The Integration of Group Psychological Counseling into the Innovation Path of College Students' Mental Health Education Course Construction

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Abstract: *This paper discusses the important significance of integrating group psychological counseling into the construction of college students' psychological courses. The mental health problems of college students are increasingly prominent, and the traditional psychological course teaching model has deficiencies. Group psychological counseling has become a new trend. The article analyzes the current situation of college students' mental health education courses and the impacts of existing problems, expounds the connotation and theoretical basis of group psychological counseling, and introduces the application of group psychological counseling in college students' mental health education courses, including the advantages of integrating interesting elements, strengthening teacher-student interaction, full-participation counseling objects and expanded group scale. Through case analysis, the practical effects of group psychological counseling are demonstrated. The role of group psychological counseling in college students' psychological courses and its significance for college students' psychological courses are discussed. Finally, the research conclusions are summarized and the future research is prospected, including exploring innovative models and methods, expanding application fields, and strengthening effect evaluation.*

Keywords: *group counseling;mental health; college students*

1. Introduction

With the development and progress of society, mental health issues among college students have become increasingly prominent. College students face multifaceted pressures such as academics, interpersonal relationships, and employment, making mental health concerns inescapable. Surveys indicate that the prevalence rate of depressive disorders among college students is 23.66%, with anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorders also being relatively common in this demographic [1]. Traditional teaching methods in college psychology courses often focus on theoretical lectures, lacking interactivity and practicality, which fail to meet the actual needs of students. In contrast, group psychological counseling, as a novel model of psychological education, possesses unique advantages and value.

Group psychological counseling has a natural adaptability in colleges and universities. There are various types of groups within schools, and college students are at similar stages of physical and mental development, sharing common developmental issues and growth challenges. Within these groups, college students are more receptive to advice from their peers and can better understand and experience the support from others. Additionally, group psychological counseling enhances the effectiveness of teachers' and counselors' work, allowing them to better understand students' issues and provide more targeted services. The development of group psychological counseling is also an inevitable trend in the mental health education of college students. It not only meets the urgent needs of college students for mental health education but also reflects the intrinsic requirements of quality education for college students. Through group psychological counseling, students can enhance self-awareness, improve self-regulation abilities, improve interpersonal relationships, and strengthen social adaptability, promoting personal growth and development.

In summary, the integration of group psychological counseling into the construction of college student psychology courses has significant practical importance and value. It provides new ideas and methods for the mental health education of college students, helping to improve the quality and effectiveness of such education.

2. Current Status of College Student Mental Health Education Courses

2.1. Theoretical Explanation and Lack of Experience

In the current college student mental health education courses, teachers often favor the explanation of theoretical knowledge while neglecting the psychological needs of students. For instance, when explaining the concept and criteria of mental health, teachers merely elaborate on theoretical knowledge without analyzing it in conjunction with students' actual life situations. This teaching method disconnects the teaching content from reality, making it difficult for students to apply what they have learned to their daily lives [2].

Moreover, the lack of targeted teaching content is also an issue. Students from different majors and grades may face different psychological issues, but teachers often use uniform teaching content in the teaching process without adjusting it according to the actual situations of students. This leads to some students feeling that the content they learn is irrelevant to themselves, thus losing interest in learning.

2.2. Insufficient Interaction and Poor Teaching Effectiveness

In college student mental health education courses, teachers often impose knowledge on students with a lack of interaction, resulting in a dull classroom atmosphere [3]. For example, teachers lecture endlessly on theoretical knowledge from the podium, while students passively listen below, seldom having the opportunity to express their own opinions and ideas. This teaching method not only makes students feel bored but also fails to stimulate their interest and enthusiasm for learning. Additionally, a lack of interaction leads to low learning efficiency and quality. Since students do not have the opportunity to participate in classroom discussions, their understanding of the knowledge is superficial, and their memory is not strong. Furthermore, teachers cannot timely understand the learning situation and psychological needs of students, making it difficult to adjust teaching content and methods.

3. The Connotation and Theoretical Basis of Group Psychological Counseling

3.1. The Connotation of Group Psychological Counseling

Group psychological counseling uses various well-designed activities as carriers to provide members with a unique platform for growth. In group activities, members can participate together, communicate with each other, and share their perceptions and experiences [4]. This sharing not only helps members better understand themselves but also allows them to view themselves from others' perspectives, thereby discovering their strengths and weaknesses. Through feedback among members, individuals can gain an objective understanding of their behavior, attitudes, and emotions, and then make targeted adjustments and improvements. In this process, members can continuously explore and challenge themselves to achieve personal growth and development [5]. For example, in a group activity themed "self-awareness," members express their inner world through painting, writing, and other methods, then share and communicate with each other. In this process, some members discover potential and strengths they were not aware of, while others realize that some behavioral patterns may need to change. This deepening of self-awareness and adjustment of behavior is a concrete manifestation of how group psychological counseling promotes growth.

3.2. The Theoretical Basis of Group Psychological Counseling

Person-centered therapy theory, as one of the important theoretical foundations of group psychological counseling, has a profound influence on the practice of group psychological counseling. Person-centered therapy theory emphasizes that individuals have a tendency to pursue the realization of self-worth. In this process, with appropriate guidance, individuals can recognize the correct direction of self-realization. In group psychological counseling, members are in a common environment, and through mutual communication and interaction, they can better understand their own needs and potential. For example, in a college student group psychological counseling group, members gradually discover their deep love and pursuit of a certain field when discussing their future plans, which is a manifestation of recognizing the direction of self-realization under guidance [6]. In the group, members can share their experiences, feelings, and ideas without fear of judgment or criticism. This open atmosphere allows members to express themselves more genuinely, thereby better understanding their inner world. At the same time, members can also gain inspiration and reference from the sharing of others, further clarifying

their own goals and direction.

4. The Application of Group Psychological Counseling in College Student Mental Health Education Courses

4.1. Integrating Interesting Elements to Stimulate Learning Motivation

Interest is the source of students' learning motivation. When college students have a strong interest in group psychological counseling activities, they will actively participate. Integrating interesting elements into college student mental health education courses can stimulate students' interest in learning and improve their learning motivation. For example, by introducing interesting psychological tests, small games, or case analyses, students can learn mental health knowledge in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. Surveys show that a majority of college students have indicated that their learning enthusiasm significantly increases when courses integrate interesting elements [7]. Organizing interesting games and competitions is an effective way to create a lively classroom atmosphere. Games are an indispensable element of group psychological counseling, not only stimulating students' participation interest but also allowing college students to participate in teams, enhancing team cooperation awareness. During the game process, students actively interact, making the classroom atmosphere lively. Additionally, reward mechanisms such as small gifts or certificates of honor can be set up to further improve student participation. For example, in a group psychological counseling activity themed on emotional management, a "emotion transmission" game competition was organized. Students were divided into groups to convey different emotions through expressions and actions, with the group guessing the correct emotion winning. In this process, students not only learned knowledge and skills of emotional management but also enhanced their relationships, making the classroom atmosphere very active.

4.2. Strengthening Teacher-Student Interaction

In college student mental health education courses, teachers should fully recognize the primary status of students and gradually hand over the initiative of the classroom to students. College students are at a specific age stage with complex and diverse psychological characteristics, such as strong but unstable self-awareness, large emotional fluctuations, a desire for independence but dependence on others, etc. Teachers can only better meet their developmental needs by closely monitoring these psychological characteristics of students. At the same time, teachers should also pay attention to students' emotional changes, identify and address potential anxiety, depression, and other negative emotions in students. When students show signs of low mood or restlessness in class, teachers can pause teaching to communicate one-on-one with students, understand their troubles, and provide appropriate advice and support.

Developing teaching plans based on students' psychological characteristics and developmental needs is key to improving the teaching effectiveness of college student mental health education courses. Teachers can understand information about students' interests, learning styles, and psychological concerns through questionnaires, individual interviews, and other methods, then design targeted teaching plans in conjunction with course objectives and teaching content. For students majoring in science and engineering, teachers can add psychological training activities related to logical thinking and problem-solving in the teaching plan; for students majoring in the humanities, teachers can design group counseling projects related to emotional expression and interpersonal relationships. During the implementation of the teaching plan, teachers should continuously adjust and optimize teaching methods to adapt to students' learning needs. Teachers can also invite students to participate in the formulation and evaluation of the teaching plan, allowing students to offer their own opinions and suggestions, enhancing their sense of participation and responsibility. Teaching plans developed in this way can not only improve students' interest and enthusiasm for learning but also better meet their developmental needs, thereby improving teaching effectiveness.

5. Conclusion and Outlook

The integration of group psychological counseling into the construction of college student psychology courses is of great significance and can improve teaching quality and students' mental health levels. As an innovative model of mental health education, group psychological counseling has brought many positive impacts to the construction of college student psychology courses. Firstly, it addresses issues in

traditional college student mental health education courses that emphasize theory over practice, lack interaction, and neglect student experience. Through rich activity carriers and in-depth theoretical foundations, it stimulates students' interest and motivation to learn. In group psychological counseling, students can not only learn mental health knowledge and skills but also enhance self-awareness, improve self-regulation abilities, improve interpersonal relationships, and strengthen social adaptability through interaction. Secondly, the universal counseling targets and expanded group scale of group psychological counseling allow it to reach more students, providing strong support for the improvement of the class mental health education system. Through class group psychological counseling, psychological committee members and class leaders can learn professional counseling methods and techniques, providing a model for class management. Additionally, a positive class atmosphere offers strong psychological support for students, promoting their psychological growth. Furthermore, the role of group psychological counseling in college student psychology courses cannot be overlooked. It compensates for the limitations of individual psychological counseling in terms of personnel and expands the service scope, enhancing the effectiveness of problem-solving. In groups, students can activate their inner potential, establish positive self-concepts, and promote healthy personality development.

With the continuous advancement of technology, group psychological counseling can actively explore innovative models and methods. For example, utilizing online platforms to conduct remote group psychological counseling can break the limitations of time and space, allowing more students to benefit. According to relevant data, some universities have already attempted to conduct online group psychological counseling activities, significantly increasing student participation compared to traditional offline counseling. Additionally, integrating artificial intelligence technology can provide personalized psychological counseling suggestions for students. By analyzing students' performance and feedback during group activities, AI systems can tailor exclusive psychological growth plans for each student, improving the targeting and effectiveness of counseling. Moreover, experiential learning concepts, such as outdoor expansion and social practice, can be introduced to help students develop psychological resilience and problem-solving skills in real-life situations. For instance, organizing students to participate in community volunteer activities can enhance their sense of self-worth and social responsibility through helping others.

Group psychological counseling should not be limited to college student mental health education courses; it can also be expanded to more application areas. In student club activities, group psychological counseling methods can be introduced to enhance cohesion and cooperation among club members. For example, conducting group counseling activities themed "team collaboration and creativity" in a music club can cultivate communication skills and innovative thinking among members through the process of music creation and performance. In terms of career planning, group psychological counseling can help students clarify their career goals and improve their adaptability to the workplace. Through activities such as mock interviews and workplace role-playing, students can gain early insights into workplace environments and requirements, preparing them psychologically. Additionally, group psychological counseling can also be applied in student dormitory management to create a harmonious dormitory atmosphere, promoting students' interpersonal relationships and mental health.

To continuously improve the quality and effectiveness of group psychological counseling, it is necessary to strengthen scientific effect evaluations. A multidimensional evaluation index system should be established, including aspects such as students' mental health levels, self-awareness abilities, quality of interpersonal relationships, and learning motivation. Regular evaluations of students can be conducted through questionnaires, psychological tests, and behavioral observations to understand the implementation effects of group psychological counseling. Additionally, comparative studies can be conducted to analyze the impact of group psychological counseling on students' psychological growth by comparing students who participate in group psychological counseling with those who do not. For example, research has found that students who participate in group psychological counseling show significantly better abilities in coping with stress and managing emotions compared to those who do not participate. Furthermore, students, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders can be invited to participate in evaluations, collecting feedback from different perspectives to provide a basis for improving group psychological counseling.

In conclusion, future research should continuously explore innovative models and methods of group psychological counseling, expand its application areas, and strengthen effect evaluations to better meet the mental health needs of college students and promote their overall development.

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