

# Research on the Path to Enhance the Effectiveness of Heart-to-Heart Talks by University Counselors from the Perspective of “Three All-around Education”

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**Abstract:** Moral education is the fundamental task of higher education. As the backbone of college students’ ideological and political education, counselors use heart-to-heart talks as both carriers and skills to fulfill their educational responsibilities. In counselors’ daily education and management, there are problems such as a single form of heart-to-heart talks and opposition between teachers and students, which affect the effectiveness of the talks and the educational role. Based on the perspective of “Three All-around Education”, this paper analyzes the value and existing problems of heart-to-heart talks and proposes specific countermeasures, aiming to enhance the effectiveness of heart-to-heart talks and achieve the goals of education for all students throughout the whole process and in all aspects.

**Keywords:** Three All-around Education; University counselors; Heart-to-heart talks; Educational effectiveness; Improvement path

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## 1. Introduction

The Regulations on the Construction of Counselor Teams in Regular Institutions of Higher Education clearly require that the primary responsibility of counselors is to carry out ideological and political education. As a direct way for counselors to communicate with students, heart-to-heart talks are an important channel to implement ideological and value guidance, solve students’ practical problems, and enhance the emotional connection between teachers and students. At present, college students’ ideological concepts, value orientations, and behavioral styles are more complex and changeable than before. Pressures from academic studies, employment, and interpersonal relationships have troubled students’ growth. Therefore, counselors must enhance their professional literacy and improve the professionalism, pertinence, and effectiveness of heart-to-heart talks. Based on the perspective of “Three All-around Education”, exploring the path to improve the effectiveness of

counselors' heart-to-heart talks is not only a practical need to strengthen and improve college ideological and political education but also an inevitable requirement to solve the difficulties in educational work, promote the professional development of counselors, and help college students grow up healthily, which has important theoretical value and practical significance.

## **2. Core connotation and contemporary value of counselors' heart-to-heart talks from the perspective of "Three All-around Education"**

### **2.1. Core connotation of "Three All-around Education"**

The core essence of "Three All-around Education" is reflected in three dimensions: all-staff education, whole-process education, and all-round education. All-staff education aims to break the limitation of a single educational subject, requiring all faculty and staff to shoulder educational responsibilities and build an educational community with upper-lower linkage and full participation. Whole-process education aims to run through the entire campus career of students from enrollment to graduation, integrating educational elements such as ideological guidance, psychological counseling, and value shaping into every growth link. All-round education aims to cover all scenarios of students' growth, such as ideological education, academic support, and mental health, and adopts multi-channel and multi-dimensional educational measures to help students grow in an all-round way.

### **2.2. New requirements of "Three All-around Education" for counselors' heart-to-heart talks**

The practice of the "Three All-around Education" concept puts forward comprehensive innovative requirements for university counselors' work, promoting their transformation in role positioning, work mode, and literacy capabilities. In this context, counselors must first clarify their role positioning, abandon the traditional single management-oriented role, and act as guides for students' thoughts, companions for their growth, and counselors for their psychology. To this end, counselors should more actively integrate into students' daily lives and study and establish a good trusting relationship with them. This requires counselors to change the previous work mode, formulate personalized learning plans for students' individual differences, and strengthen the planning, pertinence, and interactivity of heart-to-heart talks. At the same time, continuously learn professional knowledge such as education and psychology, strengthen practical skills such as communication and coordination, emotional counseling, and crisis intervention, and enhance personal professional literacy and capabilities.

### **2.3. Contemporary value**

#### **2.3.1. A key starting point for implementing the fundamental task of moral education**

The fundamental task of moral education is the guideline for university counselors to carry out various tasks. Counselors' work is extensive, but it must be carried out around the task of moral education. At present, with the integration of diverse cultures and the mixed quality of online information, college students are easily affected. Heart-to-heart talks can help teachers understand students' ideological confusions, guide students to establish a correct world outlook, outlook on life, and values, integrate ideological and political education into the whole process of students' growth, and effectively implement the fundamental task of moral education.

#### **2.3.2. An effective way to solve college students' growth puzzles**

College students are faced with pressures from academic studies, employment, psychological status, and

interpersonal relationships. The formation of these problems is concealed and complex <sup>[1]</sup>. Heart-to-heart talks provide students with a channel to express their demands, release emotions, and seek help. Teachers can provide timely attention and guidance for students and help them solve the difficulties encountered in the growth process.

### **2.3.3. An important bridge for building a harmonious teacher-student relationship**

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, love and belonging are basic human needs. College students usually study away from their hometowns and need a sense of belonging in school. Equal and sincere talks between counselors and students can narrow the psychological distance with students, establish trust and emotional connections, make students feel cared for and warm, and lay a good foundation for the development of various educational work <sup>[2]</sup>.

### **2.3.4. An important carrier for promoting counselors' professional development**

Heart-to-heart talks are an important indicator to measure counselors' professional capabilities and a practical platform for counselors to improve their professional literacy. In the process of communicating with different students, counselors need to continuously improve their theoretical level, communication skills, psychological counseling capabilities, and problem-solving abilities. Long-term talk practice enables counselors to gain reflection and growth, which is conducive to the professional construction of the counselor team and the improvement of educational effectiveness <sup>[3]</sup>.

## **3. Practical dilemmas of current university counselors' heart-to-heart talks**

### **3.1. Large student group and insufficient counselor energy**

Under the background of current college enrollment expansion, each counselor is responsible for a large number of students, and most counselors need to connect with hundreds of students. Students' talk needs are also different. In addition to conventional ideological guidance, academic pressure, interpersonal conflicts, psychological problems, emotional issues, etc., all need talk counseling, and some even require long-term follow-up <sup>[4]</sup>. However, counselors usually have to undertake a lot of complex work, such as student management and activity organization, so the time available for heart-to-heart talks is squeezed. Most talks only stay on the surface and do not have the educational effect of this model.

### **3.2. Insufficient pertinence of talk content and disconnection from students' needs**

The content of talks by some counselors includes policy propaganda and discipline emphasis, but they pay insufficient attention to the personalized needs of different scenarios, such as freshmen adaptation, graduate employment, academic assistance for underachievers, and psychological crisis intervention. Moreover, before the talk, some counselors do not conduct advanced research on students' growth background, personality characteristics, and the root causes of problems, so the talk content is difficult to resonate with students, and may even arouse students' resistance <sup>[5]</sup>. In addition, the manifestations of some problems are relatively hidden, and the causes are complex, so students may cover them up, and counselors' talk work also faces a lot of uncertainty and complexity.

### **3.3. Lack of counselors' professional capabilities and limited talk effectiveness**

Heart-to-heart talks require school counselors to master professional knowledge in fields such as psychology,

sociology, and education, but current university counselors lack systematic training in this regard. In the process of communicating with students, counselors may use “preaching-style” or “command-style” expressions or inadvertently violate students’ privacy rights, which will weaken students’ trust in counselors and make it difficult for students to open up and express their true thoughts<sup>[6]</sup>. Counselors do not master scientific intervention methods and application experience. When facing complex problems such as students’ psychological crises and extreme emotions, they are likely to handle them improperly or miss the best intervention time. In addition, talk work also requires counselors to have good self-regulation capabilities. Long-term high-pressure work is prone to professional burnout, and failure to adjust one’s mentality will further affect the patience and professionalism of the talks<sup>[7]</sup>.

## **4. Paths to improve the effectiveness of heart-to-heart talks from the perspective of “Three All-around Education”**

### **4.1. Build an all-staff collaborative education network to gather the joint force of heart-to-heart talks**

From the perspective of “Three All-around Education”, heart-to-heart talks are not a task that counselors have to undertake independently. Ideological and political theory teachers, professional course teachers, administrative management personnel, etc., should all shoulder educational responsibilities, participate fully, divide responsibilities, and cooperate collaboratively<sup>[8]</sup>. Faculty and staff from different departments can organize regular meetings to exchange students’ daily situations. For example, professional course teachers can provide timely feedback on problems found in teaching to counselors, and counselors can carry out targeted talks according to students’ professional characteristics. Logistics service personnel can pay attention to students’ dynamics in the process of serving students and provide timely feedback on students’ difficulties and problems in life to counselors.

Families are also one of the educational subjects. Counselors can provide feedback on students’ campus situation to parents or understand students’ family environment and growth background through various forms, such as telephone interviews and online questionnaires. For students with special situations, such as psychological crises and disciplinary violations, timely communication and coordination with parents to form a joint force of home-school co-education.

Colleges and universities can also invite outstanding alumni and enterprise experts to visit the campus to share life experiences and provide career planning guidance for students through special sharing sessions and one-on-one exchanges<sup>[9]</sup>. Cooperation between schools and professional psychological institutions, legal aid institutions, community organizations, etc., can provide students with more professional psychological counseling, legal consultation, and social practice opportunities, and at the same time provide professional support for counselors’ heart-to-heart talks.

### **4.2. Run through the whole-process education chain to achieve a precise connection of heart-to-heart talks**

After freshmen enroll, they need to adapt to new roles and environments and re-establish interpersonal relationships. Counselors should complete full-coverage initial talks within one month after students register, understand students’ basic situation, growth background, and development needs, and establish personal growth files for students<sup>[10]</sup>. During the enrollment education period, counselors can carry out special talks on school

rules and disciplines, professional cognition, learning methods, etc., to help students adapt to college life as soon as possible. For freshmen with adaptation difficulties, loneliness, anxiety, and other problems, carry out personalized counseling talks. At key academic nodes such as course learning, examinations and assessments, professional selection, and scientific research practice, carry out targeted heart-to-heart talks. Communicate with students about their learning situation, understand the difficulties and problems encountered by students in learning, and cooperate with professional course teachers to provide students with learning method guidance and academic planning suggestions.

College is also a transitional period for students' growth, facing problems such as interpersonal communication, emotional relationships, and psychological pressure. Counselors need to timely detect students' abnormal signals through daily observation, feedback from class cadres, psychological evaluations, etc. For students deeply troubled, use professional skills such as empathy, listening, and concretization to help students release emotions, sort out problems, and resolve conflicts. If necessary, contact the school's mental health center for professional intervention<sup>[11]</sup>.

### **4.3. Expand all-round education dimensions to enrich the practical forms of heart-to-heart talks**

According to the actual situation, counselors should choose appropriate talk methods. In addition to traditional office talks, counselors can also choose venues such as campuses, canteens, and playgrounds for talks to create a relaxed and natural talk atmosphere<sup>[12]</sup>. They can also use digital tools such as WeChat, QQ, and campus-specific APPs for online talks. This method is suitable for introverted students who are not good at expressing themselves face-to-face. For common problems among students, counselors can carry out collective talk activities such as class meetings, seminars, and experience sharing sessions to improve talk efficiency.

In the process of talks, counselors can integrate psychological counseling skills, such as active listening, open-ended questioning, and concretization techniques, to help students clarify problems and express feelings. Based on establishing a trusting relationship between teachers and students, they can reasonably use techniques such as confrontation, self-disclosure, and reconstruction to guide students to reflect on problems and achieve self-change. Counselors with higher psychological professional levels can also use psychological theories such as cognitive-behavioral therapy and humanistic therapy to help students adjust irrational beliefs and cultivate positive behavioral patterns<sup>[13]</sup>. Of course, when conducting specific talks, counselors need to take measures as appropriate according to the actual situation. For example, for students from special families, poor families, and students with psychological abnormalities, personalized talk plans need to be formulated according to their different types and characteristics.

### **4.4. Strengthen counselors' professional literacy and lay a solid foundation for heart-to-heart talk capabilities**

Colleges and universities should strengthen the training of counselors' ideological and political theories and improve their political stance and ideological guidance capabilities. Offer courses in psychology, education, sociology, communication skills, etc., to carry out professional knowledge training<sup>[14]</sup>. In addition, carry out policy and regulation training, organize counselors to study relevant policy documents such as the Regulations on the Construction of Counselor Teams in Regular Institutions of Higher Education and the Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities Under the New Situation, to ensure that talk work is carried out in accordance with laws and regulations.

To improve the educational effect of counselors' heart-to-heart talks, colleges and universities can hold diversified practical activities. For example, hold heart-to-heart talk skill competitions, set up links such as simulated talks and case analysis, to promote learning and practice through competitions; carry out case discussion and exchange meetings, organize counselors to share successful experiences and failures in heart-to-heart talks, and jointly explore methods and strategies to solve complex problems; third, organize counselors to visit and study in mental health centers or other friendly school units to learn from advanced work experiences and methods<sup>[15]</sup>.

## 5. Conclusion

Under the "Three All-around Education" concept, heart-to-heart talks are an important skill that university counselors should master, and also an important channel for counselors to carry out ideological and political education and implement the fundamental task of moral education. In practice, counselors should continuously explore and innovate new models and methods of heart-to-heart talks in combination with their own actual situations. At the same time, pay attention to technological empowerment, make full use of modern information technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence to improve the effect of talk work, and truly give play to the educational effect of heart-to-heart talks.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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