

Research on Mental Health Education Work of Vocational College Counselors from the Perspective of Positive Psychology

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of current social transformation and educational reform, college students are facing increasing psychological pressure, making mental health education an important part of higher education [1]. With the rapid development of the social economy and the popularization of higher education, the student population in vocational colleges has been expanding, and their mental health issues have gradually become a key topic in the field of education. As the core force in student management, vocational college counselors play an irreplaceable role in promoting students' all-around development and maintaining campus harmony and stability. However, in the face of the complex and changing psychological states of students and heavy work tasks, the mental health status of counselors themselves also deserves attention. Based on the theory of positive psychology, this study explores how to optimize the content and methods of mental health education work for vocational college counselors, so as to improve their psychological quality and better serve the growth needs of students.

Keywords: Vocational college counselors; Mental health education; Positive psychology

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1. Introduction

With the rapid development of the social economy and the popularization of higher education, the student population in vocational colleges has gradually expanded, and their mental health issues have attracted increasing attention. As the core force in student management work in vocational colleges, counselors play an irreplaceable role in promoting students' all-round development and maintaining campus harmony and stability. However, facing the complex and changing psychological states of students and heavy work tasks, the mental health status of counselors themselves is also worthy of attention. In this context, introducing positive psychology theory into the mental health education work of vocational college counselors not only helps to improve counselors' psychological quality but also better serves students' growth needs. This study aims to explore how to optimize the content and methods of mental health education work for vocational college counselors from the perspective

of positive psychology, thereby providing support for cultivating a healthier and more dynamic group of vocational college students.

2. Overview of positive psychology theory

2.1. Basic concepts of positive psychology

Positive psychology is a discipline centered on human happiness and potential. It emphasizes studying individuals' positive emotions, character strengths, and life meaning through scientific methods. Different from traditional psychology, which mainly focuses on diseases and defects, positive psychology pays more attention to tapping people's internal potential and helping them realize self-worth. For example, the "PERMA" model (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment) proposed by positive psychologist Martin Seligman provides a clear framework for understanding the essence of happiness.

2.2. Application fields of positive psychology

In the field of education, positive psychology is widely applied in teacher training, students' mental health counseling, and other aspects. Counselors are an important part of the teaching and management team in higher education institutions, as well as the organizers, implementers, and instructors of students' daily ideological and political education and management work, so they play an important role in college students' growth ^[2]. For vocational college counselors, positive psychology can provide them with a set of systematic tools and concepts, helping them face challenges in work with a more positive attitude and effectively guiding students to establish healthy thinking patterns. Constructing a developmental evaluation system for students in vocational colleges under the guidance of positive psychology is a key support for realizing students' positive growth ^[3]. For instance, cultivating students' sense of gratitude, optimistic attitude, and resilience can significantly improve their psychological state and enhance their learning efficiency and quality of life.

3. Problems in mental health education work of vocational college counselors

3.1. Insufficient professional competence

As the core force in class management, counselors' work effectiveness directly affects the class's learning atmosphere, academic quality, and, more profoundly, students' future growth trajectory. Therefore, in current class management, counselors should not only focus on class discipline and academic performance but also adhere to the student-centered educational philosophy and pay close attention to students' mental health ^[4]. However, at present, many vocational college counselors lack sufficient professional knowledge and skills in psychology. Without professional psychological knowledge and techniques, they often struggle in providing daily psychological assistance to students. For example, when some students suffer from depression, they may exhibit symptoms such as low mood and decreased interest in activities. If counselors have not received relevant professional training, they may mistakenly attribute these symptoms to academic difficulties, excessive exam pressure, or interpersonal issues with classmates, overlooking the possibility of depression. This can lead to missed opportunities for early intervention and seriously delay the best time for treatment.

Additionally, counselors face limitations in handling complex issues. Due to the involvement of sophisticated psychological knowledge, it is difficult for vocational college counselors to address students' problems such as anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, or other mental illnesses. They also lack clarity on

issues such as whether to refer students to professional psychologists and the appropriate referral methods. Therefore, vocational colleges need to continuously strengthen the training of counselors' capabilities in mental health education.

3.2. Excessive work pressure

Mental health is one of the key factors affecting the physical and mental well-being of vocational college students^[5]. However, the heavy and complex workload often leaves counselors in a state of being overwhelmed. Routine student management, planning and organizing college activities, career guidance, and handling emergencies are all important parts of their daily work. Compared with these transactional tasks in daily student education and management, mental health education seems to be reduced to a "labor-intensive and time-consuming" task. For example, when the end of the semester or graduation season arrives, counselors will shift their work focus to matters such as student performance review, internship arrangements, and job recommendations, leading to insufficient attention to students' mental health status.

Job burnout refers to a state where counselors feel exhausted, lack a sense of accomplishment, and become indifferent or alienated from their work due to long-term high workload. Numerous studies have pointed out that excessive work pressure increases the risk of mental health problems among counselors and reduces their work quality and efficiency. For example, counselors experiencing burnout may fail to empathize with students' psychological distress or provide sufficient patience.

3.3. Limited resource support

Many vocational colleges invest insufficiently in mental health education resources, which restricts counselors' ability to carry out mental health work and its effectiveness. This is reflected in the following three aspects: firstly, Outdated equipment in counseling rooms: there is a general lack of psychological education equipment, such as psychological assessment tools, sandplay props, and relaxation training devices, which are crucial for conducting professional psychological assessments and interventions. Due to inadequate hardware investment and insufficient attention, many vocational colleges have not yet fully equipped these facilities. Secondly, Shortage of full-time psychology teachers: Vocational colleges tend to allocate more energy and resources to teaching and practical training, resulting in insufficient human resources invested in mental health education. Counselors, who are often not professionally trained in psychology, are frequently assigned additional counseling tasks. This "part-time" role not only increases counselors' workload but also hinders the development of mental health education. Lastly, Underutilization of relevant software: Mental health education software, such as online psychological assessment tools and mental health education software, can provide auxiliary support for counselors in their work. However, in reality, due to constraints such as technical conditions and financial resources, these software tools are not fully utilized.

4. Strategies for improving mental health education work of vocational college counselors

In the new era, the scale of vocational college student groups is expanding day by day, with prominent characteristics such as diversification and individualization, which put forward higher requirements for school mental health education^[6]. Counselors shoulder important responsibilities and missions in college students' mental health education, so it is necessary to adopt some strategies to improve the mental health education work

of vocational college counselors ^[7].

4.1. Strengthen professional training

Strengthen training to improve the level of mental health education. To enhance the mental health education ability of vocational college counselors, vocational colleges should organize them to receive regular and systematic training, and also invite psychological experts to conduct relevant training. The training content should involve the differentiation and handling of psychological problems, such as training on common mental illnesses like depression, anxiety, and social phobia; improving vocational college counselors' communication skills, such as how to use non-violent communication to gain the trust of both counselors and students; and transforming positive psychology theories into practice, for example, using the three qualities of positive psychology, gratitude, optimism, and resilience, to cultivate students' psychological qualities.

In addition, schools can guide counselors to obtain psychological counselor certificates or other relevant certifications to enhance their professional capabilities. By earnestly participating in national psychological counselor examinations, counselors can not only acquire systematic theories but also accumulate practical skills, enabling them to exert their talents in the position of mental health education. Corresponding policies should be formulated for counselors, providing certain financial subsidies to reduce their pressure in taking psychological counselor examinations, etc.

4.2. Provide auxiliary support

In view of the heavy workload and huge psychological pressure faced by vocational college counselors, schools should provide them with a relatively stable working environment to alleviate their work pressure. For example, increasing investment in human resources to reduce counselors' workload, setting up an independent psychological counseling station, where full-time psychological teachers participate in handling major psychological problems with counselors. At the same time, an intelligent management system can be introduced to assist counselors in effectively completing some daily routine tasks, such as sorting out student information and activity information, so that counselors can have more energy and time to do a good job in mental health education.

Moreover, schools can establish a mutual assistance mechanism among counselors, realizing mutual assistance through irregular experience exchange meetings or group discussions. The mutual assistance network platform among counselors enables them to exchange experiences and methods, seek solutions on time when confused, and at the same time meet their sense of belonging and professional achievement, thereby reducing the occurrence of burnout.

4.3. Expand practical resources

At the same time, vocational colleges can use external resources to create richer practical conditions for counselors. For example, establishing cooperative relations with local mental education centers, allowing them to practice or visit, so as to enhance their mastery and understanding of psychological knowledge; or using technical means such as online platforms to realize sharing, communication, and discussion in the form of online learning and offline discussions, cultivating counselors' ability to receive new resources and methods promptly.

In addition, schools can develop and promote digital resources for mental health education, such as online psychological assessment systems and micro-courses on mental health education, to provide convenient support tools for counselors. These resources can not only help counselors complete mental health education work more

efficiently but also stimulate students' interest in participation and improve the overall effect of mental health education. Through the combination of internal and external resources, practical resources can be continuously enriched, and finally, the comprehensive improvement of vocational college counselors' mental health education work can be achieved.

5. Conclusions

In summary, the importance of mental health education work carried out by vocational college counselors cannot be ignored. Through the aforementioned research and practical exploration, the aim is to enhance the service capabilities of vocational college counselors in the field of college students' mental health, promote the improvement of the overall level of mental health education in vocational colleges, and thereby better maintain and enhance the mental health of college students^[8]. As an important part of student management work in vocational colleges, mental health education is not only related to the all-around development of students but also directly affects the harmony and stability of the campus. However, at present, vocational college counselors still face many challenges in mental health education work, such as insufficient professional capabilities, excessive work pressure, and limited resource support. The existence of these problems reminds us that we must take practical and effective measures to improve counselors' level of mental health education^[9].

Positive psychology theory provides new ideas and directions for solving the above problems. By integrating the core concepts of positive psychology into the work practice of vocational college counselors, it can not only help counselors face challenges in their work with a more positive attitude but also effectively guide students to establish healthy ways of thinking and cultivate optimistic and resilient psychological qualities^[10]. For example, by promoting specific practical methods such as gratitude education^[11], goal setting, and emotional management, students' psychological state can be significantly improved^[12]. Their learning efficiency and quality of life can be enhanced.

In the future, it is hoped that more vocational colleges can fully recognize the importance of mental health education work and increase investment and support in this field^[13]. At the same time, they should continuously explore and improve relevant mechanisms to form a scientific and standardized mental health education system, so as to better serve students' growth needs. Only when vocational college counselors have solid professional knowledge and good psychological qualities can they truly become guides on students' growth path, helping them move towards a healthier and happier life journey^[14]. This is not only a focus on individual development but also a strong impetus for the healthy development of the entire vocational education cause. The team of vocational college counselors assumes a more important and special role. They need to stay true to their original aspirations, keep their mission in mind, maintain the advanced nature, sense of the times, and innovative power in ideology and politics, and provide strong guarantees and support for the mental health development of vocational college students^[15].

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