

The Use of Music Therapy in the Psychological Counseling of College Students

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Abstract: With the increasingly fierce social competition, the psychological pressure of college students is increasing, and psychological problems are gradually coming to the fore. Music therapy, as a kind of non-pharmacological treatment method, has gradually been emphasized in the field of mental health in China. The purpose of this paper is to explore the application of music therapy in the psychological guidance of college students and analyze its effectiveness and advantages. Firstly, this paper provides an overview of the basic theories of music therapy, including the definition, development, principles and methods of music therapy. Secondly, by analyzing the sources of psychological pressure and the current situation of psychological guidance for college students, this paper elaborates the advantages of music therapy in psychological guidance for college students. Then, this paper introduces the application practice of music therapy in college students' psychological guidance in detail, including program design, implementation process and effect evaluation, combined with actual cases. Finally, this paper summarizes the use of music therapy in the psychological guidance of college students and puts forward the prospect of further research.

Keywords: Music Therapy, College Students, Psychological Detachment, Mental Health, Non-Pharmacological Treatment.

1. Introduction

With the increasingly fierce competition in the society, college students are facing great psychological pressure, and a series of mental health problems have gradually come to the fore. According to statistics, the incidence of psychological diseases among college students in China is increasing year by year, and psychological problems have become an important factor affecting the healthy growth of college students. In this context, music therapy, as a non-pharmacological treatment method, has gradually received widespread attention. Through the carrier of music, music therapy helps individuals release emotions, adjust their mindset, and improve their psychological quality, which is of great practical significance in alleviating the psychological pressure of college students and promoting their mental health. This thesis aims to explore the application of music therapy in college students' psychological guidance, in order to provide new ideas and methods for mental health education in colleges and universities.

2. Theoretical Foundation of Music Therapy

2.1. Definition and Development of Music Therapy

Music therapy is a therapeutic method using music as a tool, aiming to promote an individual's physical and mental health through various characteristics of music, such as pitch, rhythm, melody and harmony. Music therapy as a complementary therapy can be traced as far back as ancient civilizations such as Ancient Greece and Ancient Egypt, when music was believed to have the power to heal.

The development of music therapy has gone through several stages. At the beginning of the 20th century, music therapy began to emerge as a formal mental health service in Western countries. In 1924, the American Music Therapy Association was founded, marking the beginning of the

professionalization of music therapy. Music therapy was then used to help war-traumatized soldiers during World War II, a period considered to be the birth of music therapy as an independent field.

Over time, the theoretical foundations of music therapy have expanded to include a number of disciplines, including psychology, neuroscience, and musicology. Music therapy is believed to improve mood disorders, reduce psychological stress, improve cognitive functioning, and enhance social skills. During the therapy process, music therapists design different music activities such as playing, composing, listening and improvisation according to the individual's needs and situation.

The development of modern music therapy also emphasizes the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration with professionals in the fields of psychology, medicine, and rehabilitation, allowing music therapy to play a more integrated role in the treatment program. In addition, with the development of technology, music therapy is also exploring new ways to incorporate digital technology, such as the use of music software in psychological counseling [1].

2.2. The Basic Principle of Music Therapy

Music has the effect of regulating emotions. Music can stimulate the human auditory system, which in turn affects the human emotional state. Different types of music can trigger different emotional responses, such as happiness, sadness, calmness and so on. In music therapy, choosing the appropriate music according to the individual's emotional needs can help the individual release emotions and relieve pressure [2]. Secondly, music can improve the psychological state. Music has a regulating effect on the psychological state of people, which can improve the psychological quality of individuals and enhance their psychological tolerance. Music therapy improves the psychological state through music activities, such as listening, playing, chorus, etc., so that individuals can feel pleasure and satisfaction in the process of participation. In addition, music helps to improve cognitive

function. Musical stimulation promotes the connection and activation of neurons in the brain, which improves an individual's concentration, memory, and learning ability. Music therapy exercises an individual's cognitive functions through musical activities, such as musical memorization and musical sequencing, which help improve abilities in learning and life. Music also promotes physical and mental relaxation. Music has the ability to soothe tension and reduce anxiety and depression. In music therapy, individuals enter a state of relaxation by listening to or playing music, thus reducing physical and mental stress [3]. Finally, music therapy focuses on individual differences. During music therapy, the therapist chooses appropriate music and activities according to the characteristics and needs of individuals. This makes music therapy highly targeted and effective.

2.3. Techniques and Methods of Music Therapy

Music therapy is a therapeutic method that uses music as a tool, aiming to promote the mental and emotional health of individuals through musical experiences. In college students' psychological counseling, music therapy can use a variety of techniques and methods to achieve its therapeutic effects [4].

First, listening and music appreciation is an important technique in music therapy. By listening to different types and styles of music, college students can relax and reduce stress. The choice of music can be customized according to individual preferences and needs to stimulate positive emotional responses and psychological states. Second, music creation and expression can also be an effective therapy. By creating music, college students can express their emotions and inner experiences, thereby relieving psychological stress and emotional distress. Music composition can include composing, arranging, playing, etc., in a variety of forms, which can be chosen according to individual interests and abilities. In addition, music therapy can use musical activities and interactions to promote psychological relief. For example, choral singing, instrument playing, musical games, etc. These activities can help college students establish social connections, enhance self-confidence and self-esteem, and improve teamwork ability. Through musical interactions, college students can release stress and improve emotional regulation. There are various methods of music therapy, and the appropriate treatment method can be chosen according to the specific situation and needs of college students. Whether it is individual or group therapy, music therapy can provide a safe and free space for college students to express themselves and find inner balance and harmony through music [5].

3. Analysis of College Students' Psychological Relief Needs

3.1. Sources of Psychological Pressure of College Students

As a special group, college students face various psychological pressures. First of all, academic pressure is one of the main psychological pressures faced by college students. With the development of society and increasingly fierce competition, college students need to master rich knowledge and skills to meet the needs of society. However, the variety and difficulty of courses make many college students feel pressure in the process of study, worrying about poor grades, employment difficulties and other problems. Secondly, interpersonal pressure is also an important aspect that college

students need to face. College life means leaving home, entering a new environment, living and studying with students from all over the world. In this process, college students need to learn to deal with interpersonal relationships, including getting along with classmates, teachers and family members. Due to the differences in cultural background, character traits, values and other aspects, college students are prone to conflicts and contradictions in interpersonal interactions, which leads to psychological pressure. In addition, employment pressure is also a problem that college students cannot ignore. With the development of society and the intensification of competition in the job market, college students face many challenges in the employment process. On the one hand, college students need to plan well for their future and choose a suitable direction of work; on the other hand, they need to work hard to improve their comprehensive quality in order to adapt to the ever-changing social needs. In this process, college students are prone to anxiety and worry. Finally, family pressure is also an aspect that college students need to face. Family expectations, economic conditions, affectionate relationships and so on may bring psychological pressure to college students. Some college students are conflicted between family expectations and their own interests, which may lead to increased psychological burden; poor family economic conditions may lead to increased life pressure; and the handling of affectionate relationships, such as getting along with parents and siblings, may also trigger psychological pressure.

3.2. Status and Problems of Psychological Counseling for College Students

First of all, college students have various sources of psychological pressure. Heavy academic burden and competitive pressure; uncertain employment prospects and worries about the future; complicated interpersonal relationships, which can easily lead to psychological problems if not handled properly; in addition, factors such as personality traits, family background, and growing up experience may also affect the psychological health of college students. Secondly, the current situation of psychological counseling for college students is characterized by an increase in psychological problems and a decline in psychological quality. Some college students may have psychological problems such as anxiety, depression and low self-esteem when facing pressure. Individual students even affect their daily life and study because of psychological problems. At the same time, the education of college students in psychological quality is relatively lagging behind, which leads to their insufficient coping ability when facing difficulties. Again, the problem of psychological counseling of college students is somewhat hidden. Due to the influence of traditional concepts, when facing psychological problems, college students may choose to hide and endure, unwilling to seek help. This makes psychological problems not found and solved in time, which in turn aggravates the psychological burden [6].

3.3. Advantages of Music Therapy in Psychological Counseling of College Students

As a non-verbal intervention, music therapy shows many advantages in the psychological counseling of college students. First of all, music has a universal resonance effect, which can cross cultural and linguistic boundaries and touch the inner world of individuals. Among college students, music

is often their common language, which can quickly establish an emotional connection. Secondly, music therapy does not require specialized knowledge and is easy to accept and participate in. It is often difficult for college students to find time for in-depth psychological counseling in their busy study life, while music therapy, with its relaxing and pleasant form, allows college students to relax and heal themselves after class. In addition, music therapy is characterized by individualization and flexibility. Each college student's psychological condition and needs are unique, music therapy can develop personalized treatment plans according to individual differences, through different types of music, such as soothing music can help reduce stress, motivational music can enhance self-confidence, so as to achieve targeted psychological relief effects. Music therapy also has the advantages of real-time and continuity, students can have music healing at any time they need it, and it can be carried out continuously, which helps to cultivate good psychological quality and self-regulation ability [7].

In the mental health education system of college students, music therapy, as an auxiliary means, can effectively alleviate the psychological pressure of college students, improve the ability of emotional management, and promote physical and mental health. Through music activities, college students can release their emotions and enhance their self-knowledge, as well as improve interpersonal communication and cultivate teamwork ability in group activities. In conclusion, music therapy plays an important role in college students' psychological relief with its unique advantages, which is worth promoting and applying in colleges and universities.

4. Application of Music Therapy in the Psychological Counseling of College Students

4.1. Design of Music Therapy Program

The design of music therapy program is an important part of the music therapy process, which directly affects the effect of therapy. The design of music therapy program needs to fully consider the individual differences, psychological needs and therapeutic goals of the patient in order to develop a personalized treatment plan.

First of all, the therapist needs to understand the patient's background information, including age, gender, cultural level, music preference, etc., in order to select appropriate music for him/her. In addition, the therapist needs to assess the patient's psychological condition, such as anxiety, depression, and self-esteem, in order to determine the focus of the treatment.

After clarifying the individual characteristics of the patient, the therapist can design a personalized treatment plan for the patient based on the principles and techniques of music therapy. The treatment program usually includes the following aspects [8].

1) Music selection: according to the patient's music preference and psychological needs, choose appropriate music for him/her. The choice of music can include different types of music, such as classical music, folk music, rock, etc., as well as music with different rhythms and pitches.

2) Musical activities: Design a variety of musical activities, such as listening to music, singing, playing musical instruments, etc., to help patients experience and express their emotions. Music activities can be categorized into individual and group activities, and are chosen according to patients' characteristics and needs.

3) Music sessions: The length and frequency of music sessions are formulated according to the patient's psychological condition and treatment goals. Generally speaking, the duration of music sessions is 20-60 minutes, and they are conducted 1-2 times per week.

4) Therapeutic goals: Define the goals of music therapy, such as relieving anxiety, improving self-esteem, and enhancing social skills. The goals should be specific and quantifiable in order to assess the effectiveness of the treatment.

5) Treatment strategy: Formulate the treatment strategy according to the patient's characteristics and needs. The treatment strategy can include both direct and indirect treatment. Direct therapy refers to the direct intervention of the patient's psychological problems through music activities, such as emotional expression, pressure release, etc. Indirect therapy refers to the guidance of the patient's self-exploration and self-healing through music activities, such as self-reflection and goal setting.

6) Evaluation and Adjustment: During the treatment process, the therapist needs to evaluate the patient's therapeutic effect on a regular basis and adjust the treatment program according to the patient's feedback and changes.

4.2. Music Therapy Implementation Process

In the implementation process of music therapy, first of all, it is necessary to create a comfortable and quiet environment for the participants so that they can devote themselves to music therapy. The therapist should choose suitable music types, such as classical music, folk music, pop music, etc., according to the psychological characteristics and needs of college students. Secondly, the forms of music therapy can be diversified, including listening to music, singing, playing musical instruments and music creation. During the therapy process, therapists can guide college students to express their emotions through music, such as happiness, depression, anger, etc., thus helping them to recognize and accept their inner world [9]. In addition, music therapy can also be combined with psychological guidance techniques, such as psychological counseling and emotion management, to achieve better therapeutic effects. During the treatment process, the therapist should pay attention to the feedback of college students and adjust the treatment program at the right time to ensure that the direction and goals of music therapy match the needs of college students. The frequency and duration of music therapy also need to be adjusted according to the actual situation of college students. Generally speaking, music therapy should be conducted once or twice a week, and the duration of each session should be 30 minutes to 1 hour. During the therapy, college students should maintain a focused and open mind and actively cooperate with the therapist to complete the activities. Finally, after the music therapy, the therapist should summarize and analyze the feedback from the college students to evaluate the effectiveness of the music therapy. At the same time, therapists need to provide continuous psychological support for college students to help them better cope with psychological stress in their lives [10].

4.3. Evaluation of Music Therapy Effect

First of all, the psychological condition of college students can be pre-tested and post-tested by means of questionnaires and psychometric tests in order to assess the psychological changes before and after music therapy. These questionnaires

and tests can include anxiety self-assessment scale, depression self-assessment scale, self-esteem scale, etc. By comparing the scores before and after, the effect of music therapy on the psychological condition of college students can be understood [11]. Secondly, the behavioral and emotional changes of college students during music therapy can be observed. For example, whether they can actively participate in music activities, whether they can find happiness and relaxation in music, and whether they can express their emotions and thoughts through music. These observations can be done by recording, describing and analyzing. Finally, interviews can be conducted with college students to find out their feelings and evaluations of music therapy. These interviews can be one-on-one in-depth interviews or group interviews. The interviews can be used to find out how receptive college students are to music therapy, how they experience it, and how they think it affects their psychological condition.

Overall, the assessment of the effects of music therapy requires a combination of methods, including questionnaires, behavioral observations and interviews. The use of these methods needs to be carried out in strict accordance with the research design and statistical methods in order to ensure the scientificity and reliability of the assessment results. At the same time, the effect assessment of music therapy also needs to take into account individual differences and the complexity of the therapeutic process in order to avoid simple causal inferences and one-sided evaluations [12].

5. Case Analysis

5.1. Case Selection and Background Introduction

In this paper, we selected a music therapy case from a university counseling center for presentation. The protagonist in the case is a sophomore student named Xiaoming. Xiao Ming was under a lot of pressure in terms of academics, interpersonal relationships, and future planning, which led to psychological problems such as anxiety and depression. On the recommendation of the school's counseling center, Xiao Ming joined a music therapy group.

The activities of the music therapy group were held once a week, and a total of eight sessions were conducted. During the treatment, the music therapist used a variety of music therapy techniques according to Xiao Ming's specific situation. For example, in the first session, the music therapist allowed Xiao Ming to freely choose his favorite instrument to play in order to release his inner pressure; in the second session, the music therapist guided Xiao Ming to express his emotions through music composition; in the subsequent sessions, the music therapist also allowed Xiao Ming to participate in group activities such as choral singing and rhythmic exercises in order to enhance his socialization skills.

After eight sessions of music therapy, Xiao Ming's psychological condition improved significantly. He was no longer so anxious and depressed, and his relationships with classmates and family members became more harmonious. In the follow-up interview after the music therapy sessions, Xiaoming said that he had learned how to cope with stress and emotions better through music therapy, which would be very helpful to him in his future life.

This case shows that music therapy, as a non-pharmacological treatment method, has significant efficacy in psychological relief for college students. Through music

therapy, college students can release pressure, express their emotions, and improve their social skills, so that they can better cope with the challenges they encounter in their studies and life [13].

5.2. Implementation Process and Effect of Music Therapy

In this study, we selected the psychological counseling center of a university as the practice base of music therapy, with 20 college students with different psychological problems as the research subjects. The design of the music therapy program was divided into three phases: assessment phase, treatment phase and follow-up phase.

In the assessment stage, through face-to-face communication with the students, we learned about their psychological conditions, life background and music preferences, laying the foundation for the subsequent development of a personalized music therapy program. In the treatment phase, different music therapy techniques, such as music listening, music composition and music expression, were used according to the specific conditions of the students. In addition, music activities, such as choral singing and instrument playing, were organized to enhance students' teamwork and self-confidence. During the follow-up stage, the treatment program was adjusted in time through regular communication with students to understand their music therapy experiences and psychological changes. After one semester of music therapy, most of the students reported that their symptoms in terms of psychological stress, anxiety, and depression had been alleviated. Through the data analysis of the assessment scales, we also found that the students' psychological conditions were significantly improved. This is specifically manifested in the following aspects [14].

1) students' moods became more pleasant, and anxiety and depression were effectively alleviated. Music therapy helps students release their negative emotions and find inner balance through music selection and listening.

2) Students' self-expression ability has been improved. The music creation and expression activities in music therapy give students the opportunity to express their emotions and thoughts through music, improving their self-expression.

3) Students' teamwork and self-confidence were improved. Choral singing and instrument playing in music activities allow students to play their respective strengths in a team and work together to accomplish tasks, thus enhancing their teamwork skills and self-confidence.

4) Students' psychological coping ability has been improved. Music therapy helps students learn to face psychological pressure and challenges, and improves their psychological coping ability [15].

5.3. Summary of the Case Study

First of all, music therapy, as a non-pharmacological treatment method, has significant efficacy in the psychological relief of college students. In the case, the college students who participated in music therapy got obvious relief in psychological pressure, anxiety and depression, indicating that music therapy can effectively help college students solve psychological problems. Secondly, music therapy can improve college students' self-cognition and emotion regulation ability. During the implementation of music therapy, students express their emotions through music so as to better recognize and understand their inner world. At the same time, music therapy can also help students learn how

to regulate their emotions through music to cope with the stress and challenges in daily life. In addition, music therapy has a high degree of safety and feasibility. Compared with other psychotherapeutic methods, music therapy does not require the use of drugs, avoiding possible side effects. At the same time, music therapy is easy to implement and can be widely promoted in the campus environment to provide psychological relief services for more college students. However, the application of music therapy in college students' psychological counseling also has some limitations. For example, the effects of music therapy may vary according to individual differences, and not all college students are suitable for this method. In addition, music therapy requires guidance from professionals, and thus may be limited by human resources in its practical application.

6. Conclusion

Music therapy not only provides a platform for college students to express themselves and release pressure, but also meets the diverse needs of different students through personalized treatment plans. In the future, with the continuous improvement of music therapy theory and the accumulation of practical experience, its application in psychological counseling for college students will be more extensive and in-depth. Colleges and universities should pay more attention to music therapy and train professional music therapists to provide more mental health services for college students. At the same time, students should also be encouraged to actively participate in music therapy activities, so that they can enhance their self-knowledge and psychological resilience through the power of music, and lay a solid foundation for their future study and life.

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