

The Development of Mental Health Education for College Students under the Background of Educational Psychology

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Abstract: *The mental states of contemporary college students exhibit diversified and complex development characteristics. The traditional mental health education models suffer from deficiencies such as weak theoretical support and monotonous educational methods. Educational psychology encompasses cognitive development, emotion regulation, personality development, and other core theories. It is highly aligned with the mental education in higher education, and enables to provide scientific guidance for mental health education. This paper anchors in the core perspective of educational psychology to elaborate on the theoretical value of mental education, analyzes existing problems in current college mental health education, and explores optimization pathways from four aspects: educational philosophy, teaching models, intervention systems, and safeguard mechanisms, aiming to build a scientific and regularized college mental education system, and help college students develop a healthy psychological personality.*

Keywords: *Educational Psychology, College Students, Mental Health Education, Educational Optimization*

1. Introduction

With the continuous development of higher education, college students are confronted with multiple psychological pressures such as academic, interpersonal and employment pressures, and mental health issues have become increasingly prominent, which puts forward higher requirements for the educational efforts in higher education institutions. Mental health education is an important part of talent cultivation in higher education institutions, and it directly affects the comprehensive competency development of students. Traditional mental education often focuses on the post-event intervention of problems, lacking a deep understanding of the psychological development law of students. Educational psychology focuses on individual psychological development logic, and enables to precisely align with the growth characteristics of college students. Relying on the theories of educational psychology to innovate mental health education serves as an important way to improve the quality and efficiency of mental education in higher education institutions and meet the psychological development needs of contemporary college students.

2. Theoretical Value of Integrating Educational Psychology into Mental Health Education in Higher Education Institutions

2.1. Aligning with the Objective Law of the Psychological Development of College Students

Educational psychology systematically explains the cognitive characteristics, emotional changes and personality development patterns of individuals during their youth stage. It is precisely aligned with the growth trait of college students. College students are in a crucial transitional period of mental maturity. Their self-awareness is developing rapidly, and their emotional perception is sensitive and delicate. Therefore, they are prone to experiencing mood swings influenced by external environment. Traditional mental health education often adopts a uniform educational model. It neglects the phased characteristics and individual differences in students' psychological development and lacks targeted education. Relying on the theories of educational psychology to carry out work can follow students' psychological growth logic to conduct stratified cultivation, abandon the extensive educational model, and make mental health education meet the authentic psychological needs of students, thereby enhancing the scientific rigor and adaptability of educational work.

Educational psychology emphasizes the discontinuity, continuity and diversity in psychological development, which provides theoretical basis for the tiered and categorized implementation of mental health education in higher education institutions. There are significant differences in psychological distress and psychological needs among college students of different grades and backgrounds. Lower-grade students focus on adaptation anxiety, while higher-grade students revolve around employment pressure. Leveraging the theories of cognitive development and social psychology in educational psychology can precisely distinguish the types of students' mental problems, abandon the one-size-fits-all educational approach, precisely align with the psychological growth needs of different students, enable mental education to fit with the individual psychological development rhythm and produce substantial results in mental health education.

2.2. Enriching the Educational Connotation of Mental Health Education in Higher Education Institutions

The traditional mental health education in higher education institutions mainly focuses on screening mental problems and intervening psychological crisis. Its core objective is to address students' explicit mental issues. Its educational dimensions are rather monolithic. It neglects the cultivation of students' positive mental characters. Educational psychology encompasses diversified content such as positive psychological development, emotion management, cognition correction, and interpersonal communication. It cannot only address students' psychological distress, but also help cultivate their healthy personality, ability to withstand pressure, and positive mindset, significantly expanding the boundaries of mental education. Integrating educational psychology into educational work can promote mental health education to shift from problem correction to equal emphasis on prevention ability cultivation and literacy improvement.

Educational psychology has broken through the inherent limitations of traditional mental education, which overly emphasizes psychotherapy over cultivation, to establish an omni-directional mental education system. Its core theory is not only applicable to mental counseling, but also enable to integrate into various educational scenarios such as daily teaching, campus life, and interpersonal guidance to realize implicit education penetration. Exploring the positive educational resources in educational psychology can guide students to establish correct cognitive thinking, master scientific emotion regulation methods, develop good mental habits, enrich the educational dimensions of college mental health education and improve the talent cultivation system of fostering virtue through education [1].

2.3. Enhancing the Scientific Rigor and Professionalism of Mental Education in Higher Education Institutions

For a long time, mental health education in some higher education institutions has suffered from problems such as experientialism and randomness. Due to lack of systematic theoretical support, some educational measures become formalistic, struggling to fundamentally solve students' mental problems. After a long period of academic accumulation, educational psychology has developed a sound theoretical framework, intervention methods and educational logic, providing standardized and professional theoretical guidance for mental education. Relying on system theory to carry out mental counseling, mental teaching, and crisis intervention can completely solve the problems of empirical education and enhance the professionalism and standardization of mental education in higher education institutions.

Educational psychology provides standardized implementation basis for all the work related to mental health education in higher education institutions, and standardizes the whole process of mental teaching, mental counseling, and crisis intervention. From the reason analysis of students' mental problems and the formulation of counseling plans to the design of regular mental teaching content, all of these can be implemented based on corresponding psychological theories. Systematic theoretical support can effectively avoid the blindness of traditional educational work, help psychological counseling teachers accurately grasp the root causes of students' mental problems, make scientific and effective educational plans, and comprehensively enhance the professional and standardized development level of mental health education in higher education institutions.

3. Existing Problems of Mental Health Education in Higher Education Institutions from the Perspective of Educational Psychology

3.1. Lagging Educational Philosophy, Neglecting the Psychological Needs of Students

Currently, some higher education institutions still adopt traditional problem-oriented mental health education philosophy, focusing on mental problem diagnosis, crisis intervention, and remediation for problem students, but neglecting the regular cultivation of the positive mental characters of ordinary students. Their educational process excessively focuses on students' mental defects and negative emotions while neglecting their psychological development potential and subjective growth needs, which goes against the people-oriented core philosophy of educational psychology. A single corrective educational philosophy is challenging to fundamentally enhance students' psychological resilience and adapt to the diverse psychological growth needs of contemporary college students.

In most higher education institutions, mental education lacks a developmental educational mindset and fails to establish a long-term education mechanism by integrating the growth and development theories of educational psychology. Daily mental health education focuses mainly on theoretical lectures and public talks, with dull content and rigid models. It fails to design educational content based on students' cognitive characteristics and psychological demands. Concurrently, it ignores the individual psychological differences of students, adopts a uniform educational model, and fails to account for the psychological weaknesses and growth needs of different students. This results in insufficient initiative of students to participate in mental education, and makes it difficult for mental education work to achieve the cultivation effect of internalization.

3.2. Monotonous Educational Models, Insufficient Theory-Practice Integration

At present, the problem of rigid models is quite prominent in college students' mental health education. The teaching models mainly consist of classroom theoretical lecturing, offline campus talks, and paper-based tests, with monolithic educational carriers and weak interactivity. Educational psychology emphasizes experiential and immersive education, and focuses on students' psychological cognitive upgrading and emotion regulation ability enhancement in practical experience. However, currently, most higher education institutions lack practice-based mental education scenarios, and there is a disconnect between theory teaching and students' actual mental life. As a result, it is difficult for students to convert psychological knowledge into psychological adjustment capabilities, and the effectiveness of education is significantly reduced [2].

There is a widespread problem of theory-practice dichotomy in mental health education at higher education institutions. They have insufficient exploration of theoretical resources in educational psychology, and fail to integrate the core theories such as cognitive correction, emotion management, and interpersonal relationship adjustment into the daily educational practice. Mental classroom teaching mostly remains confined to the inculcation of theoretical knowledge, and lacks practical guidance content that align closely with students' academic pressure, interpersonal conflicts, and employment anxiety. Concurrently, due to the lack of regular psychological practice activities, students are unable to master psychological adjustment skills through experience, resulting in that mental education is superficial and struggle to truly address various psychological distress faced by students in their daily life and study.

3.3. Weak Intervention Systems, Lacking Stratified Precision Education Mechanisms

Currently, college students' mental health intervention systems are relatively extensive. There is a lack an educational psychology-based stratified and categorized precision education mechanism. Most higher education institutions only conduct unified psychological census to simply classify normal and abnormal mental states. They do not carry out detailed mental analysis based on students' cognitive level, growth stages, and sources of stress. As a result, they are unable to accurately identify students' latent or minor mental problems. It is difficult for a uniform intervention model to fit with the mental states of varying students. It is prone to problems such as excessive intervention or lack of intervention. This affects the accuracy of mental education.

The mental education in higher education institutions lacks a regular and dynamic mental monitoring and stratified intervention system. It mainly focuses on periodic centralized screening, and lacks continuous tracking of students' mental states. For students with good mental states, there are no

regular measures for cultivating positive mental characters. For students with minor psychological distress, there is a lack of targeted counseling and guidance. For students with high-risk mental problems, the intervention schemes are highly homogeneous, and no personalized scheme is made according to the causes of their mental problems [3]. The absence of stratified education mechanisms has led to insufficient pertinence in mental education, making it difficult to establish a comprehensive mental health protection system.

4. Optimization Pathways for Mental Health Education in Higher Education Institutions from the Perspective of Educational Psychology

4.1. Changing the Educational Philosophy to Establish a Developmental Mental Education Mindset

Higher education institutions should rely on the development theories of educational psychology to completely change the traditional corrective educational philosophy, and establish a prevention-cultivation-intervention triune developmental mental education philosophy. They should abandon the one-sided thinking that overemphasizes on problem-solving over literacy cultivation, focus on the long-term psychological development of students, and make the cultivation of positive mental characters and the enhancement of mental adjustment capabilities the core educational objectives. Concurrently, they should anchor in the psychological development law of college students, respect the individual psychological differences and subjective needs of students, establish a people-oriented educational mindset, make mental health education align closely with the growth rhythm of students, and achieve a shift from passive correction to proactive cultivation.

Higher education institutions should integrate the developmental education philosophy throughout the whole process of mental health education, and account for the dual objectives of problem intervention and competency enhancement. They should leverage the theories of cognitive development and personality formation in educational psychology to regularly carry out the cultivation of positive mental attitude, ability to withstand pressure, interpersonal skills, the ability to cope with emotions and guide students to establish positive cognitive thinking. Concurrently, they should pay attention to the psychological changes during students' growth process, forecast the psychological risk brought about by studies, interpersonal relationships and employment in advance, and carry out proactive psychological guidance to fundamentally reduce the incidence of mental problems and lay a solid foundation for students' mental health.

4.2. Innovating the Educational Models to Promote the Deep Integration of Theory and Practice

Higher education institutions should innovate college students' mental health education models based on the experiential education theory in educational psychology to break the rigid model of insular theory teaching, and establish a diversified education model that integrates theory teaching, practical experience, and daily infiltration. They should optimize mental classroom teaching content, and integrate common mental problems of college students to add practical psychological knowledge such as cognitive behavior correction, reasonable emotional management and control, and scientific stress reduction, so as to enhance the practicality and adaptability of the teaching content. Concurrently, they should diversify the forms of classroom interaction, and enhance students' engagement level in classrooms by means of scenario simulation, thinking guidance, and interactive discussions, etc.

Higher education institutions should establish diversified mental practice education scenarios to promote the practical application of the theories of educational psychology. They should integrate students' campus life, study and employment realities to regularly conduct practical activities such as group mental counseling, psychological fun activities, and emotion experience training, so as to enable students to master mental adjustment skills through immersive experience. Concurrently, they should integrate mental education into the whole process of professional teaching, campus culture, and daily management to achieve comprehensive implicit education [4]. In addition, they should encourage students to convert psychological theoretical knowledge into practical operational capabilities in self-regulation, interpersonal communication, and stress reduction, thereby effectively enhancing the effectiveness of mental health education.

4.3. Improving the Education Systems to Establish a Stratified Precision Education Mechanism

Higher education institutions should rely on the theory of individual differences and the theory of

psychological flattened development in educational psychology to establish a stratified and categorized precise mental health education system, so as to enhance the targeted relevance and scientific rigor of education. They should integrate the phased psychological characteristics of freshmen adaptation, sophomore growth, junior breakthrough, and senior employment to make differentiated mental education content and cultivation schemes in order to adapt to the core psychological needs of students at different grades. Concurrently, they should refine the tiers of students' mental states, divide students into three groups: students with a healthy and stable mentality, students with mild distress, and students with high-risk hidden troubles, design targeted cultivation and intervention schemes, and completely abandon the uniform and extensive educational model.

Higher education institutions should establish a dynamic mental monitoring and long-term tracking mechanism, and rely on regular mental assessment, daily status observation, and class mental feedback to promptly grasp the dynamic changes in students' mental states. For students with good mental states, they should focus on cultivating their positive mental literacy. For students with minor psychological distress, they should provide one-on-one gentle counseling and personalized guidance. For students with high-risk mental issues, they should make specific intervention schemes and provide whole-process tracking and assistance. Through stratified precision education, they can achieve comprehensive, differentiated, and regular mental education, thereby fully safeguarding students' mental health.

5. Long-Term Safeguard Mechanisms for Mental Health Education from the Perspective of Educational Psychology

5.1. Strengthening the Professional Psychological Literacy of the Teaching Staff

The professional competence of the teaching staff is the core safeguard for the high-quality development of mental health education in higher education institutions. Higher education institutions should focus on enhancing the professional competence in educational psychology and establish a regular faculty training system. To be specific, they should regularly organize psychological counseling teachers and counselors to conduct special training on educational psychology in order to enable them to systematically study core theories such as cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, and positive psychology, and consolidate the theoretical foundation of the teaching staff. The focus is on enhancing teachers' professional competence in mental assessment, emotional counseling, cognitive correction, and stratified education. This aims to enable the teaching staff to possess the professionalism to leverage psychological theories to conduct precision education.

Higher education institutions should establish a collaborative mechanism of on-campus teaching research exchanges and off-campus learning, build mental education teaching research platforms, and organize teachers to regularly conduct discussions on educational challenges, teaching experience sharing meeting, and theoretical application inquiry activities. The aim is to guide teachers to proactively change their educational thinking, abandon the traditional empirical educational model, and proficiently apply the theories of educational psychology to solve various mental problems of students. Concurrently, they should improve the faculty assessment and incentive mechanism, incorporating the application of psychological theories and the effectiveness of mental education into the assessment system to fully mobilize the enthusiasm teachers for cultivating their professional competence deeply and optimizing educational work, and build a professional team of psychological consultation teachers.

5.2. Refining a Scientific Mental Health Education System

Higher education institutions should closely integrate the educational logic of educational psychology, the psychological development law of young students, and the requirements of new-era education work to establish a sound systematic, standardized and refined mental health education management system, so as to provide solid institutional support and specification basis for the regular and scientific implementation of mental education. The system should clearly define the overall objectives of mental health education, the standards for stratified cultivation, the norms for classroom teaching, the daily work procedures, the precision intervention standards and the job responsibilities of each position, and incorporate developmental psychological cultivation, regular psychological monitoring, stratified precision intervention, whole-process mental counseling, and scientific crisis handling into the institutionalized work framework to completely eradicate the problems of fragmentation, randomness and formalization in mental education [5].

Higher education institutions should improve a regular and standardized implementation system for mental health education to comprehensively standardize the whole-process working standards and rules for Implementation across mental classroom teaching, mental counseling activities, annual mental assessment, daily mental counseling, crisis intervention, tracking, assistance and return visits, etc. Concurrently, they should establish a dynamic optimization and iteration system for mental education, and integrate the changes in students' mental states, the new characteristics of young people's psychological development, and the new education demands in higher education, continuously optimize the educational content, educational models and implementation pathways to ensure that mental education keeps pace with the times. In addition, they should improve the supporting safeguard systems such as students' psychological privacy protection system, psychological file management system, crisis emergency handling system, and graded assistance management system to standardize the details of mental education work, ensure the legal, standardized, orderly, and efficient carrying out of mental education work, and promote the institutionalized, regular, and long-term high-quality development of college students' mental health education.

5.3. Establishing an Omni-directional and Diversified Mental Education Ecosystem

Higher education institutions should rely on the core theories of implicit education, environmental education and immersive education in educational psychology to comprehensively integrate various on-campus educational resources, build a comprehensive, immersive and diversified mental health education ecosystem, and achieve the bidirectional integration and collaborative efforts of explicit classroom education and implicit environmental education. To be specific, they should continuously optimize campus culture education atmospheres, create positive, warm, inclusive, harmonious and friendly on-campus psychological culture environment, and rely on on-campus bulletin boards, campus radio, new media platforms, and online science popularization platforms to regularly feed professional psychological scientific knowledge, scientific emotion regulation techniques, positive psychological growth cases, and stress reduction methods, so as to continuously cultivate students' positive psychological cognition and healthy mentality through subtle and imperceptible infiltration.

Higher education institutions should comprehensively coordinate classroom teaching, campus cultural activities, daily dormitory management, peer mutual assistance and support, and employment guidance services, and other educational scenarios, and fully integrate mental health education into the whole process across students' study, life, and growth to realize comprehensive coverage of mental education. They should fully leverage the unique advantages of peers' psychological assistance, cultivate professional class psychological liaison men and peer assistance backbone members, and establish psychological assistance platforms for students to conduct autonomous mutual assistance and self-regulation, and accompany each other in order to timely find and resolve students' minor mental problems and daily emotional issues. Concurrently, they should build a school-guided, teacher-led, student-centered, and peer-assisted collaborative educational ecosystem to cultivate students' positive and healthy mental traits omni-directionally, and create excellent and stable educational environment for the long-term and high-quality development of college students' mental health education.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, educational psychology provides scientific theoretical support and practical guidance for the mental health education of college students, and serves as the core foundation for promoting the quality improvement and upgrading of mental education. Currently, college students' mental health education suffers from many problems, such as lagging philosophy, monotonous models and extensive systems, which restricts the high-quality development of education work. By changing the developmental educational philosophy, innovating diversified practice education models, establishing a stratified precision education system, and improving an omni-directional and long-term safeguard mechanism, it is possible to effectively optimize the mental education pattern of higher education institutions. Leveraging educational psychology to empower the innovative development of mental education can precisely adapt to the psychological development needs of contemporary college students, continuously cultivate their healthy personalities and good mental literacy, and help the high-quality talent cultivation in higher education institutions.

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