

Preliminary Thoughts on the Construction of Mental Health Education System in Higher Vocational Colleges*

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Abstract—Mental health education is an important part of vocational education in colleges and universities. Higher vocational colleges have different mental health education systems from other institutions due to the characteristics of students and the nature of school. This paper proposes a preliminary concept of constructing a mental health education system in higher vocational colleges, with a view to providing reference for the corresponding mental health education reform.

Keywords—higher vocational colleges; mental health education system; suggestions and countermeasures

I. INTRODUCTION

With the influence of various factors such as enrollment expansion, employment and the pressure of entering higher school, the mental health level of college students has gradually declined. Among them, some general mental problems such as interpersonal communication problems and the pressures in academics, employment and examination, as well as anxiety and other neurotic mental disorders have become the major mental problems that college students seek for help [1]. The mental health problems of college students have received attention from all walks of life. However compared with undergraduates, the psychological characteristics of higher vocational students is different due to the unsatisfactory results of the college entrance examination, and the differences in the characteristics of the academic system, the direction of employment, and the duration of study at school. Some common mental problems among them are the common mental problems are mostly anti-stress ability, inferior mentality, and insufficient career planning and so on [2]. Therefore, there should also be some differences in the mental health education methods, characteristics and teaching contents between higher vocational students and undergraduates, so as to develop targeted mental health education that is more suitable for higher vocational students. With the country's emphasis on higher vocational education, the future mental health education for this special group of college students should be further strengthened. Based on the experiences in college

mental health practice, this paper puts forward the preliminary concept of constructing a higher vocational mental health education system in the future, in order to provide reference for the corresponding mental health education reform in higher vocational colleges.

II. ADJUSTING THE TEACHING CONTENT OF THE COURSE OF MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION THEORY TO THE EXTENT SUITABLE FOR HIGHER VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

At present, all colleges and universities in China set up mental health education courses for college students in the enrollment stage. The teaching contents include mental health overview, freshmen adaptation, interpersonal communication psychology, personality characteristics, self-awareness, academic stress and learning psychology, common mental problems, network mental problems, emotion regulation, and loving mentalities and so on. It is aimed to help college students understanding the meaning and performance of mental health, realizing the role of mental health in their study and life in colleges and further maintaining their mental health consciously. Compared with undergraduates, in addition to the said teaching contents, the content of mental health education for higher vocational students should also be targeted. For example, based on the low results of the college entrance examination and the future employment direction of higher vocational students, it is necessary to previously set up teaching content about vocational career planning in order to help higher vocational students reasonably making plan for their future development and study during their school years; based on the inferior mentality that higher vocational students may have, it is necessary to reasonably set up positive psychology teaching content in order to improve their self-evaluation, adjust self-awareness, and enhance self-confidence [3]; based on common mental problems such as their general ability to resist stress, it is possible to provide targeted teaching contents such as decompression techniques and pressure adjustments. By providing targeted mental health education content suitable for higher vocational students, it is available to improve students' attention to their mental health and their awareness to maintain mental health.

*Fund: 2018 Social Union Program of Cangzhou City (18194); Innovation Team Program of Gannan Medical University (TD201713)

III. THE THEORETICAL COURSE OF MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION FOR HIGHER VOCATIONAL STUDENTS SHOULD FOCUS ON GENERAL SCIENCE POPULARIZATION RATHER THAN PROFESSIONAL STUDY

At present, the teaching content of mental health education course for college students focuses too much on theory and the introduction of professional knowledge of psychology, so that it is hard to attract the learning interest of non-psychology majored students. In higher vocational colleges, this kind of teaching mode is more difficult to improve students' attention to the teaching content, and the curriculum is just provided in form. Therefore, higher vocational colleges should adjust the teaching objectives and teaching methods. In specific teaching process, students' participation should be strengthened in such ways as heuristic teaching, case teaching, and discussion-based teaching. If conditioned, higher vocational colleges may consider adopting such teaching methods as role-playing and debate. Through the personal involvement of higher vocational students, it is available to strengthen their understanding of mental health. At the same time, such teaching contents should consider the general education and science popularization education of general mental health knowledge such as depressive disorder, anxiety disorder and other abnormal psychological performance characteristics that are easy to misunderstand, as well as the general performance of mental health, the common mental problems in interpersonal communication, halo effects, primacy effects and other common psychological phenomena, and other teaching contents that can attract students' interest. Instead of, the teaching content should not introduce over much professional knowledge of psychology. It is also not suitable to conduct over theoretical teaching such as teaching the standard for diagnosis of anxiety disorders, and the concept of stress and so on.

IV. PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS IN SEMESTERS TO IMPROVE THE ABILITY OF VOCATIONAL COLLEGE STUDENTS TO DEAL WITH STAGED MENTAL PROBLEMS

As higher vocational students have short duration of study at school, the learning of theoretical courses should generally be completed in the first and second years of college, and the practical teaching should be completed in the third year of college. Compared with undergraduates, higher vocational students have close curriculum arrangements during school years, and they need to deal with the contradiction between theoretical teaching and practical teaching and various campus activities, which will inevitably lead to different mental problems at different stages. Currently, almost all colleges and universities offer the mental health education course for college students in the first semester after new students enter the school. Although this arrangement has certain significance for the freshmen to adapt to the new environment, it lacks the guiding significance for their career planning in the sophomore year and the employment pressure faced before graduation. Therefore, in view of the basic characteristics and learning styles of higher vocational students in school, the mental

health education course for college students can be split into different semesters in order to carry out targeted mental health education for students in the future. For example, after the entry of higher vocational students, it is necessary to provide teaching contents such as freshmen adaptation, self-awareness, mental health overview, vocational career planning and so on to help higher vocational students adapting to the living environment in college; in the second semester, the teaching contents provided can be some common mental problems such as loving mentalities and interpersonal communication psychology; in the third semester, the teaching contents provided can be such as academic pressure and employment pressure in order to help students adjusting their mental state; in the fourth semester, it is needed to further provide teaching contents such as vocational career planning and employment psychology to help students understanding the mental problems to be faced in employment and entering higher school in the future in advance, and making relevant planning; in the third year of college, mental pressures and adjustments related teaching contents can be provided to help students mastering the basic techniques and methods for adjusting their emotions. By providing different mental health education contents in different semesters, it is available to help higher vocational students better facing the mental pressures that may be appeared at different stages and maintaining their mental health.

V. CONSTRUCTING A COLLEGE-SCHOOL-CLASS MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION SYSTEM TO ATTACH IMPORTANCE TO DAILY MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION

The mental health education for college students cannot rely solely on mental health education course or the work of mental counseling center, but also requires the whole college to participate in mental health education. In the future, higher vocational colleges should further construct a mental health education system and improve the three-level (college-school-class) mental health education system. At the college level, it is necessary to set up mental counseling center, mental health education course, and organize campus mental activities and mental health knowledge publicity; at school level, it is necessary to set up mental health counselors to organize school-level psychology-related activities; at class level, it is necessary to set up psychological commissioner to regularly organize class-level mental quality expansion training, mental health themed class meeting; in addition, it is also available to popularize mental health knowledge via WeChat Official Account, college broadcast, Microblog and other approaches easy to be received by students. By constructing a sound campus mental health education system, in addition to being able to timely find suspected mental disorders and timely pay attention to possible mental problems, it is especially able to effectively carry out various mental health activities, mental health knowledge and science popularization in daily learning. By developing mental health education in daily teaching, it is possible to enhance students' awareness of maintaining mental health.

VI. ORGANIZING COUNSELORS' MENTAL HEALTH KNOWLEDGE TRAINING TO IMPROVE COUNSELORS' MENTAL COUNSELING WORK ABILITY

Currently, the ratio of students to teachers (by quantity) as required in China is 3000:1. Namely, one mental health teacher is required to provide individual mental counseling service those having mental problems among 3,000 college students, and carry out corresponding mental health knowledge publicity. However, it is obviously impossible to investigate the mental problems of 3,000 college students one by one. This requires that counselors who have more contact with college students in daily life can undertake certain mental health education work. Therefore, higher vocational colleges should arrange counselors to participate in corresponding mental health education training. The training content should focus on the identification of abnormal psychology and simple psychological counseling techniques, such as the performance of common mental disorders, supportive therapy, mental dredging therapy and other general mental counseling techniques, empathy and embodiment and other communication skills, as well as basic mental health knowledge such as interpersonal communication and personality traits. It is aimed to enable counselors to timely discover the students who may have abnormal psychology while dealing with student affairs, deal with some general mental problems such as interpersonal relationship problems and academic problems while communicating with students, guide the students who have serious mental problems that cannot be handled by the counselor to go to see the mental counseling center to timely seek for help, and timely send the students who have serious mental disorders to the hospital. At the same time, it is also possible to hold targeted and mental health knowledge themed class meetings to achieve the goal of maintaining the mental health of higher vocational students.

VII. EMPHASIZING ON CAMPUS MENTAL CULTURE POPULARIZATION TO REDUCE THE "NOTORIOUS FEELING" OF HIGHER VOCATIONAL STUDENTS ON MENTAL COUNSELING

Studies have shown that the current utilization rate of professional mental help agencies such as college mental counseling center in colleges and universities is low [4]. The main reason is that China lacks promotion and popularization on mental health knowledge for long term and the society prejudices against psychiatric disorders so that college students have such worry that they may be misunderstood as having psychiatric disorders if they go to mental counseling agency for help [5]. Therefore, in the future mental health education work, higher vocational colleges should pay attention to develop activities to reduce the "notorious feeling" of higher vocational students, such as providing on-campus mental counseling, temperament type and mental health and other on-the-spot mental state tests to improve students' recognition on mental counseling and concern for mental health, regularly organizing on-campus mental counseling sitcom competitions, psychological film exhibition, mental health themed essay writing activities and speech and other activities to popularize mental health knowledge such as mental counseling, mental health and

mental disorders, and organizing mental health themed class meetings and class activities. Through a series of on-campus activities for mental health knowledge publicity, it is available to improve students' attention and further help them realizing that seeking for psychological counseling help is not a "disgraceful", but an ordinary help-seeking behavior, reducing their "notorious feeling" and achieving the purpose of maintaining mental health.

VIII. ADJUSTING THE WORK PLAN TO SET "DEVELOPMENT" RATHER THAN "INTERVENTION" AS THE GOAL OF MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION

At present, the purpose of setting up a mental counseling center in colleges and universities is mostly to provide psychological counseling service to those college students who have mental problems or temporarily imbalanced mental state, so that students think that the purpose of mental health education is "intervention"; considering students' safety, partial academic cadres even also regard that the purpose of mental health education is to solve the mental problems of college students. This is not conducive to helping students truly establishing their concern for their mental health. Therefore, in the future mental health education process, the purpose of mental health education should be set as developmental counseling. Namely, in addition to intervention to mental problems, the focus of mental health education should be on vocational career planning, mental development, interpersonal communication skills, academic adaptation, and other mental health education for maintaining mental health state in the future and other positive aspects, rather than on correction of mental disorders and other aspects of mental intervention. Such setting is not only conducive to helping students having a correct understanding of mental health, but also helping to reduce students' "notorious feeling" on psychological counseling. It also has some enlightenment for students' academic planning and future development, and is more conducive to maintaining students' mental health from the perspective of long-term development and "helping people to help themselves".

IX. IMPROVING THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF MENTAL COUNSELING CENTERS TO REDUCE HIGHER VOCATIONAL STUDENTS' FEELING OF DISTRUSTING MENTAL COUNSELING

The principle of confidentiality is the basic criterion for psychological counseling. However in China, mental health education for students belongs to student work and is a part of the ideological and political education for students. Some mental help information may be reported to corresponding student in charge of student affairs by the mental counseling teacher. In this way, students may worry about whether the mental counseling content may be disclosed or not to some extent. If a counselor thinks that a student in the class may have mental problems, and recommend the student to go to a mental counseling center for mental counseling, it may cause the student's antipathy regardless of the purpose of the counselor. Then, even if the student is willing to go to the mental counseling center for mental counseling, the student

may worry about whether his/her mental counseling content may be disclosed to the counselor by the mental counseling teacher or not. Even students who are actively seeking help to a mental counseling center may worry about whether his/her mental counseling contents such as unwilling to learn, sensitivity in interpersonal relations may be disclosed to relevant student administrators or not. To some extent, this has hindered students' willing to go to counseling center to seek for help. Therefore in the future, higher vocational colleges should further improve the confidential system of its mental counseling center, and specify that general mental problems of students should be strictly kept secret except that such problems as having risks of suicide, hurting self and hurting others should be timely reported to the higher level of management. At the same time, by virtue of announcement and other means, it available to help higher vocational students understanding the basic professional ethics of mental counseling, reduce their concerns about information leakage, and improve their awareness of seeking for mental help and further maintaining their mental health.

X. CONCLUSION

To sum up, due to the particularity of students in higher vocational colleges, the mental health education system should be different from that of undergraduate colleges. Only by perfecting and constructing a mental health education model suitable for higher vocational students can it be more conducive to the development of mental health education in higher vocational colleges, maintaining the mental health of students, and further cultivating graduates with excellent academic achievements and physical and mental health.

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