

The Practice and Application of Positive Psychology in College Mental Health Education

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Abstract: Compared with the traditional disease model and problem-oriented psychology, positive psychology focuses on the development of individuals, the promotion of well-being, and the cultivation of positive psychological characteristics and abilities of people. The practice and application of this psychology helps to stimulate students' intrinsic positive motivation and improve their self-awareness and emotion management skills, so that they can better cope with challenges and stress. The purpose of this paper is to explore the practice and application of positive psychology in mental health education in colleges and universities. Through in-depth research and case studies, it will focus on specific initiatives and effectiveness in practice, and explore the value and significance of positive psychology in college education.

Keywords: positive psychology; mental health; health education

1. Introduction

In contemporary college education, the importance of mental health education is gradually highlighted, and people pay more and more attention to the mental health of college students. As an emerging branch of psychology, positive psychology provides a new theoretical and practical framework for mental health education in colleges and universities with its research orientation focusing on individual strengths, developmental potential and positive mindset. It differs from traditional problem-oriented psychology in that it emphasizes the cultivation of individual psychological resources, the promotion of positive emotions and a sense of meaning, and aims to enhance students' overall well-being and quality of life. Therefore, the practice and application of positive psychology in college mental health education is of great practical significance.

2. Concept of positive psychology

Positive psychology is a branch of psychology that focuses on individual strengths, growth and well-being. It emphasizes the study of individuals' positive mindset, strengths traits and positive emotions, aiming to enhance individuals' mental health and well-being. Positive psychology focuses on the relationship between an individual's subjective well-being, fluency experiences, positive affect, self-actualization, and personal and social development.

The development of positive psychology can be traced back to the humanistic psychology movement in the 20th century. During the first half of the 20th century, behaviorism and psychoanalysis dominated the field of psychology, but these schools of thought were primarily concerned with pathologies and problems. However, humanistic psychologists such as Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers began to focus on human potential and the positive development of individuals. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, positive psychology began to emerge as a separate disciplinary field. After Martin Seligman became president of the American Psychological Association in 1998, he introduced the concept of positive psychology and advocated a shift from morbid psychology to positive psychology. Subsequently, positive psychology began to be focused on and be researched widely.^[1]

The development of positive psychology has further contributed to the transformation of the field of psychology. It has introduced a range of research themes such as happiness, optimism, mental resilience, hope, and emotional intelligence, and it has developed a range of measurement tools and

interventions to promote individuals' mental health and well-being. In addition, the development of positive psychology has been influenced by the positive psychology movement. Positive psychology emphasizes the importance of positive mindfulness and emotional experience, and calls for the cultivation of individual well-being and mind-flow experiences, as well as the pursuit of personal meaning and purpose. This integrated research orientation has furthered the development of positive psychology and has had a wide impact in academia and practice.

3. Principles of applying positive psychology in college mental health education

3.1. Putting people first

Putting people first is the basic application principle of positive psychology in mental health education in colleges and universities. It emphasizes that students serve as the main subjects and that the needs, characteristics and development of individuals should be focused on, to meet the needs of their mental health.

First of all, each student is a unique individual with different backgrounds, experiences and needs. In practice, mental health education in colleges and universities should tailor the corresponding educational programs and interventions according to the individual differences of students. By understanding students' characteristics and needs, educators can better meet students' mental health needs and help them achieve personal development and growth.

Then, in the college environment, students often face a variety of psychological stresses and challenges, such as academic stress, interpersonal problems, and self-identity confusion. The application principles of putting people first requires educators to pay attention to the psychological needs of students and provide appropriate support and assistance. This can be achieved by offering mental health courses, providing psychological counseling services, and organizing psychological support activities. Paying attention to students' psychological needs can help enhance their mental toughness and adaptability, and promote the formation and development of their positive mindset.

Finally, mental health education in colleges and universities should regard students as the main subjects and value their participation and initiative. Educators can develop students' decision-making abilities and problem-solving skills through collaboration with students, participatory teaching methods and activities chosen by students themselves. This practice style of putting people first can stimulate students' initiative and self-awareness, and enhance their autonomy and self-discipline in the field of mental health.

3.2. Combining individuality with commonality

Individuality combined with commonality emphasizes the combination of individual characteristics and universal mental health needs to meet the needs of different students and to promote their overall development.

First of all, each student has unique personality characteristics, hobbies and interests, and growth needs. In practice, educators should identify students' personality differences by gaining an in-depth understanding of their individual characteristics and backgrounds, then design individualized educational programs and support measures accordingly. For example, the training in emotional management and social skills can be provided for students with introverted personalities; and the training in innovative thinking and problem solving can be provided for students with creative tendencies. By focusing on personality differences, college mental health education can better meet students' individual needs and stimulate their potential and positive psychological resources.

Then, there are some universal mental health needs despite the differences among students. Mental health education in colleges and universities should focus on these common needs and provide appropriate educational content and support. For example, developing students' emotion management skills, improving self-esteem and self-confidence, and promoting mental resilience are widely applicable mental health needs. By establishing mental health courses and launching counseling services and mental educational activities, schools can provide students with targeted support and guidance to promote their overall mental health.^[2]

Finally, each student has unique potential and strengths, and exploring and taking advantage of these individual differences can enhance students' learning motivation and self-actualization. Mental

health education in colleges and universities should provide opportunities and platforms to encourage students to develop their hobbies and interests, and to explore their personal potential, which should be integrated with mental health education. For example, by conducting innovative and entrepreneurial competitions, organizing arts performances and volunteer activities, schools can promote students' personality development and growth, and stimulate their positive mental attitudes and creativity.

3.3. A full education

The principle of full education emphasizes the integration of mental health education into the education of the whole university group, so that every member can participate in it and promote the development of mental health together.

First of all, as an important part of the school, faculty and staff members play an active role in guiding and influencing the development of students' mental health. Schools can conduct mental health training and workshops for faculty and staff to enhance their mental health awareness and professional competence. By involving the entire staff, schools can develop an atmosphere of shared concern for mental health and provide better support and modeling for students.

Next, students are the subjects of mental health education and they should be given the right and responsibility to participate in decision-making. Schools can establish representative teams or committees for student mental health education to work closely with students, listen to their needs and opinions, and adapt educational content and approaches according to the actual situation. Through student participation, mental health education can be better tailored to students' needs and increase student participation and acceptance.

At last, family and social environments have an important influence on students' mental health development. Schools can cooperate closely with parents and community resources to focus on students' mental health issues and provide support and guidance. For example, parent talks and community events can be held to provide training in mental health knowledge and skills to help parents and members of society better support students' mental health growth.

4. Practical initiatives of positive psychology in college mental health education

4.1. Reorganizing the goals of mental health education

Traditional mental health education tends to focus on disease prevention and problem solving, neglecting the cultivation of individual potential and positive resources. Positive psychology advocates reorienting the goals of mental health education so that it focuses more on the growth, well-being, and overall development of the individual. First, the goal of reorganizing mental health education is to promote the development of positive psychological traits in students. Positive psychology emphasizes the cultivation of positive psychological traits, such as optimism, self-confidence, and self-esteem, to help students better cope with challenges and stress and improve their psychological resilience. Through targeted training and activities, students can learn how positive psychological traits are formed and developed, and how to apply them in real-life situations, thus enhancing their mental health.

In order to reorganize and implement the goal of mental health education, universities can carry out the following innovative initiatives in the mental health education system: First, school can establish a positive psychological trait development course to provide students with systematic training and teach the basic theory and practical skills of positive psychology. Through this course, students learn how to cultivate optimistic mood, deal with stress and frustration positively, and apply theoretical knowledge to real life through practical activities. Secondly, workshops and lectures are organized on the theme of positive psychological trait development. These activities are designed to help students understand and recognize their positive psychological traits and provide practical opportunities to exercise and apply these traits in real-life situations. For example, through interactive games, group work and case studies, students can enhance their self-confidence, teamwork skills and problem-solving abilities.

4.2. Changing the form of mental health education

Traditional mental health education is often limited to imparting knowledge and skills, but fails to fully stimulate students' independent learning and positive growth. Therefore, guided by positive psychology, colleges and universities need to adopt innovative forms of education to enhance the

effectiveness of mental health education at both theoretical and practical levels. One approach worth exploring is to integrate positive psychology into curriculum design. This change not only focuses on students' mental health issues, but also emphasizes the cultivation of positive psychological resources and individual development. By introducing core concepts and skills of positive psychology, such as emotion regulation, self-awareness, and goal setting, students can better cope with challenges, develop self-confidence, and increase their sense of self-efficacy.^[3]

For example, one university has introduced specially a course called "Mental Health and Positive Growth", which adopted innovative teaching methods and content. The course includes theoretical learning, practical experience and group discussion, and aims to develop students' positive psychological resources and self-management skills. In the course, students explore their own mental health issues and learn coping strategies through personal reflection, self-assessment and case studies. At the same time, through practice items and community involvement, students are able to apply their learning in real-life situations, enhancing their social adjustment and emotional regulation skills. The course also provides students with personalized support and space for positive growth through personal mentorship and student mutual-help groups.

4.3. Improving the content of mental health education

Positive psychology pays attention to individual strengths and positive resources, advocates positive mindset, positive emotions and positive behaviors, and aims to improve individuals' psychological well-being and adaptability. Based on this concept, mental health education in colleges and universities needs to pay attention to improving education contents to meet students' individual differences and development needs, and promote their positive growth and overall development. The education content should include the following aspects: firstly, cultivating emotion management and stress coping skills, which can help students cope with emotional distress and stress effectively; secondly, cultivating positive mindset, which can guide students to face challenges and difficulties positively and optimistically; thirdly, cultivating interpersonal and social skills, which can improve students' interpersonal communication ability and social relationship quality; fourthly, cultivating self-awareness and self-management, which helps students recognize their own strengths and limitations and effectively manage their behavior and emotions. Through well-designed educational content, students can acquire practical mental health knowledge and skills to better cope with the challenges and stresses of campus life.^[4]

For example, one university has organized an activity specially called "Psychological Challenge Camp" to enhance students' emotional management and stress management skills. In the camp, students practiced their resilience and teamwork by participating in teamwork games, problem solving and overcoming difficulties. During the event, students also received guidance and counseling from professional counselors, from which they gained effective strategies for emotion management and psychological adjustment. Through such case practice, students experienced the fun of learning and growing in a positive atmosphere and improved their psychological quality and mental toughness. In addition, the university offers a mental health course that focuses on developing a positive mindset. In the course, students learn the basic theories and relevant research results of positive psychology and understand the important impact of a positive mindset on an individual's mental health. The course uses case studies and group discussions as the main teaching methods, allowing students to think deeply, share and exchange their psychological experiences and opinions. Through the course, students gradually develop a positive mindset and apply it to real-life situations, improve their awareness of themselves and others, and strengthen their emotional management and social skills.

4.4. Adjusting mental health education evaluation

Positive psychology provides new perspectives and methods for evaluating mental health education. Traditional evaluation methods tend to focus on problem identification and correction, ignoring the positive resources and growth potential of individuals. However, positive psychology focuses on the strengths and positive mindset of individuals and emphasizes a comprehensive assessment of mental health. Adjusting the evaluation of mental health education means that not only problems and obstacles are focused on, but also the assessment of the individual's positive psychological characteristics and psychological growth should be paid attention to. Such evaluation methods can provide a comprehensive understanding of students' psychological states and needs, provide educators with targeted feedback and guidance, and promote positive development and psychologically healthy growth.

For example, colleges and universities can establish a comprehensive evaluation system to include students' positive psychological characteristics and psychological growth into the evaluation category. The evaluation system includes several assessment tools and methods covering psychological quality, emotional management, interpersonal interaction, etc. Among them, quantitative assessment tools are used to measure students' psychological quality levels, such as optimism and self-efficacy, while open-ended assessment tools are used to understand students' psychological growth processes and experiences, such as students' self-reports and group discussions. This open and multiple assessment process fully respects students' individual differences and focuses on discovering and stimulating students' potential. Through regular individual counseling and feedback, educators affirm and guide students for their positive psychological characteristics, helping them to fully utilize their strengths and enhance their mental resilience and self-management skills. In addition, students participate in mutual and self-assessment sessions to deepen their understanding of their own mental health status and promote individual self-awareness and growth through communication and reflection with others.

4.5. Implementing the construction of positive psychology culture

Positive psychology culture construction refers to creating a positive psychology learning and development environment on college campuses and cultivating positive psychology values and behaviors so as to promote students' psychological healthy growth. Under the guidance of this concept, colleges and universities can carry out a series of specific practical activities, such as building positive psychology clubs, conducting positive psychology-themed lectures and seminars, and designing positive psychology courses, in order to cultivate students' positive psychological traits and coping abilities.^[5]

First, colleges and universities can establish positive psychology clubs to provide students with a platform for positive psychology learning and communication. The club can organize regular activities, such as mental health lectures, thematic discussions and practical experiences, so that students can gain a deeper understanding of the theories and methods of positive psychology and share their personal experiences and growth experiences in exchanges. Through the construction of clubs, students can motivate each other and learn together, forming a learning atmosphere of positive psychology. Secondly, colleges and universities can invite experts and scholars to conduct lectures and seminars on positive psychology topics to provide teachers and students with opportunities for learning and reflection. These lectures and seminars can cover different topics such as positive emotions, optimism, and mind-flow experiences, aiming to inspire students' thinking and stimulate their interest in positive psychology. Through interaction and discussion with experts and scholars, students can gain a deeper understanding of the theoretical framework and practical approaches of positive psychology and apply them to their own studies and lives.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, the practice of positive psychology in college mental health education has demonstrated its potential to promote students' psychological growth. By changing the form of mental health education, improving its content, and adjusting its evaluation methods, we are able to focus more comprehensively on students' positive psychological characteristics, individual differences, and growth potential, and provide them with targeted support and guidance. These practical initiatives not only improve students' mental health, but also foster their self-awareness, positive mindset and mental resilience. We believe that we are able to promote continuous and greater achievements in mental health education through continuous efforts in listening to students' voices, in-depth research in the field of mental health, and strengthening faculty development. Let us work together to contribute to the mental health and growth of college students and to build a more harmonious and positive educational environment.

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