

# *Research on the Path of Developing Group Psychological Counseling for College Students in Ethnic Areas—Taking Inner Mongolia Minzu University as an Example*

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**Abstract:** In the context of education in the new era, it is a major goal of higher education to cultivate talents with healthy and all-round development of body and mind. From the perspective of practice, college students are under pressure in employment, enrollment and interpersonal communication, and have certain problems in mental health. Combining college students' mental health education with group psychological counseling can better achieve the teaching objectives of mental health education, optimize teaching methods, implement the effectiveness of mental health education, and effectively expand and make up for the traditional mental health education. Based on the practice of group psychological counseling in Inner Mongolia University for Nationalities, this paper discusses the strategies of developing group psychological counseling for college students in ethnic areas.

## **1. Introduction**

In the past, China's colleges and universities did not pay enough attention to college students' mental health, and the research results of college students' mental health education were relatively backward compared with foreign countries. However, in recent years, with the development of higher education, mental health education in colleges and universities has developed rapidly, which has aroused widespread concern in the educational sector.

## **2. Overview of group psychological counseling**

### **2.1. Definition of group counseling**

Compared with traditional mental health education, group psychological counseling has the characteristics of effectiveness and universality. It refers to the collective mental health education for people in a similar collective environment when the audience groups gather. The group psychological counseling faces people with similar learning or working environments. Carrying out mental health education for such groups can play the role of team members' mutual influence and cooperation, thus improving the effectiveness of education, guiding members to acquire higher social skills, and achieving healthy physical and psychological growth.

## **2.2. The special role of group psychological counseling**

Although the traditional mental health education in colleges and universities is also carried out in classes, its teaching form is relatively simple, and most of them are theoretical teaching to students through textbooks, hoping to guide students to release negative emotions and improve their psychological literacy. But from the perspective of practice, the effect of traditional mental health education is not satisfactory. Carrying out group psychological counseling in colleges and universities can play the role of peer influence, create a more open and relaxed communication atmosphere and communication platform, and let more students get results from psychological counseling. In addition, compared with traditional individual psychological counseling, group psychological counseling can target more students, thus making more students benefit from it.

## **3. The feasibility of group psychological counseling in colleges and universities**

### **3.1. Consistent with the form of mental health education in colleges and universities**

At present, the college mental health education course, as a public compulsory course in colleges and universities, mainly includes the popularization of mental health knowledge, psychological effect experience and psychological behavior experience. According to the teaching requirements of the Ministry of Education, the mental health course in higher education needs to integrate theory and practice, so that students can obtain behavior training and knowledge intake through experience, such as teacher lectures, case analysis, cooperative discussion, experience and perception. Group psychological counseling adapts to the development of mental health courses in higher education. It is precisely through the creation of group situations that students can gain relevant experience in the situation and achieve mental health education in group cooperation and communication.[1]Teachers can effectively improve teaching efficiency and truly implement educational results by completing teaching through group psychological guidance in the classroom.

### **3.2. The objects of higher education in ethnic areas are consistent**

The key of group psychological counseling is that the counseling object should be in a similar environment. College students in ethnic areas have their own characteristics.[2]Take Inner Mongolia University for Nationalities as an example. Due to the geographical environment of universities in ethnic areas, there are many ethnic minority students in universities in this area. Students come from different nationalities, and have different growth backgrounds, living habits and even ideological tendencies. Students gather together to form a special group to carry out group psychological counseling for the students in the group. The psychological problems encountered by students are often similar. The students are in the same environment, and the group psychological counseling is targeted.

## **4. Discussion on the practical path of group psychological counseling -- taking Inner Mongolia University for Nationalities as an example**

### **4.1. Research object**

This research practice selected 64 students from Inner Mongolia University for Nationalities who were not the subjects of the study. They were all freshmen. The students were divided into two groups. One group was the experimental group, and they were given group psychological counseling for two months.[3]The other group was the control group, without any group psychological counseling

intervention. The students participating in the experiment were not randomly selected, but met the following criteria. First, we have enough time to participate in group psychological counseling once a week. Second, students voluntarily participate in and agree to use the test contents and results for research. The 63 students who participated in psychological counseling were divided into two groups. The experimental group of group A consisted of 16 girls and 16 boys. Group B reference group also has 16 girls and boys.

## 4.2. Research methods

This study adopts the SCL-90 scale, which has 90 items and includes 10 analysis and statistical factors. It mainly includes total average score, somatization, compulsive behavior, psychosis, interpersonal sensitivity, tension and anxiety, pessimism, fear, paranoia, and hatred. In addition, the scale also involves some content related to mental health, such as feeling, behavior, thinking, interpersonal relationship, etc.

## 4.3. Practical process

Table 1: One to two weeks (self-awareness)

| Activity theme                    | Activity purpose                                | Activity content  |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Self-awareness                    | Team members introduce themselves               | Team members introduce themselves on the cards, including their names, strengths and weaknesses, preferences, etc., and exchange cards to complete self-identification and team mutual understanding.   |
| Subgroup                          | Team formation, group name setting, etc         | Members choose their favorite animals and fruits and divide them into groups according to their similar preferences. Each group determines the group leader and cooperates to determine the group name.   |
| The ever-changing me              | Know yourself in the eyes of different people   | Substitute parents, relatives, teachers, friends and other identities, describe yourself in the eyes of others, and share personal feelings with team members.  |
| Know yourself differently         | Guide members to further understand themselves  | Members prepare A4 paper, draw a four-quadrant diagram, and fill in each quadrant with "known I" (that is, I know well in the eyes of others and myself as well as myself), "my confusion" (who others think but I don't think), "invisible I" (who others know but I know), "future I" (what I want to be) |
| Mutual evaluation of team members | Guide members to objectively examine themselves | Members first describe themselves with any pattern and invite one or two group partners to evaluate each other  |
| Experience summary                | replay  | Invite members to share the harvest of this stage   |

The students participating in the experiment were divided into two groups, with no intervention for the control group. For the 32 students in the experimental group, group psychological counseling was conducted once a week for two months, a total of eight times. The members of the two groups were tested with SCL-90 before and after the counseling. According to the test results, the relationship between group psychological counseling and college students' mental health was analyzed, and the role of group psychological counseling in college students was evaluated, as well as the practical strategies.

The form of group counseling is different from the traditional mental health classroom teaching. The location of group counseling is not the traditional classroom. In this study, school cafes, cultural salons and other places with warm atmosphere are selected. The form of tutoring is not the traditional teacher's single theory teaching, but the rich forms of activities.

Combined with group counseling practice, the whole process can be divided into four stages. The first two weeks focus on guiding students to understand themselves (As shown in Table 1). The educational goal of three to four weeks is to improve students' self-confidence and cultivate students' optimistic and positive attitude (As shown in Table 2). Five to six weeks of education is about member cooperation and interpersonal communication (As shown in Table 3). I hope students can integrate into the group and improve their interpersonal skills. The last two weeks are summary and outlook, hoping to help students reshape their psychology and look forward to the future (As shown in Table 4).

Table 2: The third to fourth week (recovery of optimism)

| Activity theme           | Activity purpose                                | Activity content   |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Activity review          | Get into coaching status as soon as possible    | Review the contents of the previous stage  |
| Activity review          | Quickly enter the coaching status               | Recall the activities of the previous stage  |
| Think about advantages   | Guide members to regain confidence              | Team members share with each other, describe advantages and tell corresponding stories   |
| Others' merit evaluation | Invite members to share their strengths         | Describe the strengths of other team members   |
| Bean experiment          | Guide students to accept and restart confidence | The teacher played a slide to show the bean experiment to the members. Fresh beans can be used for germination, crushed beans can be used to make soybean milk and tofu, and beans that have become dregs can be used to make fermented bean curd, etc. Teachers guide students to be useful no matter where they are<br>State can find their own flash point. |
| Experience summary       | Summarize psychological counseling activities   | Share and discuss  |

Table 3: The fifth to sixth week (interpersonal collaboration)

| Activity theme               | Activity purpose                                      | Activity content  |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| Activity review              | Enter status as soon as possible                      | Review the contents of the previous stage   |
| SWTICH Game                  | Cultivate collaborative ability                       | Members need to use the handle to complete the cooperation task within the specified time. The teacher will divide the members into groups to compete. The more cooperative the group, the higher the score in the game.                                      |
| Baton sprint                 | Understand the role of the team                       | The team members carry out relay race sprints. The team members need to make full efforts in the race, run the specified distance, and pass the baton to the teammates. The team members will win if they finish the corresponding tasks as soon as possible. |
| Sharing of members' feelings | Summarize the results and review the coaching content | Members share experiences and teachers summarize  |

Table 4: Week 7 to 8 (outlook and summary)

| Activity theme  | Activity purpose  | Activity content   |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Activity review | Get into coaching status as soon as possible              | During the previous period of review   |
| Review the past | Recall the memory and correctly understand the past       | Recall the past, reveal the sadness or heart knot that you can't get rid of in your growth, and the things that made you most happy in your growth in the past. The teacher guides the members to express their thoughts and share happiness in the form of pictures or words on A4 paper. |
| Looking ahead   | Guide members to set life goals                           | Write any expectations about the future on A4 paper, and the content should be detailed and specific.  |
| Share           | Summarize the results of coaching in the past eight weeks | Members share their gains in   |

After two months and eight weeks of group psychological counseling, statistics and comparison were made on the mental health of college students. Nearly 85% of the students in the experimental group said that they had gained from group counseling and enjoyed themselves in the process of counseling. Nearly 97% of the students said that they had gained a lot in the first two weeks of tutoring and could understand themselves more clearly. 90% of the students said they had more confidence in the future. Nearly 80% of the students think that they have made good friends in the activity and have more specific plans for the future. The experiment results are obvious.

## 5. Strategies of integrating group counseling into college mental health education

### 5.1. Establish school-based curriculum around students' reality

College mental health education should still be based on the textbooks issued by the Ministry of Education. However, due to the differences in the actual situation of students in different regions, the school should design the teaching content based on the textbooks and educational objectives and around the actual situation of students. Therefore, group psychological counseling can be used as an effective supplement to traditional mental health education, and a targeted and personalized school-based curriculum can be established. For example, we can design group counseling themes for college students at different stages. Freshman students who have just entered colleges and universities can design some psychological education themes that adapt to the environment and plan for the future in the face of drastic changes in their identity and changes in their learning and living environment. However, senior students often have anxiety psychology in employment and other aspects. We can design themes to alleviate anxiety and enter society according to students' needs.

### 5.2. Create a harmonious and open group counseling atmosphere

The place of traditional mental health education is in the classroom. The teacher, as a teacher, carries out psychological education mainly based on theoretical education for students, and students passively accept it. The whole teaching atmosphere appears closed, even tense and boring, which is not conducive to the implementation of the effect of mental health education. Teachers can regularly change places to create a harmonious and open educational atmosphere, so that students can express their feelings and carry out exchanges in the context of equal interaction. In addition, group counseling should focus on case education, experience education and interactive education, and reduce theoretical education. Teachers can use games and other practical means to provide group counseling for students.

## 6. Conclusion

Group psychological counseling can give play to the gathering effect of the environment and enable more people to obtain the effect of mental health education in a short time. Carrying out group psychological counseling in colleges and universities in ethnic areas can effectively make up for the shortcomings of traditional mental health education and effectively cultivate students' psychological literacy. Teachers should create a good and open educational atmosphere and design more targeted educational counseling programs around the actual psychological needs of students in ethnic areas.

## References

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