

Problems and Countermeasures of College Students' Mental Health in Higher Education in the New Era

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of the new era, mental health issues among college students in the higher education stage have become increasingly prominent. These issues are not only related to the personal growth of students but also affect the quality of national talent cultivation and the harmonious development of society. Therefore, this study focuses on the current mental health problems of students in the higher education environment. A systematic analysis method was adopted to examine various factors contributing to this phenomenon from multiple perspectives, such as academic pressure, interpersonal relationships, and self-cognition. To address this problem, a series of practical strategies was proposed, aiming to provide guidance for colleges and universities, help students establish a positive mental state, and enhance their coping abilities. It is expected that these efforts will effectively improve students' mental health, promote their all-round and healthy growth and development, and at the same time contribute to building a harmonious society.

Keywords: Higher education; Mental health; Collaborative education; Educational countermeasures

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1. Mental health issues among students in higher education

1.1. Intertwined academic and employment pressure

As the wave of higher education popularization continues to advance and the phenomenon of “involution” (excessive internal competition) intensifies, students are facing unprecedented academic challenges. Courses have become more profound and complex, competition in scientific research has grown fiercer, while the demand in the job market shows a tightening trend. The combination of these factors imposes heavy psychological pressure and mental burden on students. They often feel confused and helpless, filled with uncertainty about the future. Such emotional fluctuations can easily evolve into mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. In particular, some students with relatively weak willpower may fall into the predicament of insufficient learning motivation, unable to maintain a proper learning state, and even experience a crisis of self-identity^[1]. This not only affects their personal development but also exerts an adverse impact on the improvement of the overall

quality of society. Therefore, the study must take effective measures to alleviate students' academic pressure, provide necessary psychological support, and help them maintain a positive and optimistic attitude to better cope with the various challenges encountered in higher education ^[2].

1.2. Dilemmas in emotions and interpersonal relationships

The behavior of over-reliance on social media is gradually eroding people's ability to communicate with others in real life. In this digital age, students are addicted to virtual social circles, often neglecting the importance of interpersonal relationships and the necessity of in-depth communication in real life. Minor frictions in dormitories, misunderstandings between lovers, and even emotional estrangement among family members—issues that should be properly addressed in daily life—have become complicated and intractable due to the lack of direct face-to-face communication. As a result, many students feel lonely; their inner world is gradually occupied by indifference and misunderstanding, and the foundation of interpersonal trust is thus shaken. In the long run, some people may even fall into psychological predicaments, exhibiting extreme emotional reactions or behavioral patterns—all of which are highly risky signs for mental health ^[3–5].

1.3. Conflicts in values and adjustment disorders

In this era of multicultural integration, society is undergoing a profound reshaping of values. Amid this context, students are confronted with an irreconcilable gap between ideals and reality, as well as conflicts and integration between individual and collective values. The interplay of these factors makes students particularly confused in their journey of self-cognition. Some students may experience a deep sense of existential anxiety, which stems from the uncertainty about future goals and the challenges encountered in seeking personal positioning and value recognition in a rapidly changing environment. They may feel that their lives lack a certain direction and have profound doubts about the meaning and purpose of life, thus falling into deep contemplation and struggle ^[6].

1.4. Imperfect mental health service system

In the current higher education system, a prominent and widespread problem is the shortage of mental health counseling resources. This situation is reflected not only in the insufficient number of counselors but also in their lack of necessary professional knowledge and skills. Furthermore, the intervention mechanisms for students' psychological problems in colleges and universities are often slow to respond and fail to keep pace with the development of the times, resulting in delayed prevention work ^[7]. At the same time, the awareness of protecting personal privacy is relatively weak, which to a large extent restricts students' willingness to seek help. The combined effect of these factors makes it difficult for students to detect abnormalities in their mental state at an early stage. When problems do emerge, the effectiveness of intervention is naturally greatly reduced ^[8].

2. Countermeasures and suggestions for students' mental health education in the higher education process

2.1. Construct a full-process mental health education system

In the current education system, the study has recognized the importance of mental health education. Therefore, the study has decided to incorporate it into students' compulsory courses to provide them with comprehensive support and guidance. These courses will cover multiple key areas, such as how freshmen adapt to college life, cope with academic pressure, and manage emotions. By introducing case-based teaching and practical experience, the study aims to help students better understand the connection between theoretical knowledge and practical application,

thereby improving learning outcomes and the effectiveness of the courses. This initiative not only helps students build positive psychological resilience but also lays a solid foundation for their personal development in the future.

In today's digital era, the study is well aware of the significance of new media platforms in popularizing mental health knowledge. Thus, the study is committed to conducting regular mental health science education through these platforms. For example, the study has created a series of "mental health micro-class" short videos, which explain psychological knowledge in a relaxed and easy-to-understand way, helping students understand and cope with psychological challenges they may encounter in daily life. Meanwhile, the study has also launched an online "tree hole" talk space, encouraging students to voice their thoughts here. Whether it is about academic pressure, interpersonal relationships, or emotional distress, they can receive listening and guidance from professionals^[9-12]. Through such efforts, the study hopes to create a campus culture where all members pay attention to mental health, allowing everyone to find support and comfort in this open and inclusive environment.

2.2. Improve the "Prevention-Intervention-Rehabilitation" tertiary support network

To better serve students' mental health, the study will establish a comprehensive and dynamic psychological assessment mechanism. By conducting an initial psychological assessment upon students' enrollment and conducting follow-up evaluations throughout their study period, the study can identify groups that may be in a high psychological risk state. For these individuals, the study will adopt a precise support strategy of "one person, one policy" to tailor personalized assistance plans for them.

Strengthening collaboration among various departments within the university is crucial. The study will enhance the linkage mechanism among school doctors, counselors, and head teachers. Through this mechanism, the referral channel for psychological counseling will become smoother. In addition, the study also plans to cooperate with some professional medical institutions to establish a green channel for emergency intervention, ensuring that professional medical support can be obtained quickly in emergencies. Such measures will greatly improve the university's ability and efficiency in addressing students' psychological issues and protect every student's mental health from threats.

2.3. Optimization of stress management and value guidance mechanisms

To promote the all-round development of students, the study has actively implemented the academic mentor system. This system not only provides students with academic guidance but also pays attention to their career planning. Through well-designed workshops, the study aims to help students better understand their interests and strengths, enabling them to stand out in the fiercely competitive job market. Furthermore, these workshops focus on cultivating students' psychological resilience when facing challenges, allowing them to stay calm and find solutions when encountering difficulties. With such comprehensive support, the study hopes to stimulate students' potential and guide them to become future professionals who are forward-looking, adaptable, and confident^[13].

In the current era, ideological and political education is not merely the inculcation of theoretical knowledge from textbooks; it requires students to gain a profound understanding and grasp of relevant concepts through social practice activities. Through these diverse carriers, the study can guide students to establish a dialectical outlook on values—when recognizing the complexity and multidimensionality of the world, they can uphold their principles, pursue truth, and courageously take on social responsibilities. Meanwhile, this educational approach can foster students' self-efficacy: they will learn to believe in their own abilities, actively participate in social activities, continuously improve their quality in the process of serving society, enhance their ability to solve practical problems, and ultimately maximize their personal value. Such an educational model not only helps students form

correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values but also lays a solid foundation for them to become useful members of society in the future.

2.4. Strengthening the teaching staff and hardware support

To ensure that the mental health of teachers and students receives adequate attention and support, schools should assign a full-time psychological counseling teacher to each student based on actual circumstances. These professionals should not only receive regular training on crisis intervention skills to improve their ability to handle emergency psychological issues, but also a sound psychological care mechanism for teachers should be established. The key to this mechanism lies in providing teachers with the necessary emotional support and professional incentives to prevent occupational burnout. In this way, the study can effectively prevent negative emotional reactions of teachers when interacting with students, thereby ensuring the smooth progress of counseling work and truly addressing both the growth needs of students and the psychological status of teachers themselves^[14].

To improve the public's mental health, the study has decided to further strengthen the development of mental health centers. To this end, the study will not only optimize the facilities and equipment in psychological counseling rooms but also expand the functions of group counseling rooms, creating a supportive environment where people can communicate and learn from each other. At the same time, the study plan is to introduce advanced technologies to enhance service quality. For example, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) for psychological assessment will enable us to quickly and accurately diagnose an individual's psychological state, while virtual reality (VR) relaxation training can help clients experience relaxation and stress relief in a safe environment. The application of these new technologies is expected to greatly improve the accuracy and effectiveness of services, providing more personalized and high-quality support for those in need^[15].

3. Conclusion

Against the backdrop of rapid social transformation, the mental health issues faced by college students in higher education have become increasingly prominent. This is not only a matter of individuals' psychological quality but also a concentrated reflection of various contradictions in society, education, and other fields. The severity of this problem requires us to fundamentally innovate educational concepts, promote institutional innovation, and integrate resources to build a comprehensive and multi-level new pattern of "school-family-society" collaborative education. Such a framework will provide a solid psychological safety barrier for students' growth and development, allowing them to thrive in an environment full of support and understanding.

In this process, higher education institutions need to deepen their understanding of students' all-round development—focusing not only on the cultivation of academic abilities but also on the development of non-intellectual factors such as students' emotions, willpower, and social skills. Therefore, education authorities should take effective measures, such as establishing specialized mental health counseling services, offering mental health education courses, and building psychological crisis intervention mechanisms, to address students' psychological stress and challenges. Meanwhile, family education should also play its important role: through parent schools, parent workshops, and other forms, parents are guided to pay attention to their children's mental health and work together to create a family atmosphere conducive to the physical and mental health of children. In addition, all sectors of society should actively participate in this work, providing necessary resource support and policy assistance to jointly build a healthy and positive social environment. Only when these elements cooperate and interact with each other can higher education truly achieve the connotative development

transformation from simply “cultivating talents” to “educating people”, allowing every student to find their own value and achieve a bright future in this process.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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