# Cinematherapy: An exploration of the application of integrated sound, light and dynamic image in college students' mental health education

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Abstract: In recent years, the mental health problem of college students has become increasingly prominent, which has aroused widespread concern. In addition to carrying out traditional psychological courses, counseling and lectures, colleges and universities are also actively exploring more ways of mental health education. Among them, the psychological center joint library, using its collection resources and the advantages of the library space, has gradually been favored by teachers and students of universities, especially film art colleges, to carry out cinematherapy and mental health education for college students. Based on this, this paper will analyze the mechanism and advantages of cinematherapy, and briefly describe the application strategies of cinematherapy in college students' mental health education, with a view to improving the quality and effect of college students' mental health education through cinematherapy.

**Key words:** cinematherapy, college students' mental health education; University library

## I. Introduction

At present, the pace of social development is accelerating, the employment situation is becoming increasingly severe, and many problems such as academic pressure, interpersonal pressure and employment pressure affect the mental health development of contemporary college students. Therefore, colleges and universities need to adopt effective strategies to carry out mental health education for college students. The mental health education in many colleges and universities is still dominated by the traditional infusing "preaching", which is easy to make students feel boring and disliked. As an innovative means of mental health education, cinematherapy creates "immersive" mental health education experience for students by integrating various elements such as sound and light, increasing students' emotional resonance and in-depth thinking, so as to help students understand and solve their own psychological problems, and promote their physical and mental health development.

# II. Overview of cinematherapy

1. Basic concepts of cinematherapy

cinematherapy, which originated in the 20th century, refers to the purpose of exploring, understanding and solving personal psychological problems through watching, thinking and discussing movies through the plots, characters and emotional expressions of movies. As early as the 1990s, American psychologists have applied cinematherapy to psychological treatment. In recent years, with the rapid development of social economy and internet technology, Chinese college educators have begun to apply cinematherapy to college students' mental health education. College libraries, in particular, have advantages in space, equipment, environment and database (film library) resources to carry out cinematherapy. The librarians can cooperate with the university psychological center to organize college students to watch and participate in the interaction of movies, and use movies as a medium to help them explore their inner problems, and promote individual psychological growth and change through discussion with the implementors of psychological education or other participating students. Cinematherapy can be used not only as a means of individual psychotherapy, but also in group therapy, psychoeducation, and the prevention of psychological problems.

2. Research status of cinematherapy

At present, the definition of cinematherapy at home and abroad has not been unified, but the concept of cinematherapy proposed by many experts and scholars in the industry has been recognized by related fields of psychological education. Among them, Solomon described cinematherapy as: treating film as a "prescription" to help people recover. According to Wolz, cinematherapy is a form of psychotherapy through educational viewing of movies, combined with psychotherapy theory, and integrated with psychotherapy training. Xu Lixia and Yang Fengchi also pointed out that cinematherapy is a kind of psychological treatment technique which uses movies that echo the viewer's subconscious mind, makes them find the cause of life, guides them to return to their place in watching, and finally points out solutions. Dai Lingfei has also introduced the method of college counselors using cinematherapy to carry out education work, and cited the example of using cinematherapy to college students through the movie "Children of Heaven". In general, cinematherapy has a broad application prospect in college students' mental health education. Relevant teachers can provide a new perspective and method for college students' mental health education through the research and practice of cinematherapy, so as to help college students improve their mental health problems.

#### III. Mechanism and advantages of cinematherapy

1. The mechanism of cinematherapy

As a new mental health education method, cinematherapy has a unique mechanism. Through watching movies, college students can have emotional resonance with the characters in the movies, and then trigger emotional experience and emotional release. Specifically, the mechanism of cinematherapy mainly includes three aspects. One is projection and identification. In the process of watching a movie, college students can connect with their real life experiences by paying attention to a certain plot, scene, role and other elements in the movie. Such emotional connection and resonance can stimulate individuals' thinking and exploration of their own emotional problems, and encourage them to actively participate in the self-adjustment and treatment of mental health. The second is social learning. College students can learn from the emotional coping styles of the characters in movies to change their attitudes and ideas about emotional problems. By imitating the emotional expression of the characters in the movies, college students can learn a reasonable way of emotional expression, so as to enhance their understanding and adjustment ability of their emotional problems. The third is metaphor. Since different college students have different viewing angles, the implementers of psychological education can show college students movies on the theme of campus life, and think about their own campus life by following the continuity of the movie during the viewing, so as to obtain a new perspective of their own campus life.

## 2. Advantages of cinematherapy

Compared with traditional means of mental health education, cinematherapy has many advantages. First, cinematherapy can provide an "immersive" emotional experience. By watching movies, students can deeply feel the plot of the movie and empathize with the movie characters, and this emotional resonance can stimulate students' emotions and help them understand and deal with their emotional problems. Secondly, cinematherapy can also promote interaction and communication among students. After watching the movie, students can share their personal opinions and feelings and discuss the plots and themes in the movie. Such interaction and exchange can enhance communication skills and sense of teamwork among students, and provide a social environment conducive to mental health education.

# IV. Application strategies of cinematherapy in college students' mental health education

## 1. Feasibility of cinematherapy in college education

As an innovative method of mental health education, cinematherapy has the feasibility to be promoted in college students. The introduction of cinematherapy in college education can effectively promote the growth and development of college students' mental health. As a kind of audio-visual language, film can arouse students' emotional resonance through rich plots, images and expressions. In college education, college students are faced with psychological problems such as academic pressure and interpersonal relationship. For example, some freshmen still stay in the mode of high school education because of their thinking mode and learning habits, and do not adapt to the more liberal mode of college education, and then feel pressure on professional learning and lifestyle change. Some students go to psychological centers or library reading rooms to seek help in mental health education or try self-help. At this time, the psychological center and library can accurately respond to the needs of students and organize regular movie-watching activities such as "Homeless to Harvard: The Liz Murray Story" and "Inside Out". By watching relevant movies, college students can find their own inner resonance in the plot, thus producing the effect of emotional catharsis. This kind of emotional catharsis can not only relieve the pressure of college students, but also promote the regulation and flow of emotions. In addition, in the movie plot, students can experience a variety of emotions, such as anger, joy, sadness and so on. Under the guidance of mental health education practitioners, students can learn the expression of emotions and the cognitive ability of emotions through the observation and analysis of movie plots. Therefore, cinematherapy has a high feasibility in college education.

#### 2. Research on the theory and practice of cinematherapy for college students

Psychological centers and libraries in colleges and universities, as practitioners of cinematherapy, should first select films suitable for contemporary college students, which is an important premise to improve the effectiveness of cinematherapy and an important support to help students actively cope with psychological problems. However, at present, there are relatively few works on cinematherapy in China, and psychological education personnel need to explore and practice continuously according to the existing theoretical basis, so as to promote the theoretical research and practical exploration of cinematherapy in the mental health education of college students. University library is one of the most intensive places for college students to gather in addition to classroom learning. Librarians can conduct in-depth investigation and analysis of contemporary college students' mental health problems through questionnaire survey and professional talk, so as to find suitable movie therapy models and specific methods for them. In addition, practical research is also essential. In addition to organizing mental health education theme viewing, the library can also guide students to carry out discussion and communication activities after viewing the movie. The implementer of psychological education can put forward open questions to guide students' thinking. For example, how do you understand the theme in the movie, the connection between the scenes or plots in the movie and your personal experience or emotions? And encourage students to actively share their own feelings and experiences of watching the movie, helping students to deeply understand the experience of self, others and life in the movie. Through practical research, the effectiveness of cinematherapy in college students' mental health education can be verified, and its specific implementation process and healing effect can be understood.

#### 3. Implementation points of cinematherapy

As a modern method of mental health education, cinematherapy has a wide application prospect in college students' mental health education. In order to better develop cinematherapy, three key points should be paid attention to. One is to choose the right movie. When advancing cinematherapy, select films that address a specific class of college students' mental health issues as educational materials. These films should have positive thematic characteristics that can arouse the resonance and thinking of college students. For example, movies

about how to explore self-identity and the meaning of existence, and movies about how to actively deal with stress and anxiety. Second, consider students' individual differences. Different students have different psychological states and needs, so when using cinematherapy to carry out college students' mental health education, the content and form of cinematherapy should be flexibly adjusted according to the individual differences of students. Individualized mental health education support can be provided through group discussion, self-reflection and other ways. Third, create a good movie-watching environment. In order to ensure the effectiveness of cinematherapy, it is necessary to create a safe and warm movie-watching environment. College students may involve some sensitive subjects and emotions when watching movies. Mental health education practitioners can encourage participants to express their thoughts and emotions openly and sincerely, and guide students to respect other people's feelings and protect their privacy.

4. The application effect of cinematherapy

With the in-depth development of cinematherapy in the psychological education of college students, it has achieved some remarkable results. First of all, cinematherapy can help college students understand and cope with their own psychological pressure. cinematherapy shows the inner struggle and growth process of the characters in the movie, so that students can have emotional resonance, find and understand their own emotions and pressure, so as to learn to effectively cope with pressure and improve psychological adaptability. Secondly, through watching and thinking about the plots and characters in the movies, under the guidance of the implementors of mental health education, students can reflect on their own values, development goals and personality habits. This kind of self-reflection can stimulate them to think and find ways to solve psychological problems, thus promoting the all-round development of students. In addition, cinematherapy can provide students with a safe and inclusive space where they can express their feelings. In the communication and sharing session of cinematherapy, students can release their feelings and emotions by discussing movie characters or plots, which can help them reduce psychological pressure and improve their mental state.

# V. Epilogue

To sum up, the application of cinematherapy to college students' mental health education is helpful to solve college students' mental health problems more effectively. By watching and discussing movies, college students can more intuitively recognize and understand psychological problems, and relieve pressure through emotional release. In combination with thinking about movies, they can develop their cognition of their own mental health status. Therefore, exploring the application of cinematherapy in college students' mental health education has important research and application value.

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