

# Postmodern psychological consultation and therapy in ideological and political education in colleges

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**Abstract.** Postmodern psychology is a new orientation in the development of western psychology, which also has many coincident points with ideological and political education work in colleges. Starting from the connotation of postmodernism and postmodern psychology, this paper discusses the three paradigms of postmodern psychological consultation and therapy, and the basic viewpoints of postmodern psychological consultation and therapy. This paper analyzes the relationship between postmodern psychological consultation and therapy and ideological and political education in colleges and the significance of its application, the problems existing in the application of postmodern psychological consultation and therapy in ideological and political education in colleges. Finally, the author puts forward the concrete application path of postmodern psychological consultation and therapy in ideological and political education in colleges.

## 1. The overview of postmodern psychological consultation and therapy

### 1.1 The connotation of postmodernism and postmodern psychology

The word "postmodern" first appeared in German philosopher Rudolf Panwell's book *"The Cultural Crisis of Europe"*, which referred to "nihilism" at that time, and later used in literature, architecture, philosophy and other fields. Postmodernism can be understood in a broad sense and in a narrow sense. In a broad sense, postmodernism includes philosophy and other western postmodern cultural movements. In a narrow sense, postmodernism mainly refers to postmodern philosophy. Postmodernism is the sublation of the scientific view of traditional natural science and methodology, and doubts the legitimacy of knowledge, the objectivity of truth and the universality of theoretical principles.

Under the influence of the postmodernism ideological trend, a brand new thought appears in the discipline of psychology which is trapped in the paradigm dilemma, namely post-modernism psychology, which is the product of the spirit of the post-modernism era and also an important part of the post-modernism ideological trend. In 1988, Gergen's *"Towards Postmodernism"* special report on psychology marked the rise of postmodern psychology. The typical characteristic of postmodern psychology is to oppose foundationalism and essentialism, and hold that psychological phenomena are not a "spiritual reality", individuals do not exist a stable internal essence, and everything is just a social construction of culture, and social constructivism is the theoretical basis of postmodern psychology.

### 1.2 Three paradigms of postmodern psychological consultation and therapy

Under the influence of post-modern psychology, modern psychological consultation and therapy also begin to transform into post-modern. Postmodern psychological consultation and therapy not only refer to the difference in time concept, but also reflect the difference in therapy theory and paradigm. The modernist psychotherapeutic theorists Nemeyer and Reskin summarize the three main

paradigms of specific therapy of postmodern psychotherapeutic: constructivism therapy paradigm, social constructivism therapy paradigm and narrative therapy paradigm.

The paradigm of constructivism is based on Kelly's personal constructivism. She emphasizes the role of cognition in personality and the individual's interpretation and cognition of the world. She believes that everyone is a scientist who can constantly incorporate complex information from experience into personal construction, that is, people's interpretation and expectation of events, and everyone has his own unique personal construction. Constructivism therapy paradigm holds that psychologically healthy people must be those individuals with highly adaptable and flexible cognitive structures, who can flexibly use their cognitive structures to explain and anticipate events, and adjust their cognitive structures in time with the changes of environment and behaviors. On the contrary, if individual fails to adjust their cognitive structure according to the changes of the situation and maintains the previous structure so that it cannot adapt to the current situation, psychological diseases will occur. The purpose of psychotherapy is to assist patient in constructing new structures that can accurately anticipate future events and rebuild their lives.

Social constructivism is an important branch of constructivism, which emphasizes that knowledge is actively constructed by cognitive subjects, but focuses on analyzing the role of social culture in the construction process. Social constructivism is developed on Vygotsky's thought, so it is also called "Vygotsky's social constructivism". Social constructivism holds that the world is constructed by people subjectively, individuals and social culture are interrelated, and there is no completely independent individual psychology. Individuals in a specific historical and cultural background use various intermediary symbols to accumulate and enrich concrete or abstract life experience through interaction and consultation with other social members, thus forming concrete concepts and knowledge, and realizing "meaningful social construction". Emotional, personality, temperament and other psychological phenomena do not exist within individuals, but are the result of interaction and negotiation among social members and the product of social and cultural construction. Therefore, psychological consultation and therapists guided by social constructivism do not pay attention to digging out the real reasons behind the patients' psychology and behaviors, but focus on the discourse of constructive behaviors and explain the causes of the behaviors by analyzing the discourse.

Narrative therapy suggests that everyone is a good storyteller and that our lives are affected by the stories we tell ourselves and others. The story is not necessarily a reflection of our real experience, but constructs "real experience" and shapes our reality. Narrative therapy focuses on how people tell their stories and how they live up to their stories. People's life experience is a meaningful story, but the story we tell is not complete, and we often ignore those special activities or experiences, which are not understood and accepted by us. This is the theoretical premise for the therapists of narrative therapy to carry out their work. They are interested in stories that have been left out by their patients, leading them to become aware of and tell what is hidden, helping them find solutions to problems themselves, and reconstructing positive, meaningful alternative stories.

### **1.3 The basic viewpoints of postmodern psychological consultation and therapy**

**Epistemology.** The epistemology of postmodern psychological consultation and therapy has changed from subject-object dualism to social constructivism. Social constructivism holds that the so-called "spiritual reality" does not exist independently, and psychological phenomena such as feeling, perception, memory and will do not exist in individuals but in interpersonal interaction, which is the result of social construction. Therefore, if this view is applied to the field of psychological consultation and therapy, the so-called psychological problems do not really exist somewhere in the patient, but are merely the result of language construction, "narrative" rather than "reality".

**The concept of knowledge.** Social constructivism holds that knowledge is not the description and representation of the objective world, but the result of social and cultural construction. All knowledge is constructed and is the result of negotiation and dialogue between people under certain social, historical and cultural conditions. Knowledge does not correspond to facts in the objective world, and does not depend on what it refers to. The knowledge of psychological consultation and therapy is also the product of people's interaction and negotiation under specific historical and cultural conditions.

All knowledge of psychological consultation and therapy is subjective construction in a specific historical period, which is a kind of invention. A kind of consultation and therapy as long as it can achieve the effect of therapy and help patients to solve psychological problems, it is an effective theory and correct knowledge.

The concept of language. Social constructivism opposes modernism's view of language as a neutral tool to represent objective reality. In their opinion, it is not language that reflects reality but language that creates facts, and language itself is not given a definite meaning by reality. The same is true of psychological consultation and therapy. The description of the patient's psychological problems by the therapist cannot accurately reflect the real state of the patient's heart, because he explains his problems to the patient through language, but the language itself does not have a clear meaning. Language is constructed through interaction and negotiation, and its meaning is endowed by history and culture. Language does not mirror the real world accurately and objectively. On the contrary, it constructs the objective reality according to the social expectation.

The concept of self. Essentialism holds that there is an invariable self as essence behind the change of human behavior, and the self as essence is stable and objective, which does not change with external conditions. Postmodern psychology is opposed to this view, holding that the hypothesis about the self is not valid, the self is the result of people's construction in social interaction, things or phenomena are a social construction under specific historical and cultural conditions, and there is no so-called essential self behind it. Postmodern psychological consultation and therapy influenced by social constructivism, believe that the self is not a "spiritual reality" but a construction. For them, the self is a "narrative" process, a "story" that patients speak of.

The concept of doctor-patient. Postmodern psychological consultation and therapy emphasizes equal and cooperative doctor-patient relationship. In the post-modernist view, everything is a social construction, including knowledge, pathological psychology and so on. Since knowledge is only the result of construction, and therefore there is no distinction between true and false, the therapist should not assume that he has professional knowledge and therefore is superior to the patient. Therefore, the task of consultation and therapy is not to find and solve problems through the so-called professional knowledge and methods, but to carry out equal dialogue with patients, listen to patients' stories, and help patients reconstruct the meaning of life. In this process, the therapist does not guide and control the therapy as an expert or authority, but carries on the interaction and dialogue with the patient with the attitude of curiosity and exploration. Throughout the course of therapy, the counselor has a "know-nothing" attitude.

## **2. The relationship between postmodern psychological consultation and therapy and college ideological political education and the significance of its application**

### **2.1 The relationship between postmodern psychological consultation and therapy and college ideological political education**

The goals of postmodern psychological consultation and therapy and college ideological political education intersect. The ultimate goal of postmodern psychological consultation and therapy is the same as college ideological political education. The object of college ideological political education is the group of college students, and the educational activities also take the development of college students as the main line, which is ultimately to achieve the all-round development of human beings. Postmodern psychological consultation and therapy focuses on exploring the patients' inner potential, encouraging them to accumulate small changes and discover the meaning of life from a constructive perspective, so as to realize the improvement of self-help and personality. Postmodern psychological consultation and therapy can guide college students to think about problems and examine themselves with constructive thinking, motivate college students to make positive changes and build healthy psychology. Both uphold the "people-oriented" theory to promote the all-round development of people.

Postmodern psychological consultation and therapy intersect with the content of college ideological political education. College ideological political education is an important part of

ideological and political education as well as an important content of higher education. Ideological and political education has always been a common method and means to solve the ideological problems of college students when psychological consultation and therapy have not been used in colleges. From this point of view, college ideological and political education itself covers part of the content and function of psychological consultation and therapy, which is one of the effective ways to maintain the psychological health of college students. Postmodern psychological consultation and therapy utilizes professional psychological theories and techniques to guide the cooperation between the patient and the therapist and use the patient's internal and external resources to construct positive stories. Therefore, it can help college students better solve academic, love, interpersonal relationship and other problems, and promote the healthy growth of college students. Therefore, the contents of ideological and political education and postmodern psychological consultation and therapy overlap.

Postmodern psychological consultation and therapy are complementary to college ideological political education. On the one hand, postmodern psychological consultation and therapy complement each other with the perspective of college ideological political education. The essence of college ideological political education is the requirement of society on individuals, which aims to influence college students' ideological cognition and spiritual realm with mainstream social ideology and values. Postmodern psychological consultation and therapy starts from the patient's own problems, and attaches importance to stimulating the patient's inner strength and promoting the problem solving. From the perspective of college students, the "legitimacy basis" of post-modern psychological consultation and therapy is more of a personal dimension, aiming to encourage and help college students to use their own ability to solve problems in life, learning, thinking and other aspects, and to face life with a positive and optimistic psychology. On the other hand, postmodern psychological consultation and therapy complement the college ideological political education. College ideological political education can improve the ideological and moral level of college students and help them establish a correct world outlook, also the outlook on life and values. Postmodern psychological consultation and therapy can help college students to shape good psychological quality. Good psychological quality is the premise and foundation of carrying out college ideological political education. Healthy mental state makes it easier to form good moral character, and good moral character promotes the healthy development of psychology. They complement each other.

## **2.2 The significance of applying postmodern psychological consultation and therapy to college ideological political education**

### *2.2.1 It is helpful to innovate the idea of ideological and political education*

College students are generally young people aged 18 to 22. They are not mature in thinking and easily influenced by the outside world. They like to think and challenge new things themselves. At this stage, the young people have an unprecedented high sense of self-consciousness and independence, requiring parents and teachers to respect their subjective rights and individual needs. Traditional ideological and political education plays down students' personality and subject consciousness, which leads to the challenge of ideological and political education in the new era. Under the new situation, the college ideological political education needs to change the traditional educational concept and respect students' subjective consciousness and individual needs. Based on social constructivism, postmodern psychological consultation and therapy advocates that everything is only a construction under specific historical conditions. Therefore, the relationship between the therapist and the patient is equal, the therapist is an expert with professional knowledge, and the patient is an expert with his own problems. In this process, the therapist does not guide and control the therapy as an expert or authority, but carries on the interaction and dialogue with the patient with the attitude of curiosity and exploration. Throughout the course of therapy, the therapist maintains a "know-nothing" attitude. Postmodern psychological consultation and therapy emphasizes unconditional respect and acceptance of the patient, separating the problem from the individual, and guiding the patient to discover the problem and tell the story by himself. The therapist is more of a listener. Ideological and political education workers to apply the theory of postmodern psychological counselling and therapy

to the specific classroom teaching and practice, change traditional education idea, change the way the pedagogue leading education process, attaches great importance to the development needs of the students' individuality and the body needs, so as to effectively carry out the future of the ideological and political education work, truly "people-oriented" education philosophy.

#### *2.2.2 It is helpful to improve the method of ideological and political education*

Postmodern psychological consultation and therapy emphasizes listening and the use of language techniques. The therapist guides the patient to tell his own story in his own language. In this process, the therapist, as a listener, does not judge and evaluate the nature of the story, that is, right or wrong, but fully respects and accepts each patient. Based on each patient's specific problem, the therapist and patient work together to develop strategies and implement them. Throughout the process, therapists focus on stimulating the patient's own potential, helping them discover and tap internal resources, and motivating the patient to use his or her own abilities to solve problems independently. This enlightens the daily college ideological political education, on the one hand, to reform the method of "teaching", not only to pay attention to "listening", listen to students' ideas and needs, but also to cultivate students' enthusiasm, tap students' potential, and guide students to think and participate actively; On the other hand, we should emphasize "doing" and be good at guiding students to apply theoretical knowledge to practice. Postmodern psychological consultation and therapy's emphasis on social culture also guides the college ideological political education to carry out differentiated teaching, which cannot be required by one standard. Ideological and political education should take into full account the differences of students' cultural background, personality, cognition and so on, so as to carry out education and teaching pertinently.

#### *2.2.3 It is helpful to form a good ideological and moral quality in college*

Psychological consultation and therapy pay attention to people's emotions, motivation, will and other psychological problems, while ideological and political education solve people's beliefs, morals and other ideological problems. A person's different cognition, needs, motivation and so on will form different ideas. Only people with sound personality and healthy psychology can form good ideological and moral qualities. Therefore, healthy psychology is the foundation of good ideological and moral character. People who are mentally healthy are more likely to accept and understand the education of ideological and political educators and make correct behaviors. On the contrary, psychologically unbalanced people tend to have a rebellious attitude towards the guidance of educators, and they are unwilling to follow the education, which leads to some immoral behaviors. At present, college ideological political education are accustomed to attribute students' immoral behaviors to the lack of ideological and political education, but ignore the exploration of psychological reasons behind the behaviors. The goal of ideological and political education is to promote the all-round development of human beings, which requires contemporary college students not only to have good ideological and moral quality, scientific and cultural quality, but also to have healthy psychological quality.

#### *2.2.4 It is helpful to improve the effectiveness of ideological and political education*

The purpose of ideological and political education is to improve people's ideological and moral level, strengthen people's political belief, and finally realize the all-round development of people. Overemphasizing the social value of students and neglecting the importance of personal value; The indoctrination method diluting the main body needs and individual needs of students; The unified teaching standard ignores the differences of students, which leads to the unsatisfactory effect of ideological and political education. Postmodern psychological consultation and therapy attach importance to listening, equal communication, fully respect human subjectivity, make plans according to individual differences, and pay attention to encouraging individuals to use their potential to solve problems. Therefore, through learning from and mastering the knowledge and technology of post-modern psychological consultation and therapy, college ideological political education communicate and interact with students on an equal basis, listen to their real thoughts, and carry out vivid and interesting teaching and practical activities according to their needs. According to the individual differences of students, we can teach students in accordance with their aptitude, avoid the phenomenon of "one size fits all" and "one speech", and be good at guiding students to tap their own

potential and independently solve problems in study and life, so as to improve the effectiveness of ideological and political education.

#### *2.2.5 It is helpful to enhance the predictability of ideological and political education*

The predictability of ideological and political education means that in the process of carrying out ideological and political education activities, educators are expected and educated in advance of the possible ideological problems and behavioral tendencies of the educated. People's inner psychology is manifested through external behavior and dominates and regulates behavior to a certain extent. We can infer a person's mental activity by observing changes in behavior. Therefore, the combination of ideological and political education with psychological consultation and therapy can help ideological and political educators to use psychological knowledge to understand students' psychological conditions, grasp their ideological dynamics and tendency behaviors in time, and guide educators to take targeted educational measures, so as to guide students to develop in the right direction. To improve the predictability of ideological and political education, it is necessary to combine psychological consultation with therapy and ideological and political education, master students' psychological activities through means of consultation and therapy, foresee the possible thoughts and behaviors in time, and adopt effective solutions.

### **3. The application of postmodern psychological consultation and therapy in college ideological political education**

#### **3.1 The problems existing in the application of postmodern psychological consultation and therapy in college ideological political education**

##### *3.1.1 The regional development remains uneven*

Due to economic and cultural factors, colleges in different regions pay different attention to psychological consultation and therapy, which leads to imbalance in the application of psychological consultation and therapy in college ideological political education. Developed areas pay more attention to students' mental health and consultation than backward remote areas, and relatively more funds are invested in the construction of psychological consultation and therapy infrastructure and professional training. Liu rong and others also found that the development of psychological consultation institutions in colleges around the imbalance. Colleges with good economic strength not only have professional consultation and therapy equipment, personnel and places, but also have special expenses.

##### *3.1.2 The understanding of psychological consultation and therapy is wrong*

Psychological consultation and therapy is a concept and technology introduced from the west and has not been developed in China for a long time. Many people believe that only psychopaths need psychological therapy, and it is a disgrace to receive psychological consultation and therapy. Once seeking the help of a psychologist, it means that the person has serious psychological problems and is even treated as a mental patient. Due to the lack of publicity and popularization in some colleges, many students lack scientific understanding of psychological consultation and therapy, and there is a certain degree of cognitive deviation. They would rather not say anything than seek professional help when they encounter psychological problems. In fact, psychological problems are not the same as mental illness, they overlap but are not equal. The target of psychological consultation and therapy is not only limited to the mentally unhealthy people, but also includes those who have problems and need to seek help from the mentally healthy people.

##### *3.1.3 The number and professional level of psychological consultation and therapy teams in colleges are not enough*

In China, most of the psychological consultation and therapy work in colleges is held by part-time staff, such as college counselors, ideological and political education teachers, head teachers, etc. Part-time workers play a certain role in promoting students' mental health, but due to the limitation of their professional knowledge, they cannot solve some specific psychological problems well, so they still need professional knowledge. In foreign countries, the personnel engaged in psychological consultation work must have a master's or doctor's degree in psychology. The doctor's degree is the

introductory degree for the personnel engaged in mental health in the United States. In addition to the requirements of the degree, the internship experience is also required. By contrast, there are no strict requirements for the degree and clinical practice of the trainees. Only a small number of psychological consultation personnel in domestic colleges are from professional training, most of them have only received short-term, scattered training or no relevant training, and their professional level is not enough.

### **3.2 The concrete application of postmodern psychological consultation and therapy in college ideological political education**

#### *3.2.1 Application of short-term consultation in college ideological political education*

Focus solve short-term psychological counselling and treating abandoned the traditional pathology - medical narrative, based on the philosophy and methodology of social constructivism, to encourage the parties to ponder the significance of the construction, review the construction way to own life brought about by the negative influence, by changing the way meaning construction to achieve the purpose to solve the problem.

At present, college ideological political education mainly adopts the method of indoctrination. Under the influence of multi-culture and multi-ideology, the subjectivity and self-consciousness of contemporary college students are enhanced, so the traditional education of reasoning and passive reception cannot meet their needs. Focus solution short-term consultation regards the patient as an expert of their own problems, believing that the patient has inherent potential to solve problems, and encourages the patient to participate in the consultation process as the subject. This is in line with the need of enhancing the autonomy of college students. Using it to carry out college ideological political education can enhance the subjectivity of college students, so as to better achieve the goal of ideological and political education. In the traditional ideological and political education work in colleges, the teacher is the leader and guides the students with the attitude of expert authority, while the students are mostly passive recipients, and the students' enthusiasm and participation are not high. The focus solution short-term consultation advocates cooperation and interaction, which can inspire ideological and political educators to change the teaching mode of "one voice", encourage students to interact with teachers, stimulate their autonomy, and thus improve the level of ideological and political education.

The correct world outlook, outlook on life and values of college students need the guidance of ideological and political educators. Similarly, the correct solution of their psychological problems also requires effective and professional psychological consultation and therapy techniques. Most of the ideological and political education and psychological consultation work in colleges is undertaken by counselors, and most of them do not have professional psychological knowledge and skills. The application of short-term focused therapy in college ideological political education can improve the professional work of counselors. If the instructor can successfully use the focus of changing conversation, construction and other professional short-term therapy techniques to deeply analyze the psychological problems of college students in the process of ideological and political education, it will undoubtedly be beneficial to improve the effectiveness of ideological and political education. Short-term focused solutions focus on guiding the patient to seek out the outside-successful experience, let the patient see the positive side of the problem, by accumulating small changes and effective actions to bring about real and lasting big changes, which can improve the self-efficacy of college students, that is, to be sure that they can successfully complete a certain task. The enhancement of self-efficacy of college students is beneficial to improve the efficiency of ideological and political education.

#### *3.2.2 Application of narrative therapy in college ideological political education*

Narrative psychotherapy is the therapists by listening to the patients of the narrative story, through professional and effective method, to help patients memories are missing in life experience actively, making the problem objectively, and to guide patients to construct a meaningful life story, make positive changes to inspire patients to guide the process of it is the most representative in postmodern psychological consultation genre of therapy.

Narrative therapy believes that everyone is born to be a good storyteller. However, unpleasant experiences make the stories told by the patient be discontinuous, and they will miss out on some rich life experiences, which also makes the patient lose the meaning and direction of life and be troubled by problematic stories. By listening, therapists help patients recall and explore experiences they have overlooked and reconstruct meaningful stories. Some college students may fall into psychological difficulties due to family, personal and childhood trauma, and lose their sense of meaning and purpose in life. Traditional ideological and political education methods can not solve such problems, while narrative therapy is a good supplement. Ideological and political educators or college counselors can help students find the ignored positive stories and the hidden positive meanings behind the stories by listening to students' language narration and using techniques such as inquiry and explanation. Assist students to discover positive aspects of themselves, change negative thinking patterns and language, construct alternative stories, and establish the meaning and direction of life. This also reflects the college ideological political education "people-oriented" concept.

Distinguishing the problem from the individual is a feature of narrative therapy. People are not problems, the two are separate. Problems are socially constructed, and people are independent of them. In the process of carrying out ideological and political work in colleges, narrative therapy is used to see students without problems, and students seeking help are not seen as "patients", but as experts on their own problems, guiding them to discover their potential and realize better self-development. Narrative therapy attaches importance to the cultural background of the problem, which inspires ideological and political educators in colleges not to use unified standards to measure students, pay attention to the difference and uniqueness of students, respect each student's unique growth background and family environment, and view students from multiple and diverse perspectives.

Narrative therapy separates people from problems through techniques such as "objectifying dialogue", "seeking exceptions" and "constructing alternative stories", so as to restore the essence of people. It emphasizes equality of status between therapist and patient, mutual respect and trust. Focus on finding positive aspects of the patient's life experience to enhance their sense of identity. All of these are consistent with the idea and goal of college ideological political education, that is, the educator and the educated are the subjects of each other to cultivate healthy and positive qualified college students.

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