

Peer Psychological Counseling to Improve the Level of College Students' Mental Health Education

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Abstract: Under the current social background, there are some psychological problems and bad emotions among college students. As a way of mental health education, peer counseling can help college students better face various pressures and difficulties, and maintain a good attitude to face future study and life. In this paper, by analyzing the relevant factors that affect the peer psychological counseling of college students, put forward corresponding strategies such as changing the thinking of mental health education work, expanding the work form of peer mental health education, and improving the working mechanism of peer psychological counseling, so as to achieve the goal of comprehensively improving the mental quality and mental health level of college students. In addition, schools should also pay attention to cultivating college students' self-management ability, encourage them to actively participate in various practical activities, constantly enrich their own experience, and improve college students' comprehensive quality.

Keywords: Peer counseling ; College students ; Mental health

1. Research Background

Colleges and universities, as one of the important bases for cultivating talents, play an irreplaceable role in the process of students' growth. At present, the psychological problems of college students appear increasingly, and various psychological problems occur frequently. Therefore, how to improve the mental health level of college students is a major issue urgently needed to be solved. Nowadays, there are a lot of articles about mental health of college students published in our country. However, there are few literatures about peer psychological guidance. This means that we must conduct in-depth research from various aspects if we want to carry out peer psychological guidance effectively. Through data review and interview survey, it is found that due to the limitations of various factors, the effect of peer psychological counseling has certain limitations, so it is necessary to further strengthen the work of peer psychological counseling, and constantly expand the coverage and specialization of peer psychological counseling. In addition, we should pay attention to the construction of peer psychological counseling team, in order to better serve college students to provide a solid and reliable talent guarantee.

2. Definition of peer counseling

At present, there are few researches on peer psychological counseling in colleges and universities in China. Through literature review, the author finds that there are several points of view worthy of reference in the aspect of peer psychological counseling for college students. The first is to define peer counseling as a new psychological counseling model with students as the center and group activities as the main form. The second is that peer psychological counseling refers to the class or grade as a unit, teachers guide, help students to solve various problems in study and life, and make them grow up; The third emphasizes that the purpose of peer counseling is not only to let students learn how to deal with interpersonal relationships, but more importantly to teach them to look at themselves correctly, so as to promote their physical and mental development. The fourth is the peer psychological counseling into the school mental health education system, is a form of school to promote college students mental health education. The author thinks that peer counseling is a kind of psychological counseling service model based on peer relationship. To be specific, it means that peers exchange experience, share experience and lessons, help each other, and can build a good sense of trust between each other, so that everyone can feel the care and love from others.

From the above definition, “peer psychological counseling” has the following characteristics : first, group members have a strong sense of autonomy, that is, members will take the initiative to participate in group activities ; Second, there is a close relationship between the members of the group, and they help each other, rather than dealing with difficulties in isolation ; Third, group members generally exist psychological problems, such as anxiety, but these psychological problems are not insurmountable, only timely discovery and channelization can fundamentally improve the psychological state of the individual.

In universities in our country, “peer psychological guidance” generally refers to a form of activity organized by the students spontaneously to help college students solve various problems in their study and life with the purpose of group activities or individual guidance to improve college students’ psychological quality and self-regulation ability. It can be used as an effective means of psychological counseling and a special way of social practice.

3. Advantages of peer educational psychological counseling

3.1 Expand the coverage of mental health education and promote self-education of college students

Under the traditional mode of education, mental health education is mainly carried out by counselors and psychological teachers with limited coverage. Peer mental health counseling expands the coverage of mental health education based on the friendship or peer relationship between mentors and mentees. Make use of the student peer network to combine more groups together, and at the same time give better play to the advantages of peer education mentors, and carry out different types of guidance groups, such as freshmen adaptation and growth group, time management group, emotional adjustment group, interpersonal skills improvement group, to improve the pertinency of psychological guidance.

3.2 Break time and space restrictions and improve operability

The traditional form of mental health education is restricted by time, space and other factors, so it needs all factors to form an effective joint force to achieve the ideal effect. Peer mental health education is less restricted, college students can interact in class, dormitory, community and other daily environment, make full use of students’ daily life, entertainment and learning space, through informal occasions to communicate and interact, it is easier to touch students’ inner world. In addition, psychological problems may involve the privacy of college students, which is easy to cause the psychological closure of college students, unwilling to reveal their true ideas, resulting in greatly reduced effectiveness of communication. The relationship between peer mental health mentors and mentees has natural advantages, which makes communication barriers between them better resolved and students’ psychological preparedness lower, which is convenient for peer psychological mentors to give reasonable suggestions according to students’ needs and improve the effectiveness of college students’ mental health education.

3.3 Improve the early warning system of psychological crisis to prevent students from dangerous events

Expand the team of mental health education and promote the work of mental health education. For a long time, mental health education mainly relies on college counselors and mental health teachers. Due to the limitations of roles and identities, it is difficult to know the situation of students at the first time.

Peer psychological mentors go deep into student groups, eat and live together with classmates, and can timely discover students’ psychological crisis in daily communication, take the initiative to report, improve the efficiency of psychological crisis investigation, and prevent psychological crisis emergency.

4. Analysis of the application status of peer psychological Counseling

4.1 Low cognition of peer psychological counseling

When carrying out mental health education, many schools regard peer counseling as a way of ideological and political education, ignoring the professionalism of psychological education. When most students encounter psychological problems, they do not know how to seek experienced partners to solve the problems. It can be seen that peer psychological counseling is not popular on campus, neither do I know the significance of peer psychological counseling, more do not know the way of peer psychological counseling.

4.2 The content of peer psychological counseling cannot meet the needs of college students

At present, most universities equip freshmen with senior mentees, which further deepens the peer education of college students. However, the peer guidance of mentee students focuses on freshman entrance education and academic guidance, and pays less attention to mental health education. Secondly, most colleges and universities position peer education mentees as counselors’ assistants. Mentees educate students under the arrangement of teachers and counselors, and cannot fully understand students’ needs, so it is difficult for them to go deep into students, so the tutoring effect will be greatly reduced.

4.3 Peer psychological counseling lacks perfect supporting measures

First of all, although some schools have implemented peer education activities, there is a lack of corresponding rules and regulations and standardized operation and evaluation mechanism, which makes it difficult to form a system of peer education and cannot guarantee the professionalism of psychological counseling. Secondly, peer psychological counseling has no fixed venue, most are temporary use of classrooms or other activity rooms mixed, psychological counseling lack of long-term coherence, easy to become superficial and form, unable to go deep into the heart of students ; Third, lack of financial support is also a major factor limiting peer counseling at present.

5. Peer psychological counseling to improve college students' mental health education strategies

5.1 Change the thinking of mental health education and improve the awareness of peer psychological counseling

To change the past single mode of mental health education, make full use of students' friends and peer resources advantage, and bring peer psychological counseling into the school psychological education work system. Establish a team of experienced full-time psychological counselors, improve the professional quality and guidance ability of psychological counselors, deepen the interaction with peer psychological counselors, establish a normal interaction mechanism, and improve the professional skills and level of peer psychological counselors.

5.2 Expand the forms of peer mental health education and optimize the content of peer psychological counseling

At present, college students' mental health education mainly takes classroom as the main position, supplemented by individual psychological counseling, the form of mental health education is relatively simple. Based on the necessity of college students' mental health education, colleges and universities should actively expand the ways to implement peer psychological counseling, make psychological counseling organically permeate into interpersonal communication and community activities, let psychological counseling naturally occur, and improve the affinity of peer psychological counseling.

When carrying out peer psychological counseling in colleges and universities, it should be set up according to the actual situation and characteristics of students in different grades. For freshmen, they just enter the university campus, facing the strange environment, mainly to help them adapt to as soon as possible ; Sophomores and juniors gradually mature mentally and can face some difficulties independently, so they can organize more diverse activities to improve their mental health level. For example, psychological lectures, group psychological counseling, mutual aid groups, etc., can also be combined with community activities and network platforms, improve the participation of students, and improve the effectiveness of psychological work education.

5.3 Improve the mechanism of peer psychological counseling and strengthen the guarantee of peer psychological counseling

Colleges and universities should establish and improve relevant rules and regulations, incentive systems and assessment and evaluation systems to ensure the orderly development of school mental health education, stimulate the work enthusiasm of psychological teachers, counselors and peer mentors, teachers and students together, improve the recognition of college students for peer mental health education, so as to improve the level of college students' mental health education. On the other hand, it is necessary to strengthen the communication between peer mentors and schools, timely understand the mental health status of college students and put forward corresponding solutions to existing problems, so as to promote the healthy growth of college students' physical and mental health. By holding regular training lectures, assigning supervisors, and inviting experts in psychology or other disciplines into the campus for on-site explanation, peer psychological mentors can constantly learn new theoretical knowledge, methods and skills, improve their theoretical level and practical ability, and become the assistant and good helper of mental health education in colleges and universities. Effectively promote the progress of college students' mental health education.

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