

Application of group counseling of college students for their positive growth based on positive psychology

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Abstract. It is found through studies that group counseling with positive psychology plays a great role in promoting positive growth of college students, effectively relieving bad mood and psychological problems of college students, and boosting their optimistic emotion and satisfaction with life. This paper is divided into three parts: I. significance and application of positive psychology; II. Purpose and method of group counseling of college students for their positive growth; III. Application of positive psychology in group counseling of college students for their positive growth. Finally, this paper analyzes effects and functions of positive psychology on positive growth of college students to provide methods and thoughts for colleges to carry out group counseling of college students for their positive growth.

Positive psychology is a new emerging research field in American psychology circle and a new ideological trend of contemporary psychology used to study human strength with the help of perfect and effective experimental methods and measurement means^[1]. As positive psychology popularizes and develops in China, researchers gradually realize application of positive psychology in college psychological education can lay certain role in enhancing teaching effect and improving psychological quality of college students^[2]. Currently, the number of colleges and college students is on the rise, and psychological characteristics of college students also become increasingly complex. Various kinds of passive mentality and unhealthy thoughts are filled in the minds of college students. In the face of hard employment situation and international communication obstacle, many college students generate psychological imbalance and unhealthy emotions. College education mostly focuses on students' academic achievement, psychological problems and employment training, but neglects their personality and quality cultivation. There is still the lack of cognition and research of group counseling of college students for their positive growth with positive psychology. This study explores application of group counseling of college students for their positive growth under positive psychology from four aspects and provides theoretical support for practical activities of positive psychology and group psychological counseling.

1. Significance and function of positive psychology

1.1 Origin and development of positive psychology

Positive psychology is a subject to study human strength and virtues. Positive psychology group counseling is a form of psychological health education which combines basic principles of positive psychology and group counseling. American famous psychologist Seligman put forward the concept of positive psychology first. The mark is the book *Introduction to Positive Psychology* cooperated by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi in 1997. Since then, American psychology circle and even world psychology circle have carried out vigorous academic campaign with the main content of positive psychology. In the early 1990s, as the number of colleges and college students is on the rise, college psychology education gained rapid development. As psychological health education in colleges boosts, positive psychology comes into the view of college managers. Some psychological education workers gradually realize that there are various personality and quality problems among students. These problems can not be solved only through psychological health education and emotion counseling mode. Group psychological counseling mode based on positive psychology plays certain education role at spiritual level through psychological problem management, consultation and guidance in group situation. The practice proves that group psychological

counseling under positive psychology can effectively improve self-cognition, self-affirmation and self-evaluation ability of college students and plays a vital role for personality growth and psychological health management of college students.

1.2 Relation between positive psychology and traditional psychology

Positive psychology is a new psychological research field which develops on the basis of traditional psychology. The two have both differences and connections, and supplement each other. Compared with positive psychology, traditional mainstream psychology mainly studies all kinds of spiritual problems existing in human and human society, such as mental disease, personality problem, violence, eroticism, intemperance and crime, but it does not involve other functions which should be owned by psychology. So, it is also called passive psychology. Its implementation path also follows a passive and pessimistic thinking mode. Apart from damage, defect and harm, theoretical research emphases of positive psychology are explored from human excellent quality, positive strength as well as lofty character and morals. Thus, positive psychology deeply excavates human excellent quality, potential, strength and ability while counseling treatment, repairing, making up for damages and defects. Seeing from this level, positive psychology deeply excavates human inherent potential and innovation ability through scientific approaches and strategies so as to help people enhance faith and confidence as well as the sense of happiness while drawing the essence of passive psychology.

1.3 Research contents and direction of positive psychology

Research contents mainly contain three aspects: 1) positive subjective experience, including subjective sense of happiness, positive emotional experience, happiness, satisfaction and optimism etc.; 2) positive individual traits, including individuality strength, talent, interest and value etc.; 3) positive organizations, including school, family, commercial institution and society etc. ^[3]

1.3.1 Positive psychology mainly studies positive and subjective experience at spiritual and subjective level, including subjective sense of happiness, satisfaction, sense of achievement and superiority complex as well as hope, happiness and joy etc. Positive psychology also emphasizes human satisfaction for the things he has done or the past life, no regret for the past, clear cognition and grasp of existing happiness as well as optimistic and firm faith for the future.

1.3.2 Positive psychology studies human positive personality traits at individual level, including the ability to love others and work, the due courage for one thing, communication and exchange skills, the ability to feel the beauty of the environment, beauty of personality and beautify of heart as well as many nice emotions, such as perseverance, tolerance, window, creativity and insight, and seeks approaches and strategies to make an individuality own positive personality traits.

1.3.3 Positive psychology studies positive organization and system traits at group level, including establishing harmonious, happy and healthy family ties, establishing a favorable community atmosphere, a school with solidarity and cooperation and media with a feeling for justice and sense of responsibility. Through positive organizations and systems, citizens' virtues and public morality are cultivated so that all citizens can become civilized, polite, positive and upward professional ethics with the sense of responsibility and altruism.

2 Purpose and methods for group counseling of college students for their positive growth

2.1 Concept and significance of positive growth

Positive growth aims to help college students pursue spiritual motivation of self-value, self-affirmation and positive evaluation under the guidance of positive psychology theory so as to develop their positive potential, improve their sense of happiness, optimistic index, self-determination ability, goal setting and execution ability as well as the sense of achievement. The sense of happiness and optimistic index are the satisfaction of college students for their living environment, self-value and life pursuit as well as positive and upward attitude towards life. Self-determination ability refers to the ability to independently set the objective and complete the objective based on fully knowing oneself. Those with strong self-determination ability can pursue objectives more independently, freely and firmly. Goal setting and execution ability refers to the ability to set the study and work goals with positive mentality through cognizing and mastering

oneself and environment, give full play to potential and achieve the goal through self-affirmation and self-motivation. Goal setting theory holds that a goal is the purpose one tries to complete and also is the most direct motivation of behaviors. A proper goal set will make one generate achievement needs to achieve this goal, so it has strong incentive function. Valuing and setting proper goals is an important process of arousing the motivation.^[5] When college students achieve the goals they set, if they are full of faith, courage, perseverance and determination, harbor huge hope for the future and keep positive and optimistic mentality, this show they have high sense of achievement. Self-determination ability and self-execution ability can improve through group counseling and group training.

2.2 Group counseling demand and function

2.2.1 Concept of group counseling

Group counseling is a professional job in which group leaders which have received professional training assist group members in gaining relevant information through professional skills and methods so as to establish correct cognitive concept, healthy attitude and behaviors.^[6] Group counseling is a form of psychological guidance carried out under group participation environment. Group counseling has the following features:

2.2.2 Methods of group counseling

Group counseling mainly contains individual psychological counseling, psychological picture, psychological sand table and psychological lecture. Different from individual psychological counseling, group psychological counseling is mainly carried out through teamwork. Group psychological counseling has many forms. Group members form psychological, emotional and spiritual interaction process through mutual communication, influences and effects as well as mutual acquaintance, communication and interaction so as to reach the purpose of self-affirmation and self-expectation. Group members can change their images through changes in language, behavior and thought, and learn new behavioral patterns to improve interpersonal communication relationship and solve various problems in life, study and work.

2.2.3 Functions of group psychological counseling

Positive group counseling can enhance the sense of worth and sense of identity and make members' mentality continuously develop, grow rapidly, improve and adapt in group counseling process. But, passive or wrong group counseling or improper psychological guidance will damage members' heart, spirit, enthusiasm and self-confidence, deepen their inferiority feeling and destroy professional reputation of group counseling.

Professional group psychological counseling tutors should continuously improve industrial and professional knowledge, strengthen communication and exchange skills of group counseling, positively and effectively organize and implement group activities, promote members' self-maturity and self-development and make them face up to all sorts of difficulties in life.

3 Application of positive psychology in group counseling

He Jin^[7] et al. show through experiments that group counseling based on positive psychology can effectively improve psychological health status of impoverished college students, boost their self-esteem and subjective sense of happiness and reduce their depression and anxiety level. The researches of Ye Hongping^[8] et al. indicate that positive psychology combined with group counseling can improve subjective sense of happiness of freshmen in higher vocational colleges. Lu Wei^[9] et al. apply positive psychology group counseling in comprehensive class management in allusion to general psychological characteristics of students in higher vocational colleges, which effectively overcomes the mode of traditional class management which pays attention to grades and disciplines, better gives play to teamwork strength, motivates individual internal vigor and virtue and finally promotes harmonious and healthy development of class and individuals. Yang Yun^[10] et al. adopt Campbell happiness index scale to measure the sense of happiness of students in higher vocational colleges and draw such conclusion that: psychological health education mode combining positive psychology with group psychological counseling is feasible in practice and can gain good effects for different groups and forms.

4 Conclusions

Positive psychology is a burgeoning psychological counseling field. Through comparing group psychological counseling and positive psychology, it is found that they are correlated and promote each other. They not only have common points, but also extend psychology. College students are in the initial phase of life and work, and their spiritual traits, psychological characteristics and behavioral norms have various problems to different degrees. Group psychological counseling based on positive psychology can effectively boost psychologically expected value of college students, improve their cognition and mastery of all kinds of difficulties and setbacks in life, and make them break away from ideological trammels, grow positively, better blend in future development and construction and become mature, confident, strong, optimistic, tolerant and responsible college students.

In conclusion, group counseling based on positive psychology plays a vital role in enhancing optimistic quality of college students and improve their ability to confront setbacks. Psychological counseling under positive psychology is not just limited to treating people's psychological illness and mental disease, but also will be applied in a wider range so as to make people recognize themselves better and become most excellent.

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