

# Literary Reading Intervention Strategies for Adolescents with Depression

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**Abstract:** Teenagers are in the special stage of physical and mental development, and their psychological problems show complex and diverse characteristics. Depression is the most common mental disorder among teenagers. Literary reading has a certain intervention effect on depression and can be used as an important strategy for psychological intervention. Reading literature works can help teenagers understand and discover themselves from different angles, and then realize the self-recognition and intervention of depression. This paper mainly discusses the causes of depression in teenagers and the intervention principles and strategies of literary reading on depression, aiming to alleviate and eliminate the depressive symptoms of teenagers through literary reading and promote their physical and mental health development.

**Keywords:** Depression; Literary reading; Intervention strategy

**Online publication:** July 31, 2024

## 1. Introduction

Depression is a common mental disorder, with obvious and lasting low mood as the main symptoms. Clinically, it can be seen that the low mood is not commensurate with its situation. Patients' emotional depression can progress from sadness to feelings of grief, inferiority, pessimism, rigidity, and even lead to suicide attempts or behaviors. Depression is more common in women, and the age of onset is earlier. Teenagers have a high incidence of depression and are at a high risk of depression. How to alleviate and eliminate adolescent depression has become one of the urgent practical problems to be solved. In terms of treatment, drug therapy is often the first-line option. When drug therapy proves ineffective, non-drug therapy can be selected as a complementary treatment option. The main non-drug treatment means include physical therapy, psychotherapy, traditional Chinese medicine treatment, functional neurosurgery treatment, etc. <sup>[1]</sup>. In recent years, studies have found that reading literary works can be used as a positive intervention to help students relieve depressive symptoms. As a typical psychotherapy, reading therapy has been shown to be an effective way to alleviate the risk of depression in depressed patients <sup>[2]</sup>. This paper mainly discusses the causes of depression in teenagers and the intervention principles and strategies of literary reading on depression, aiming to alleviate and eliminate the depressive symptoms of teenagers through literary reading and promote their physical and mental health development.

## **2. Cause analysis of depression in adolescents**

The occurrence of depression is influenced by multiple factors. During adolescence, increasing pressure from society, family, school, and other aspects is a significant factor contributing to adolescent depression. The social environment changes have had a certain impact on the growth of teenagers, especially in recent years, the frequent major public events, such as COVID-19, have brought a considerable impact on the psychological situation of teenagers and caused their anxiety and depression. In addition, negative social phenomena such as school bullying can also trigger adolescent depression. Family factors are important factors affecting the psychological development and cognitive structure formation of adolescents. Parents are the most vital teachers and role models for their children. Parents' educational philosophy, lifestyle, social style, and so on will have a subtle influence on their children. Such as a bad relationship between parents and the lack of good communication or companionship may induce depression in children. As an indispensable part of the growth process of adolescents, its educational concepts and educational methods will directly affect the cognitive structure and psychological state of adolescents. In some schools, teachers adopt the "full classroom" teaching method where students passively receive knowledge, which may not be conducive to their healthy growth; in order to increase the graduation rate, some schools pay excessive attention to students' performance, but ignore the attention and guidance to students' mental health. In addition, some schools and teachers' disrespect, incomprehension, and even discrimination against students may also induce depressive symptoms in teenagers. In the process of growing up, teenagers will gradually form self-consciousness such as independence, autonomy, and self-discipline. However, with increasing self-awareness, there will also be some contradictions and conflicts, which lead to teenagers developing anxiety, confusion, and other negative emotions.

## **3. Principle of intervention of literary reading on depression**

Reading therapy can help patients establish correct disease cognition and confidence in overcoming disease through intervention means such as books, newspapers, and periodicals, effectively relieving patients' negative emotions and improving treatment effects <sup>[3]</sup>. Literary works are created by writers based on their cognition, feeling, and experience of social life. They have certain value orientations and ideological tendencies at the aesthetic level, and can also have a psychological impact on readers. The intervention of depression is mainly achieved through the following aspects.

### **3.1. Emotional resonance and stress release**

Teenagers are in the stage of physical growth and development and psychological development. In real life, due to the inability to receive a good family education or school education, coupled with the existence of a network environment and other factors, teenagers face all kinds of pressure. Moreover, it is difficult to relieve internal pressure, so in this stage, there will be depression, pessimism, and other problems. Literature often contains rich emotional elements. When readers resonate with the characters or plots of literature, they can temporarily forget their troubles and immerse themselves in a different emotional world. This experience allows teenagers to fully experience the positive energy and emotions embedded in literature, which can help alleviate depression through self-regulation.

### **3.2. Psychological distance and self-reflection**

When reading literary works, there is a certain psychological distance between the reader and the works, which can make the reader look at themselves more objectively. In the process of reading literature, teenagers can understand the issues present in their own hearts and gain insights into the formation process of their own

personalities through the analysis of characters in literary works. In reading, teenagers can communicate and interact with the author. They can imagine themselves as a character or role in the work, and gradually know, understand, and accept themselves in the process of reading, so as to enrich their cognition of the value of life and the meaning of life. By observing and thinking about the characters and plots in the work, readers can reflect on their own behavior and ways of thinking, so as to find new ways to alleviate depression.

### **3.3. Knowledge acquisition and spiritual support**

Literary works are the carrier of knowledge. Through reading literary works, readers can acquire knowledge about human nature, society, nature, and other aspects. This knowledge can expand readers' cognitive vision, help readers look at problems from a broader perspective, and reduce depression. Teenagers are a special group who are in an important stage in their lives, where their self-awareness evolves from sensitivity to rationality, from ambiguity to clarity, and from childishness to maturity. During this period, literary works are the main carriers that can meet teenagers' own spiritual needs. Literary works can not only show the author's cognition and perception of social life but also show the author's thinking on his own life and the problems in social life. At the same time, literary works are also a kind of aesthetic art, which has distinct aesthetic characteristics and aesthetic value orientation. Therefore, when reading literary works, teenagers can not only obtain rich emotional experience and aesthetic enjoyment but also obtain certain life perceptions and spiritual strength.

### **3.4. Emotional regulation and mentality cultivation**

In the process of reading, teenagers' reading attention can be focused on the work itself, so as to better understand the meaning and connotation of the work. The content of literary works has certain uncertainties. In the process of reading, teenagers can interpret the text content from different angles, so as to constantly enrich their reading experience and improve their emotional regulation ability. For patients with depression, due to the influence of social factors and family factors, they will have vague cognition of their own life value and low self-evaluation. Positive elements in literature (such as optimism, courage, persistence, etc.) can have a positive impact on the reader's mentality. By reading these works, readers can gradually develop a positive attitude and enhance their ability to deal with negative emotions such as depression.

## **4. Intervention strategies of literary reading on depression**

Literature reading can effectively help teenagers to relieve and eliminate depression, and promote their mental health and development. At present, the intervention research of literature reading is carried out for teenagers, which mainly includes two intervention strategies: one is emotional therapy, which helps teenagers to overcome psychological problems and alleviate depression by using the positive emotions and healthy mentality contained in literary works; the other is cognitive therapy, which mainly intervenes in the cognitive and thinking aspects of depression symptoms, and helps teenagers to improve their cognition and emotional as well as psychological regulation. The specific measures are shown as follows.

### **4.1. Selection of reading materials**

Different groups should use varying reading materials. Some researchers refer to them as "book archives" and compile them into "book archives" according to practice <sup>[4]</sup>. The plot in literary works often carries specific emotional tendencies. Therefore, for teenagers, these plots can evoke corresponding emotional experiences. For example, *A Dream of Red Mansions* in *Good Song* and *Flower Burial Song* can make teenagers have similar emotional experiences. When reading these works, teenagers are more likely to empathize and resonate with

the emotions portrayed, deepening their emotional connection. Therefore, when reading literary works, teachers should pay attention to choosing some literary works that can arouse the emotional resonance of teenagers for reading. In addition, teachers should also focus on different types of literature works when choosing reading materials. Different types of literary works may bring various emotional experiences and feelings to adolescents. For instance, *A Dream of Red Mansions*, *All Men Are Brothers*, and other literary works can arouse strong emotional resonance among young people. However, there is often some violence, pornography, and other content in these works. Therefore, teachers should pay attention to guiding the students to select content that can lead to positive emotional experiences when reading.

#### **4.2. Guiding the reading process**

Reading is a gradual process. As teenagers read, they develop a strong sense of curiosity, which drives them to explore the content of literary works. This curiosity leads them to actively engage with the material, allowing them to gradually gain a deeper understanding of the world reflected in the works. Therefore, in the process of reading, teachers should be good at guiding students' interest in reading and encouraging them to actively participate in literature reading. For example, when reading *A Dream of Red Mansions*, teachers can first let students preview the book before class. In the pre-class preview stage, students can read relevant books in advance to understand the relationship and characteristics and other related content. Teachers can first ask students to analyze the image characteristics and personality characteristics of the characters in *A Dream of Red Mansions* according to their knowledge. In class, students discuss the characters in *A Dream of Red Mansions* in groups, and then each group explains the content that their group members understand according to the results of the discussion. In this way, students can be guided to understand the characters in *A Dream of Red Mansions* from different angles, so as to absorb the personality characteristics and emotional factors conducive to the construction of a positive mentality in the works.

#### **4.3. Sharing reading feelings**

Sharing reading feelings mainly refers to guiding students to discuss, communicate, share, and record their feelings in the process of reading. Sharing reading feelings is a good reading intervention method. Sharing reading feelings can help teenagers discover the reasons behind their depression in time and help them to better understand their emotions. This lays a cognitive foundation for improving the interpersonal status of depressed patients and can enhance their treatment compliance <sup>[5]</sup>. When sharing reading feelings, teachers can use some methods to stimulate students' positive emotional experiences. Firstly, teachers can encourage students to share through positive emotional expressions. Positive emotional expressions include sharing their understanding and experience of the work and sharing their gains in the process of reading. Secondly, teachers can guide students to use the right way to share, such as "I think" and other words. Lastly, teachers can guide students to share by asking questions, communicating, discussing, and other ways, such as "you think" and other words can be used to guide students to share. By sharing reading feelings, teenagers can more actively participate in literary reading and effectively find out their mood changes and the causes of depression, so as to seek help in time.

### **5. Conclusion**

As an effective intervention method, literary reading has wide application value. In the intervention of adolescent depression, literary reading intervention <sup>[5]</sup>, as an effective supplement, can provide effective psychological support for teenagers, help them to eliminate depression, enhance the cognition of self, others, and life, regain a positive attitude towards life, and promote the healthy development of teenagers' body and

mind. At present, there are few studies on literary reading intervention strategies for adolescents' depression, and there are still some problems in practice. For example, as an auxiliary intervention method, whether the effect of literary reading intervention will be affected by other factors remains to be further studied. However, these problems do not prevent literary reading from playing an active role as an effective means of mental health education in adolescents. With the deepening of relevant research and the accumulation of practical experience, more effective intervention strategies will be applied to the literary reading intervention in adolescents' depression.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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