

Strategies for improving college teachers' mental health service

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Abstract: Under the current environment, college teachers are facing new challenges of work pressure, and their mental health can not be ignored. This paper focuses on the mental health status of college teachers and its influencing factors. In view of the problems existing in the current mental health service for college teachers, such as unclear concepts, unclear subjects, lack of social understanding, lack of systematic and professional services, this paper provides coping strategies for colleges and universities to carry out mental health services for teachers from the aspects of overall planning, interaction of subjects, security to position, organization and personal improvement.

Keywords: college teachers; Mental health services; Promotion strategy

1. The Mental Health of College Teachers Should Not Be Neglected

In the educational reform wave of building a double first-class university in China, university teachers are the main force and builders, undertaking the historical mission of talent training, scientific research, social services and cultural heritage. The psychological health of university teachers is related to the survival and development of teachers, and is the premise guarantee for teachers to devote themselves to work, play their talents, and achieve the educational mission. Paying close attention to the psychological health of college teachers and establishing a psychological counseling mechanism for teachers are the important basis for the development of college undertakings. With the deepening reform of colleges and universities and the continuous strengthening of management, higher social expectations for college teachers have increased the psychological pressure of college teachers, which makes the profession itself mean "high standards, strict requirements, and strong challenges", which poses severe challenges to the psychological pressure and physical and mental health of college teachers. At present, college teachers are faced with risk of physical health problems, which may lead to mental health problems such as tension, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, etc; At the same time, the teaching and management of colleges and universities need constant timely adjustment, which also brings new pressure and challenges to college teachers. Therefore, the current mental health of college teachers, a special group, needs to be concerned; How to improve teachers' mental health more effectively in colleges and universities is also worth exploring.

2. The current situation of college teachers' mental health

The survey found that ordinary people have had different levels of anxiety, depression and stress since 2020, and the level of stress is positively related to age and educational background, that is, the older (over 40 years old), the higher the level of education, the higher the pressure. College teachers are highly educated people, and because the work of colleges and universities requires high attention to relevant information, they are more likely to be affected by psychological stress. On the other hand, college teachers' mental subhealth is widespread. A cross-sectional historical study on the level of teachers' mental health in China shows that during the 18 years from 1994 to 2011, the level of teachers' mental health in China has declined year by year, and the common psychological problems of teachers include anxiety and compulsive symptoms. The survey on college teachers shows that the scores of young teachers in somatization, obsessive compulsive symptoms, depression, anxiety, fear, paranoia and psychotic factors are significantly higher than those of the domestic norm, especially in obsessive compulsion and depression; The level of teachers' mental health is negatively related to their sense of well-being, and poor mental health will reduce their sense of well-being. In addition, the survey on the mental health of university teachers abroad also shows that the mental health of university teachers is not optimistic. According to the survey data in Britain in 2015, the number of faculty and staff introduced to psychological counseling in British universities has increased by more than 300% in six years, and the number of people seeking psychological health counseling and occupational health services has increased sharply. It can be seen from this that the mental health of college teachers is poor, and there are problems such as high pressure and low sense of happiness. At present, college teachers have added new persistent health issues besides scientific research pressure, competitive pressure and realistic occupational pressure, and there are certain risks in their mental health.

From March to June 2021, the research team of the author released questionnaires on the Internet for college teachers in Beijing and Shanghai to learn about the current mental health of college teachers. The distribution targets include full-time college teachers, college counselors and party and government administrators. The titles range from junior to senior, and the proportion of double first-class colleges at the school level is 75.6%. The results show that the working pressure of college teachers is above average (the total score is 90, with an average of 53.12 ± 14.72). The results of correlation analysis showed that the scores of subjective well-being of college teachers were significantly negatively correlated with the scores of work stress and general health status, that is, the higher the work pressure, the lower the subjective well-being, and the worse the health status; However, college teachers' subjective well-being is positively correlated with their psychological resilience scores and perceived social support scores, indicating that the stronger their psychological resilience, the more

social support they feel, and the higher their subjective well-being.

According to the work stress questionnaire, 31.1% of the respondents said they were stressed and 8.9% said they were very stressed about the question “Do you always feel stressed in the past three weeks?”; With regard to the question “Did you have insomnia due to worrying too much about something in the past three weeks?”, 30.0% of the people said that they had or always did. According to the level of stress from high to low, the stressors are job security, workload, teaching security, work fun and interpersonal relationship. The survey shows that 38.9% of the people are under “great or very great” pressure due to the “unclear boundary between work and leisure time”; 36.7% of people have “too many things to do every day”, which brings about “great or very big” pressure; 34.45% of the people have “high or very high” pressure caused by “high work requirements”; 31.1% of the people are “afraid of getting sick” and the pressure is “big or very big”.

3. Problems in Psychological Health Service of College Teachers

Although the problem of teachers’ mental health has gradually attracted attention, domestic research focuses more on the problems of teachers’ mental health and coping interventions, but there is still a lack of research on how to promote teachers’ mental health and provide services conducive to teachers’ mental health in colleges and universities. Compared with many explorations and researches on college students’ mental health education, college teachers, as the main body of college education, have been largely ignored. Teachers’ mental health needs to be paid close attention to and improved urgently, so as to ensure the healthy and sustainable development of college education team. At present, there are five main problems in college teachers’ psychological service.

3.1 The concept of mental health service for college teachers is unclear. The work of higher education is the work of people, and it is the dual subject structure of students and teachers. At present, colleges and universities have gradually attached importance to the psychological health education of students, and put it under the framework of “establishing morality and cultivating people”. What is the function of teachers’ mental health service for universities? What is the relationship between teachers’ mental health and their responsibilities of teaching and educating people and the development of higher education? What role should colleges and universities play in promoting teachers’ mental health? There is no consensus on these issues.

3.2 The subject of mental health service for college teachers is unclear. Colleges and universities generally set up mental health centers with full-time psychological teachers, but their service targets are students at school, and few of them can cover teachers. Institutions related to teachers’ rights and interests, teachers’ development and ideological and political education in colleges and universities, such as the school trade union, teachers’ development center, faculty affairs office, etc., but the main body of teachers’ mental health service institutions is unclear, and teachers’ mental health service lacks protection of a professional team. Mental health problems need to be solved by professional psychological counseling and psychotherapy practitioners. At present, most college teachers that have psychological problems and need help, even do not know where to go.

3.3 The society lacks understanding of teachers’ mental health. College teachers are usually highly educated. They are expected to be people who “preach, teach, and solve problems”, and are “the most sunny career under the sun”. These glorious images of teachers’ roles make it difficult for people to face up to or accept the psychological problems that may exist in teachers themselves, even for teachers themselves, it is difficult for them to show their vulnerabilities, and they are more “secretive” about psychological problems, which virtually aggravates the shame of psychological diseases in the teacher industry, and increases the obstacles for teachers to obtain external mental health services.

3.4 The service is not systematic enough. The existing mental health services for teachers usually take the form of organizing psychological experts’ lectures, holding cultural and sports activities or team training. This form usually plays the role of publicizing and popularizing mental health knowledge or health care, lacking pertinence and continuity. Teachers themselves are busy, time is tight, and cognitive load is heavy. The popularity of knowledge has little attraction for them, resulting in low participation. And one-time sports or group building activities are also difficult to play a role in promoting full communication between teachers. Such a form of service is like “skimming the water” or “scratching the surface”, which cannot accurately help teachers cope with psychological problems. Over time, it is easy to become a mere formality after losing its appeal, which may become an additional task for teachers.

3.5 College teachers’ mental health service is not professional enough. In addition to the lack of professional staff and team security, the lack of professionalism of college teachers’ mental health services is also reflected in the protection of teachers’ personal privacy and the ethical problem of multiple roles of psychological service personnel. In reality, the psychological state of teachers is likely to involve their work units and personnel, and the person who provides psychological help is usually a member of the school. On the one hand, this will affect the trust and willingness of teachers who ask for help. On the other hand, there may be conflicts of interest and ethical dilemmas caused by multiple relationships.

4. Strategies for improving college teachers’ mental health service

The psychological quality and physical and mental health of college teachers are not only teachers’ personal problems, but also affect the quality and effect of education. The words and deeds of teachers are imperceptibly affecting students. A teacher need to maintain a

psychological state of self-respect, self-confidence, rational peace, and positive. Only through the teacher's demonstration and example can students deeply understand and effectively establish a self-esteem, self-confidence, rational peace, and positive attitude. Just imagine that if college teachers themselves can't deal with "justice and benefit, unity and self, success and failure, gain and loss" well, and are in psychological imbalance under multiple pressures for a long time, it is impossible to guide students to correctly understand "justice and benefit, unity and self, success and failure, gain and loss". Therefore, the mental health service of college teachers is not only the care for teachers, but also a strong guarantee for the cause of higher education. It is an important foundation for colleges and universities to establish morality and cultivate people. In the current environment, more attention should be paid to the mental health service of teachers. Specifically, the mental health service of college teachers can be improved from the following five aspects.

4.1 Overall planning of the school. Colleges and universities should attach importance to the psychological health service for teachers, bring it into the overall career development level of the school, and form a consensus of ideas. The research found that the help and support of school leaders is a very important factor in teachers' social support system. The support and care of school administrators, especially school leaders, can effectively reduce teachers' psychological pressure and reduce the occurrence of psychological problems. For example, the establishment of a "teachers' psychological care committee" at the school level and regular meetings and discussions as an important part of the school's career can promote the implementation of various services to improve teachers' mental health literacy, which can make teachers feel their needs are concerned and valued, Effectively increase teachers' sense of social support and belonging, and enhance teachers' subjective well-being.

4.2 Main body collaboration. The trade union organization in colleges and universities is the bridge and link between the school and the teaching staff, and the organization to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of the teaching staff. The psychological health of teachers is an important factor in the quality of teachers' life, and is also an important part of the trade union's concern for teachers' healthy life. Therefore, as the leading department of the school's "Teachers' Psychological Care Committee", the trade union organization in colleges and universities can form a systematic joint effort to integrate various resources and provide organizational guarantee for teachers' mental health services by collaborate with the faculty affairs office, the teacher development center, the human resources department, the school hospital, the mental health education center, the publicity department, the sports education department and other departments.

4.3 Guarantee should be in place. The school can set up a "psychological care fund for teachers", which is included in the special budget of the school and used for special purposes. The school can use this special fund to purchase third-party services. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a mature third-party psychological service. At present, it is widely used for employee welfare in large enterprises around the world. Through professional assessment, consultation and training services, it helps employees improve their psychological and behavioral problems and improve their work performance. Third party services can improve the professionalism of services, effectively solve teachers' concerns about privacy disclosure, and reduce teachers' sense of shame about psychological problems and obstacles to seeking psychological help.

4.4 Organizational promotion. At the organizational level, we should carry out long-term and regular dynamic evaluation and monitoring of the psychological health of teachers and staff, understand the psychological problems of teachers and staff, focus on "prevention", master the rules of the psychological health of teachers and staff, and actively take measures to resolve risks. The survey results show that teachers' psychological pressure mainly comes from five factors: job security, workload, teaching security, work fun and interpersonal relationship. Schools can provide more intimate job security and teaching security for teachers and staff from the organizational and institutional levels, promote social support among teachers through teacher training and collective activities, improve the working environment, and respect their work autonomy, Stimulate teachers' intrinsic motivation and fun, and help them cope with pressure effectively. The school can also popularize the awareness and methods of psychological self-help among teachers and staff through popular science publicity, create a psychological atmosphere of understanding and acceptance, provide more platforms and channels for teachers and staff to express their demands and needs, encourage teachers to participate in psychological related continuing education and training, develop annual group psychological guidance plans according to teachers' needs, and provide teachers with diversified personalized service menus, Improve teachers' psychological quality and resilience.

4.5 Personal promotion. Everyone is responsible for their own mental health. The results also show that college teachers' psychological resilience and understanding of social support have a positive role in promoting mental health. College teachers should pay attention to improving their psychological resilience, cultivating their amateur interests, cultivating their sentiment, creating a positive working atmosphere, adjusting their expectations, establishing appropriate channels to relieve pressure, and strengthening physical exercise to enrich their personal lives. At the same time, college teachers should also pay attention to the establishment of good family relations and social support, spend time managing family and friend relationships, and actively seek the help of family and friends when encountering problems that are difficult to solve; Put aside the bad feelings about psychological problems, take the initiative to ask for help when necessary, seek professional psychological resources, and obtain spiritual growth.

The mental health service for college teachers is a long-term systematic project, an important guarantee of human capital in colleges and universities, and a driving force system for the sustainable development of college education. The school needs to pay full attention to it, cooperate with various departments in an all-round way, make full use of social professional resources, form a mechanism of "all staff, all

directions and all processes”, follow the scientific and professional methods, actively innovate the service content and form, and truly and effectively improve teachers’ sense of happiness and mental health.

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