elderly to provide a relaxed atmosphere and give researchers a glimpse into the background of their daily lives.

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method, which is a research method that aims to describe social phenomena in depth based on real conditions in the field. This approach allows researchers to explore the subjective experiences of the elderly regarding the gap in family relationships and the coping strategies they use. Face-to-face interviews are the main technique because they allow researchers to capture the emotional nuances, facial expressions, and nonverbal language of the informant. Direct observation is also used to understand the social context and daily routine of the elderly. This approach corresponds to the view (Soegiyono, 2011). that qualitative research is used when problems are complex, dynamic, and require a holistic understanding. The qualitative descriptive method allows the acquisition of natural descriptive data that displays the meaning, experience, and interpretation of the elderly to the social situations they face.

The data analysis process refers to the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. Data reduction was carried out by selecting relevant information related to the form of family relationship gap and coping strategies used by the elderly. The data is then presented in the form of a structured narrative to facilitate interpretation. Furthermore, conclusions are drawn based on the patterns of findings that emerge from the results of interviews and observations. To ensure the validity of the data, the researcher used field records, then triangulated sources, triangulated methods, and triangulated researchers to ensure that the results obtained were truly representative of the conditions of the elderly in the field

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Characteristics of Informants**

Six elderly residents from Pekik Nyaring Village in Central Bengkulu participated in this study. The age of the

informants varies between 65 to 74 years old. Their living conditions, which include marital status, residence, health, and daily activities, often show diversity. The four informants still live with their partners, but their children live far away, making it difficult for them to interact with their families. Despite living alone, the other two informants lived close to their relatives and children.

The majority of informants are considered to have good physical health. One of them had mild hearing loss, while the other five could still hear well. Although some of them periodically suffer from mild illnesses such as rheumatism, which is a natural thing in old age, their health is generally good. However, overall, the informants were able to carry out their daily activities freely and did not suffer from severe illnesses. The informants in this study are Muslim. When facing loneliness or emotional stress, religious practices such as prayer and reading the Qur'an are also often used as a source of inner strength. Because spiritual activities for many elderly are not only a worship routine, but also serve as a medium of emotional stabilization and a means to restore inner peace when family support is limited.

In terms of economic activity, very few elderly people are still working. One of the informants continued to sell food, another worked as an onion peeler every day, and the third spent time in the garden of their home. The other three informants rested and engaged in basic activities in the home environment most of the time. Furthermore, emotional and psychological problems do not disappear with age. One in six informants admitted that they often felt restless and anxious, even worried about death at home. Meanwhile, other informants often feel bored with the monotonous routine and miss their children who live far away. This illustrates how, despite their good physical health, the majority of respondents feel emotionally distant from their families, indicating that the emotional well-being of the elderly is greatly influenced by the quality of family interaction and attention, so the absence of such support can cause psychological distress even though their physical condition is relatively stable.

In addition, the condition of the elderly in this study showed a balance between their need for family support and

their independence. Although the majority of informants are still able to take care of themselves, the presence of family members is still crucial in fostering a sense of security, support, and unity. They can continue to participate in basic activities such as cooking, gardening, and going to places of worship if they maintain physical health. However, there are significant barriers due to emotional considerations, including loneliness, longing, and a desire to be close to children. This shows how emotional and social encouragement from families and the surrounding environment, in addition to physical health, affect the quality of life of the elderly.

## **2. Coping Strategy**

Coping is considered any behavior or idea, both positive and negative, that can reduce stressful situations and prevent them from creating stress. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), stressful states can have negative effects physiologically and psychologically. People will act to counter these negative impacts and will not let them continue. These behaviors are called coping mechanisms. The purpose of the coping method is to deal with demands and circumstances that are considered burdensome, difficult, stressful, and beyond their capabilities. The coping mechanism that a person uses to deal with various problems will depend on their coping resources.

**Coping Mechanism** According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984) in (Siti Maryam, 2020), coping mechanisms are usually classified into two categories: (1) Problem-focused coping mechanisms. The actions taken to overcome the problem are known as the problem-focused coping method. When individuals believe that the problem they are facing can be managed and solved, they tend to resort to this behavior. When someone feels that they can change the situation or that they have the resources to do so, they tend to engage in problem-focused coping practices. (2) The goal of emotion-focused coping methods is to alter emotional function without directly changing stressors. When a person feels powerless to change a difficult circumstance and can only accept it due to a lack of resources, they tend to engage in emotion-focused coping practices. In the

context of the lives of the elderly in Pekik Nyaring Village, these two approaches appear flexibly and often complement each other.

Interview data shows that the elderly do not use just one type of strategy, but adjust how to cope with stress based on the situation they are facing. When conditions allow for direct treatment, they are more likely to use problem-focused strategies. Conversely, when the situation is irreversible, such as geographical distance or the child's busyness, the elderly rely more on emotion-focused strategies to calm down. The combination of these two strategies shows a strong pattern of adaptation and the ability of the elderly to maintain emotional balance even when family support is not always available. This shows that the coping process in the elderly takes place dynamically and is influenced by various conditions they encounter in their daily lives.

## **3. Problem Focused Coping**

This type of strategy known as problem-focused handling emphasizes addressing the problem directly from the source. Despite the limitations caused by age and family situation, this tactic is important for seniors to feel responsible for their lives. Using these tactics, seniors seek concrete answers, focus on more fulfilling activities, and form social bonds that boost their confidence. Geographical, communication, and emotional gaps are the three main types of relationship gaps faced by the elderly in this study. These gaps are then addressed in a variety of ways that are specific to their experiences. This illustrates that the elderly continue to try to manage various obstacles with their abilities even though the conditions are not always supportive.

Efforts by the elderly to remain productive, such as participating in basic economic activities, expanding social networks in the community, and increasing their involvement in religious and community activities, are clear examples of these issues-focused approaches. Therefore, these techniques not only reduce the psychological stress of being separated from family, but also strengthen one's confidence and purpose in life. This strategy also emphasizes that activities carried out independently can be a source of strength for them in dealing with

various forms of pressure.

#### **a. Geographic Relationship Gap**

The frequency of encounters between the elderly and their children is sometimes limited by geographical distance. Visits are limited to extraordinary occasions such as holidays, family gatherings, or emergencies because some children live far away and some even live outside the province or city. Others live in the same neighborhood, but they rarely go home due to work or lack of access to transportation. In these situations, the elderly often feel the need to regroup, which is often hindered by distances that prevent regular gatherings. This condition shows that distance limitations are a difficult factor to control so that they require adjustments from the elderly.

This strategy is also seen when the elderly face a geographical gap. Seniors realize that the distance to their children's residence cannot be changed, so they choose to spend time with activities that give a sense of productivity. These activities are a way to avoid feelings of emptiness and maintain the spirit of life. The findings are consistent with Lazarus and Folkman's theory that problem-focused coping is used when individuals assess the situation can still be controlled through direct action. Thus, the elderly continue to look for steps that make them feel in control even though physical limitations and distance cannot be changed.

#### **b. Communication Relationship Gap**

Another common problem in family dynamics is a lack of communication. Communication gaps describe a decrease in the number and quality of meetings, including information sharing, attention, and emotional support. Communication between parents and children is still very minimal, even when they live nearby. Children's busy schedules, household chores, and busy work schedules often leave little time for in-depth discussions with their parents. Typically, interactions are short and are just text or phone messages to ask how they're doing or make sure their basic needs are met. This situation shows that limited communication is not only a matter of rarely saying hello, but also related to the lack of opportunities to build deeper emotional connections.

According to field research, some seniors now feel less emotionally attached to their children as a result of this. However, the elderly are looking for ways to bridge this communication gap instead of lamenting the disappointment. They decide to participate in various social activities, including religious study groups, elderly community service activities (posbindu), or even just chatting with neighbors. They can listen, share stories, and feel valued by others in this social environment. This is reinforced by research that states that social involvement has a strong relationship with the quality of life of the elderly, because it can reduce loneliness and increase life satisfaction (Emphasis added) *et al.*, 2024). These activities make them feel that they still have a role in their families and the surrounding environment. Elderly people who live alone also choose physical activity as a way to distract their mind from loneliness, especially when children rarely contact. In other words, the elderly seek to maintain their emotional well-being by seeking alternative interactions that can provide social support even though communication with the nuclear family is limited.

#### **c. Emotional Relationship Gap**

The elderly are very sensitive to the emotional dimension. Anxiety, fear of being abandoned, and even fear of dying alone without their children, were all mentioned by a number of informants. When being with loved ones is desirable but not always achievable, such as at night or when sick, loneliness often appears. Seniors feel their emotional needs are not being adequately met, which is influenced by geographical distance and lack of in-depth communication with offspring. This condition shows that the emotional aspect is an important part of the welfare of the elderly who are easily affected by the dynamics of family relationships.

Nonetheless, the elderly are trying to manage this anxiety in a healthier way. They decide to engage in more intense spiritual activities, such as regular worship, joint prayer, or recitation. They found that engaging in religious activities gave them inner peace and a sense of intimacy with God, which helped them cope with loneliness. In addition, emotional support is often provided

by strong bonds with neighbors and other elderly residents. This confirms that the immediate social environment can be a source of emotional comfort for them.

Overall, the elderly in Pekik Nyaring Village do face these three types of interpersonal gaps. However, the impact is not always bad. The children's presence is felt through brief and frequent communication, even though their visits are rare. Similarly, because there are still bridges, the elderly still feel cared for even though communication is less intensive. They are able to maintain their confidence, and continue to play an active role in society by using various coping strategies that focus on problems.

#### **4. Emotion Focused Coping**

Emotion-focused coping is the most dominant strategy used by the elderly when facing situations that are completely out of their control, such as geographical distance, children's busyness, or decreased communication quality and emotional closeness. The elderly tend to deepen spiritual activities as a primary way to manage emotional stress. They increase their prayers, recite the Qur'an, and dhikr to gain inner peace. Religious activities are an important source of strength for them, especially when they feel homesick or anxious due to a lack of attention from children.

Self-acceptance is also part of emotion-focused coping. The elderly learn to accept that their children's lives have their own dynamics and busyness. This understanding helps them reduce expectations and reduce heartache when communication or visits of children do not meet expectations. Some seniors seek peace through conversations with neighbors, attending studies, or socializing with older groups, which gives them a sense of acceptance and value. This approach helps them stabilize their emotional state through social support that is more accessible in the surrounding environment.

In the deepest emotional gaps, the elderly use spiritual and social approaches simultaneously. When fear arises, especially the fear of getting sick or dying without a child, they rely on prayer and faith strengthening to cope with anxiety. This

combination of strategies shows that the elderly are able to utilize internal and external sources of strength to maintain their inner peace.

#### **a. Geographical Relationship Gap**

They often experience loneliness and longing when separated from their children by distance, and visits become rare. Seniors in these situations often turn their emotional attention to spirituality, strengthening their remembrance, prayer, or intimacy with God. According to research conducted in Oetete Kupang, the elderly have admitted that prayer is a coping mechanism to reduce the stress that arises from being away from home (Tiera) *et al.*, 2025). The elderly believe that they can "talk" to God through spirituality, which allows them to realize that relationships and affection can be maintained even when distance continues. In addition, emotion-focused coping helps the elderly find purpose in life, even when the elderly have an emotional gap, prayer and religiosity can reduce feelings of emptiness and give them a sense of purpose (Lima, 2020). Seniors can maintain psychological balance and a sense of calm despite family relationship constraints by strengthening their identity. As a result, emotion-focused coping is more effective than problem-focused coping. Because it can be difficult to actively deal with emotional gaps in the family, seniors may choose to regulate their emotions, deepen their spirituality, and accept circumstances sincerely when geographical barriers cannot be changed.

#### **b. Communication Relationship Gap**

When older parents feel like they are only able to communicate with their children through short, infrequent phone conversations, or feel that they are not getting enough attention, they may feel frustrated, forgetful, or uncaring. One way to reduce it is to seek social support from the elderly group, or neighbors. They share stories, express desires, and gain support through these emotional interactions. Through these simple activities, the elderly can maintain a sense of connection even though communication with children does not run optimally.

### **c. Emotional Relationship Gap**

Based on several field interviews, seniors who experience connection gaps use emotion-focused coping mechanisms to maintain the alignment of their minds, instead of being immediately overwhelmed by unpleasant feelings. It has been proven that self-acceptance, spiritual-based hope, and social contact help can help people feel more peaceful, prevent loneliness, and maintain hope. The main ways to calm down through religious practices include prayer, reading the Qur'an, and dhikr, or remembering God. For the elderly who are lonely or separated from family, spirituality is essential to increase resilience and reduce stress. Therefore, religious activities provide inner strength and calmness to face life's challenges. Self-acceptance is a crucial component of emotionally-focused treatment, in addition to spirituality. They can become more patient and not easily disappointed thanks to this acceptance. Backed by research (Nurliah *et al.*, 2020) In the family and social institutions, the quality of life of the elderly is closely related to spiritual characteristics and self-acceptance. The majority of informants in this survey chose emotion-focused coping as their primary strategy in dealing with family difficulties that are difficult to overcome or cannot be resolved immediately. Their approach to coping with emotional distress revolves around techniques such as practicing faith, practicing patience, and seeking opportunities to express their feelings to others. This shows that emotional management is the main key for the elderly to remain able to function psychologically even though family relationships are not fully harmonious.

### **d. Gap Relation in the Elderly**

Gap relations or gaps in family relationships in the elderly in Pekik Nyaring Village are divided into three main forms, namely geographical gaps, communication gaps, and emotional gaps. Geographical gaps arise when children live far from their parents, so meetings only occur at certain times. In Pekik Nyaring Village, this condition can be seen in the elderly whose children have settled outside the area, even outside the province. Family visits are

usually only carried out at certain moments such as holidays, so the elderly often feel lonely and lose the warmth of togetherness. While communication via phone or text message is still common, it is not entirely able to replace meaningful face-to-face interactions. This geographical separation causes some elderly people to feel neglected and lack of attention, especially when they need help in terms of health or daily needs. They tend to experience feelings of loneliness, boredom, and loss of social meaning, which suggests that physical distance has a significant psychological impact on the well-being of the elderly. Because basically long distances often make family relationships less intense and difficult to maintain emotionally.

Communication gaps are seen when children rarely contact or communicate with the elderly. The informants said that they only received calls at certain times, and this made the elderly feel less cared for. Minimal communication makes the elderly sometimes feel that they are no longer an important part of their children's lives. According to (Pohan, 2021), effective communication in the family is determined not only by how often a person interacts, but also by the depth of meaning and empathy built in those conversations. In Pekik Nyaring Village, there are elderly people who live close to their children, but still feel distance in emotional relationships. Communication that occurs is generally brief and functional, for example only when discussing practical matters such as household affairs or health. Even so, the elderly still appreciate every form of communication received, even if it's just a text message or a short call. Because, even simple communication can give a sense of appreciation and remember by the family.

The deepest form of gap is the emotional gap, which is when the elderly no longer feel the affection, attention, and support of their family members. According to (Ezalina *et al.*, 2020), lack of emotional support is related to increased feelings of loneliness and low zest for life in the elderly. While (Anisa *et al.*, 2023) It found that the self-acceptance of the elderly was strongly influenced by the extent to which they received emotional support from their families. The results of observations in Pekik



Nyaring Village show that some elderly people who live with their families still experience emotional gaps. They are rarely talked to in private, are not involved in decision-making, and feel that their existence is no longer noticed. These feelings cause emotional distress such as sadness, worthlessness, and even excessive worry about the future. (Riasmini, *et al.*, 2022) emphasized that positive social relationships with family can increase the confidence and meaning of life of the elderly.

On the contrary, a strained relationship actually deepens loneliness. In addition, Chen and Chan (2022) in (Amalia & Pradana, 2024) mentioning that the busyness of the modern family and the lack of involvement of the elderly in domestic life reinforce the feeling of marginalization, both in the elderly who live alone and with their families. This emotional gap describes the form of disconnection that has the most influence on the psychological well-being of the elderly. Elderly people who no longer feel the warmth of family tend to withdraw from the social environment, lose their zest for life, and experience a decline in social welfare. Because emotional needs are a fundamental part of the quality of life in old age.

These findings suggest that gap relationships do not only occur due to physical distance, but are also influenced by communication dynamics and emotional closeness. The three forms of gap are interrelated and provide a comprehensive picture of the condition of elderly family relations in Pekik Nyaring Village.

**Table 1. Coping Strategies for the Elderly in Dealing with Family Relationship Gap**

Y e s	Gap Relation	Strategy coping	
		Problem Focused Coping	Emotion Focused Coping
1	Geograp hic Gap	The elderly alleviate the gap by remaining active in productive activities such as gardening, participating in posyandu and studying. Occasional family visits also give a	Longing for being far away is more faced with prayer, worship and self-acceptance. Community via phone, although not often, is still an emotional reinforcement that helps

		positive encouragement so that the distance feels lighter	maintain inner connections.
2	Commu nication Gap	When conversations with children are rare, the elderly fill their time with productive activities so that they feel neglected. Phone calls or text messages, even if they are limited, still bring a sense of appreciation.	The limitations of daily communication are balanced by social support from neighbors and peer groups. The elderly also try to be grateful for the small opportunity to communicate with their children, even if it is not intense.
3	Emotio nal Gap	Anxiety or anxiety is difficult to overcome directly, so it is rarely solved through problem-focused coping. The elderly stay busy with routines so that their minds are not too burdened.	Feelings of worry, fear of dying in their own circumstances are often relieved with prayer, patience, gratitude, and self-acceptance. Periodic visits and phone calls from family, although rare, are still able to calm the heart.

Source: Research Results 2025

**Table 2. Use of Coping Strategy by Six Informants**

N o	Informant Initials	Strategy coping	
		Problem Focused Coping	Emotion Focused Coping
1	A		✓
2	SJ	✓	✓
3	S		✓
4	N	✓	✓
5	In	✓	✓
6	AY	✓	✓

Source: Research Results 2025

The table mentioned above shows how the coping mechanisms used by the elderly to bridge the connection gap are very different and depend on the situation. Some seniors emphasize the spiritual and emotional aspects more, while others rely on physical and social activities to distract from feelings of loneliness. This is in line with the opinion of Lazarus & Folkman (1984) who stated that individuals can choose more than one form of coping strategy depending on their resources and psychological state.

In addition, table 2 which contains the

distribution of the use of problem focused coping and emotion focused coping by six informants shows that four informants used both forms of coping strategies simultaneously. This means that every elderly person not only focuses on solving problems through real activities such as work, gardening, or socializing but also calms down through emotional approaches such as praying, and accepting the situation.

These findings indicate that a balance between the two forms of coping strategies is important for the elderly in maintaining inner peace and adjusting to family relationship gaps. This pattern of using a dual strategy shows that the elderly in Pekik Nyaring Village have good adaptive ability, because they are able to take advantage of social support from the surrounding environment while strengthening their spiritual aspects. Thus, the table not only shows the tendency of individual coping strategies, but also reflects the general pattern of the elderly in responding to the condition of relationship gaps, where social and spiritual aspects complement each other in self-adjustment.

Geographically, being separated from children encourages parents to actively engage in beneficial activities to prevent feelings of isolation and loneliness. Social support from the surrounding environment, such as neighbors or peers, is one of the important factors in maintaining the spirit of life of the elderly. These results confirm that the well-being of the elderly is not only influenced by family support, but also by their ability to adjust independently through effective coping strategies. Therefore, it is important for social workers to pay attention to these two aspects in developing intervention programs that focus on improving the psychological and social well-being of the elderly.

## CONCLUSION

According to this study, the elderly in Pekik Nyaring Village experience a lack of family ties due to lack of emotional support, limited communication, and geographical separation. Older people use a variety of coping strategies to cope with these issues, depending on their social environment and experiences. Older people's efforts to stay busy, productive, and engage in important

daily activities show problem-focused coping mechanisms, which reduce loneliness resulting from family separation. On the other hand, emotionally-focused coping is more often used when the elderly experience deep longing or limited family communication, which is overcome with patience, prayer, and sincere acceptance of the situation.

This pattern suggests that the elderly tailor their coping techniques according to the circumstances they are facing, instead of using one strategy that works for everyone. While people who are more physically vulnerable choose to strengthen their spirituality as a way to calm down, those who are physically healthy are more likely to actively seek out rewarding activities. Therefore, flexibility is essential for maintaining social and psychological balance.

One positive finding is that, although rare, family visits still provide a sense of warmth, closeness, and care to the elderly. Because there is still involvement and communication that maintains an emotional bond with the family, this prevents them from feeling too disappointed or alone. According to the study's findings, social support from surviving family members as well as from the community and neighbours is crucial in helping the elderly maintain their mental and social health. When core family support isn't always available, interactions with neighbors, friends, and community leaders can be a valuable addition. This illustrates how social networks among the elderly include not only the family but also the local community, which is crucial in fostering a sense of acceptance and gratitude. The existence of support groups helps the elderly feel less lonely, more optimistic, and more psychologically resilient. Therefore, social workers and other stakeholders can build support programs that are more sensitive to the emotional and social needs of the elderly by understanding the coping mechanisms used by the elderly.

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