

Practical Research on the Cultivation of Junior High School Students' Positive Psychological Qualities through Group Psychological Counseling

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ABSTRACT

With the development of society, junior high school students are facing increasing pressure, and mental health problems are becoming more prominent. As an effective form of psychological intervention, group psychological counseling can help students improve their positive psychological qualities. This paper deeply explores the impact of group psychological counseling on the positive psychological qualities of junior high school students and reveals its crucial role in the mental health education system for junior high school students.

KEYWORDS

Group Psychological Counseling; Junior High School Students; Positive Psychological Qualities; Mental Health Education; Empirical Research

In today's society, junior high school students are in a critical period of physical and mental development. They not only face academic pressure but also encounter challenges in peer relationships, family relationships, and other aspects. The cultivation of positive psychological qualities is of great significance for their growth. As a form of psychological counseling involving collective participation, group psychological counseling can provide students with a platform for mutual support and learning, promoting their psychological growth. This study will systematically explore the role of group psychological counseling in promoting the positive psychological qualities of junior high school students.

1 The Concept, Types, and Connotations of Group Psychological Counseling

1.1 The Concept of Psychological Counseling

Psychological counseling is a process in which professionally trained psychological counselors, using professional psychological knowledge, methods, and techniques, provide psychological assistance to individuals or groups. Its purpose is to help those seeking help resolve psychological troubles, optimize their psychological qualities, enhance their psychological adjustment abilities, and promote the sound development of their personalities(Ge, L. 2023). Compared with one-on-one individual counseling, group psychological counseling focuses more on the application of group dynamics. In a group environment, the interactions among members are like multiple mirrors reflecting each other. Through sharing experiences, exchanging feelings, and providing support, individuals can have a clearer understanding of themselves, broaden their cognitive horizons, learn to view problems from different perspectives, and thus more effectively improve their psychological adjustment abilities and achieve psychological growth.

1.2 The Types of Group Psychological Counseling

Group psychological counseling has various forms, and common types include thematic counseling, supportive counseling, and skill training. Thematic counseling centers around specific psychological themes, such as emotion management, interpersonal communication, and self-awareness(Li, J. X. 2024). Through systematic curriculum design and activity arrangements, it guides members to deeply explore relevant themes and acquire knowledge and experience. Supportive counseling mainly provides emotional support and understanding for members facing similar difficulties or pressures, creating a safe and inclusive atmosphere where members can feel accepted and cared for, thereby relieving psychological pressure and enhancing psychological resilience.

Skill training group counseling aims to help members master practical psychological skills, such as relaxation techniques, communication skills, and problem-solving skills. Through repeated practice and practical application, members can skillfully apply these skills to their daily lives. According to the characteristics of physical and mental development and actual needs of junior high school students, it is necessary to accurately select appropriate counseling types. For example, junior high school students are in a stage of rapid development of self-awareness and are full of confusion about self-cognition. At this time, carrying out thematic self-cognition counseling can greatly stimulate their enthusiasm for participation and improve the counseling effect.

1.3 The Connotations of Positive Psychological Qualities

Positive psychological qualities encompass multiple dimensions and include core elements such as optimism, resilience, social skills, and self-efficacy. The psychological quality of optimism enables students to view the ups and downs in life with a positive attitude, regarding setbacks as opportunities for growth and always harboring beautiful expectations for the future. Resilience endows students with an indomitable spirit in the face of difficulties and pressures, allowing them to persevere in pursuing their goals and not being easily defeated by setbacks. Good social skills help students establish harmonious relationships in interpersonal communication, enabling them to learn to understand and respect others, effectively express their thoughts and emotions, and thus enhance their social adaptability. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's subjective judgment of their ability to successfully complete a certain behavior. Students with high self-efficacy are more confident in their studies and daily lives, daring to take on new tasks and actively exploring uncharted territories. These positive psychological qualities are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, collectively exerting an influence on students' academic performance, mental health, as well as their future career development and social adaptability.

2 The Implementation Process of Group Psychological Counseling

2.1 The Preparation Stage

"Everything succeeds with careful planning, and fails without it." Before carrying out group psychological counseling, sufficient and meticulous preparation work is the cornerstone to ensure the success of the counseling. First of all, clarifying the counseling objectives is a crucial first step. The objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART principle). Next, carefully select the participants. Students who have psychological counseling needs or hope to improve their positive psychological qualities can be screened out through various methods such as questionnaires, teacher recommendations, and student self-recommendations. At the same time, factors such as students' age, gender, personality characteristics, and psychological status should be fully considered to ensure that the group members have a certain degree of homogeneity and complementarity, so as to promote good group interaction. It is also essential to formulate a detailed activity plan. The activity content should be closely centered around the counseling objectives and cover various forms, such as ice-breaking games, group discussions, role-playing, and psychological tests. In addition, a comprehensive and in-depth preliminary assessment of the psychological status of junior high school students is required. Professional psychological assessment tools, such as the Adolescent Mental Health Scale and the Positive Psychological Qualities Questionnaire, can be used to understand students' psychological characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages, so as to "teach students in accordance with their aptitudes" and better meet their individual needs.

2.2 The Implementation Stage

The implementation stage is the core and soul of group psychological counseling. In this stage, experienced and amiable organizers shoulder the heavy responsibility of leading the group forward. The organizers should skillfully guide the participants to fully engage in various team activities. For example, in the counseling with the theme of "Interpersonal Communication," the game "Bombardment of Advantages" can be carried out, allowing members to discover and sincerely praise each other's advantages. Through this positive interaction, the affection and trust among members can be enhanced. In the group discussion session, topics close to students' lives, such as "How to Deal with Conflicts with Classmates," can be set to encourage members to share their experiences and coping strategies, and broaden their thinking about problem-solving in the collision of ideas. In role-playing activities such as "Campus Scene Simulation," students can play different roles respectively to experience the inner feelings of different roles, thus improving their empathy and communication skills. In a relaxed, pleasant, and vibrant atmosphere, students can freely communicate their joys, sorrows, sorrows, and happiness, deepen their understanding of themselves and others, gradually establish deep emotional connections in the interaction, and enhance the trust among them, just like sowing the seeds of positive psychological qualities in the soil of the soul, waiting for them to take root and germinate.

2.3 The Evaluation Stage

"Without evaluation, there is no improvement." After the group counseling is successfully completed, scientifically and comprehensively evaluating its effect is an indispensable and important link. Through the method of questionnaires, students' satisfaction evaluations of the counseling content, activity forms, organizational methods, etc., as well as their self-perceived changes in various dimensions of positive psychological qualities can be widely collected. For example,

design a questionnaire containing 50 questions, covering multiple aspects such as optimism, resilience, and social skills, and use the Likert scale for quantitative evaluation. At the same time, combined with one-on-one in-depth interviews, communicate face-to-face with students to deeply understand their inner experiences, growth insights, and behavioral changes in real life during the group counseling process. In addition, the observation feedback of teachers and parents on students' changes can also be collected to understand the changes of students after participating in group counseling from multiple dimensions and comprehensively. These changes are mainly reflected in the significant improvement of positive psychological qualities, such as an increase in optimistic emotions, an enhancement of resilience when facing difficulties, and a significant improvement in social skills, and more harmonious relationships with others in school and at home. These valuable data and feedback information will provide a solid basis for optimizing the group psychological counseling plan and improving the counseling quality in the future, helping the psychological counseling work to continuously reach a new level.

3 The Impact of Group Psychological Counseling on Positive Psychological Qualities

3.1 Enhancing Optimistic Emotions

Group psychological counseling can remarkably and effectively nourish students' optimistic emotions by creating a positive, warm, and inclusive group atmosphere. During the counseling process, students sit together and candidly share various experiences in their lives, whether it is the joy brought by success or the bitterness triggered by setbacks. When members talk about how they overcame difficulties, these personal stories are highly contagious and can stimulate the hope and courage deep within the hearts of other members, making them understand that difficulties are not insurmountable. With mutual encouragement and support, students gradually learn to view the unpleasant things in life from a positive perspective and regard setbacks as valuable opportunities for growth (Gong, Q. Y. 2021). For instance, in a discussion themed "Coping with Setbacks," a student shared his experience of how he adjusted his mindset, redrafted his study plan, and ultimately made progress after failing an exam. Other students were deeply touched and all expressed that they would also respond positively like him when encountering similar situations in the future. This kind of positive group interaction continuously reinforces students' optimistic emotions, enabling them to always maintain a sunny and positive attitude when facing various challenges in life.

3.2 Improving Interpersonal Relationships

Group counseling builds a bridge to good interpersonal relationships for students and is a natural practice field for interpersonal communication. Here, students come from different backgrounds and have their own unique personalities and experiences. In a variety of interactive activities, they have the opportunity to communicate and cooperate deeply with their peers. For example, in the "Teamwork Puzzle" game, students need to clarify their divisions of labor, cooperate with each other, and jointly complete the puzzle task. In this process, they learn to listen to others' opinions, respect different views, learn to coordinate their actions, and give full play to their respective advantages. Through such interactions time and time again, students gradually master the skills of interpersonal communication, such as how to take the initiative to greet others, how to effectively express their ideas, and how to understand others' feelings. As time goes by, students make like-minded friends in the group and establish deep friendships. This significant improvement in interpersonal relationships enables students to be more at ease in the school community, better integrate into class life, establish harmonious relationships with teachers and classmates, greatly improve their social skills and social adaptability, and lay a solid foundation for future social interactions.

3.3 Enhancing Self-Efficacy

In the wonderful journey of group psychological counseling, students are like embarking on an adventure of self-exploration and growth. By participating in a series of carefully designed activities and bravely accepting various challenges, students keep trying and groping in practice, and gradually discover the huge energy and potential hidden in themselves. For example, in the "Speech Challenge" activity, many students were nervous and uneasy at first because they were afraid of speaking in front of everyone, but with the encouragement of teachers and peers, they summoned up the courage to step onto the podium. When they successfully completed the speech and heard the warm applause from the audience, a sense of accomplishment welled up in their hearts. This kind of successful experience accumulates continuously, allowing students to have a new understanding of their own abilities and gradually believe that they have the ability to solve problems and complete tasks, thus greatly enhancing their self-efficacy. Research shows that the improvement of self-efficacy is significantly positively correlated with students' learning motivation. Students with high self-efficacy are more proactive and enthusiastic in their studies, dare to challenge difficult learning tasks, and can

persevere in their efforts when facing difficulties. At the same time, good self-efficacy also has a positive promoting effect on students' mental health level, making them more confident and calm in the face of various pressures and challenges in life.

4 Conclusion

As an effective method of psychological education, group psychological counseling is of great significance for the cultivation of junior high school students' positive psychological qualities. Through scientific implementation strategies and systematic evaluation feedback, the effect of counseling can be continuously improved. In the future, schools should strengthen their attention to group psychological counseling, regularly carry out relevant activities, protect students' mental health, and create a good environment for their growth.

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