

## Psychological intervention of social work on street children

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**Abstract.** This article attempts to analyze the psychological situation of street children and the main problems in the rescue of street children. Puts forward the suggestions of social work on the psychological intervention of street children. To summarize the significance of social work on the psychological intervention of street children.

### 1. Introduction

In recent years, China is undergoing unprecedented rapid social transformation. With the transformation of its economic system and social structure, street children, a vulnerable group, have become a common presence. According to the preliminary estimate of the Civil Affairs Department, the number of street children in China has reached one million, mostly in first-tier cities, which hinders its social and economic development. It is helpful to promote social equity and accelerate the construction of a harmonious society to carry out rescue work for street children. Relevant departments have adopted various ways to rescue street children, and some civil organizations have begun to rescue street children. However, both the government and civil organizations have limitations in the rescue of street children. Moreover, these two kinds of assistance are bound by the mode of "vagrant-rescue-repatriation", while few people pay attention to whether the street children really return to their families and society. In 2006, the Ministry of Civil Affairs promulgated the "Basic Standards for Relief and Protection Institutions for Vagrant Minors" for street children. The document added psychological intervention for vagrants, but it still had little effect.

Social work sets up the working concept of people-oriented, and self-help, and adheres to professional guidance methods to interfere with the psychology of street children. This can not only supplement the deficiencies of the government and civil organizations in the aid, but also lay a solid foundation for maximizing the aid for street children and promoting social equity and stability. Social work should not only solve the physiological problems of street children, but also pay attention to their psychological problems. It should also be clear that the ultimate return of street children is to society rather than simply to repatriation or returning to school.

### 2. The psychological characteristics of street children

According to the EPQ Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (Children) and the Child Behavior Checklist Questionnaire (CBCL) surveys, street children have psychological characteristics such as inferiority, distrust, indifference, timidity and solitude. In case of stimulation, their mood greatly fluctuate, their hearts are fragile. Moreover, there are depressive emotional forces such as suspicion, dissatisfaction, pain and disgust, which are quite different from the performance of normal children. And there is a cognitive bias, their emotions tend to be negative. According to Mental Health Testing (MHT) and Group Intelligence Test for Children (GITC), the mental health level and intelligence level of street children are significantly lower than those of children in normal school environment. In the process of wandering, street children have formed some bad cognition, which leads to their bad behavior and results in their wandering.

In addition, most street children did not get good education and were cared for by their families and friends during their infancy and childhood growth. If the needs of love and belonging cannot be met, the individual will feel lonely, indifferent and alienated. However, when the street children are separated from their families and peer groups, they are extremely vulnerable to lack of the sense of belonging and emotional support. Therefore, the need for street children to get care is stronger than that of ordinary children.

### **3. Psychological intervention of social work on street children**

#### **3.1 Intervention target: from repatriation to return**

At present, the rescue for street children can only be positioned at the level of guaranteed assistance. In the "Detailed Rules for the Implementation of the Relief and Management Office for Vagrants and Beggars Who Have No Urban Life", minors who meet the requirements of street children are first contacted with their family members, the residence (village) committee, public security or civil affairs departments where the residence is located according to the information provided by the street children. And then the relatives are contacted and the local civil affairs departments are asked to pick them up. For those who cannot be returned, they are temporarily placed in relief stations or welfare homes to provide street children with basic living materials. However, even if they know their current detailed home address and simply send them home, the fundamental problem will not be solved and they will probably be homeless again. "Going home" and "Returning" are two different intervention targets. Returning home is only to send children back to their families, but there is still the possibility of wandering again. Returning is to discover the root cause of vagrancy and solve the problem. It not only allows street children to return to their families and schools, but also is recognized and accepted by the society, thus achieving psychosomatic return in a true sense. Therefore, the goal of return-oriented intervention should replace the goal of return-oriented intervention so that street children can truly return to the mainstream society.

#### **3.2 Intervention personnel: from non-professional to professional**

In the past, the government emphasized the maintenance of the city image. They believed that the fate of vagrants and beggars was mainly caused by their laziness and ignorance. They were a group of people who were not worthy of respect. Therefore, they regarded the help of street children as a kind of charity and lacked the love and respect they should have for street children. Social work advocates a kind of humanistic care, insisting on altruistic values as the main idea, solid scientific knowledge as the foundation, and then using scientific methods to help others. There are also many non-professional personnel who simply complete the tasks of government departments or higher authorities, carry out mandatory management on street children or simply let those street children who behave badly and do not listen to discipline, without putting love and emotion into social work. Even street children are independent individuals and should obtain the corresponding attention and respect. Street children themselves know the crux of their problems better than the staff. As a worker, they should play the role of a listener. Only faithful listening can open the closed heart of street children, which is conducive to the development of intervention work. Intervention for street children should be based on respect and should not be absolutely mandatory or allowed to drift. In the process of getting along with street children, the staff should maintain a positive and optimistic attitude to promote the positive emotions of street children. We should accept street children with an inclusive and sincere heart, follow the principle of equality, get along with them and maintain due respect for them. When street children confide their voices, they should adopt the principle of confidentiality and understand their experiences. In the face of street children who are unwilling to receive help, the staff must not enforce the aid. Humanism believes that only with the support of the recipients is the best, and the implementation of aid on the basis of voluntary street children can achieve twice the result with half the effort.

Our country mainly carries on the cultural lesson teaching to the street children, inculcates the Chinese traditional moral thought as well as some most basic life skills training, but these above

methods take temporary solution but do not effect a permanent cure. Some street children were abandoned or even abused by their relatives, some were imprisoned and abducted by traffickers, and some female street children were forced to engage in sex work. During their vagrancy, they suffered the most cruel physical and mental injuries, so that they distorted the normal outlook on life, values and world outlook. Traditional methods can no longer effectively solve the root causes of street children, which requires professional staff to tailor-made physical and mental recovery training for different street children. However, only by receiving professional and systematic education can social workers obtain professional qualification certificates. Only by possessing social work, psychology, law, education, sociology and other related knowledge, mastering the methods and skills of helping others, and having certain working procedures and standardization can they formulate individualized service programs for street children. Only more professional workers can fundamentally solve the deep psychological problems of street children and better achieve the goal of returning street children to the mainstream society.

### **3.3 The concept of intervention: from management to "helping others and self-help"**

In 2003, the "Detailed Rules for the Implementation of the Measures for the Administration of Relief for Vagrants and Beggars Living in Urban Areas Without Means" stipulated that relief stations generally do not save street children for more than 10 days. If there are special circumstances that require a delay in the relief time, they must report it to the higher civil affairs department in advance for the record. If relatives are found, they will be directly resettled. However, the majority of street children are vagrant because of their poor family environment. They have not corrected their family functions and have not solved their fundamental problem of vagrancy, thus leading to "repeated sending and returning". There are also street children who can not find a home, and long-term detention in relief agencies without integration with society may lead to some problems such as physical and mental health and social adaptation. Children are in a sensitive period to external things, especially physical contact and human-to-human interaction, which is an essential part of their physical and mental development, but these needs of children are often ignored by staff in a collective environment. Social workers should follow the value concept of "teaching people to fish, putting people first and helping others to help themselves" in their work for street children. Staff should teach street children how to adapt to society solve problems, so that they can realize their own value and potential, regard them as capable individuals, use professional knowledge to promote the development of each of them, encourage them to strive to realize themselves, restore and enhance their social functions, instead of simply managing the daily life of street children. Social work advocates helping people to help themselves is to provide help to those who need help, to make them voluntarily accept help instead of being forced passively, to regard the aided person and the aided person as a process of social interaction, and to deeply understand problems that the aided person encounters that cannot be solved. At the same time, tap the potential of the recipients themselves, and the two work together to help the recipients recover their social life ability, that is, to finally achieve the goal of helping themselves to solve their life problems.

## **4. Conclusion**

In the rescue work for street children, social workers should uphold the humanistic spirit of people-oriented and help others to help themselves instead of merely providing material help. It is committed to restoring the self-confidence of street children, exploring their own potential and helping them get on the right track of society, from "being helped" to "self-help".

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