

The application of group counseling in college students' career planning

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Abstract: Strengthening college students' career education and counseling to help them better plan their career and realize the win-win situation of personal value and social development has become an important task in college education at present. Group counseling is a form of psychological counseling carried out in a group situation, which is a process of helping people through interpersonal interaction within a group, prompting individuals to recognize themselves, explore themselves, accept themselves, adjust and improve their relationships with others, and learn new attitudes and behaviors in order to develop a well-adapted process of helping people through observation, learning, and experiencing in the interaction. Based on this, this activity uses group counseling to help college students make preliminary exploration of their career on the basis of self-knowledge.

1. Introduction

With the increasingly fierce competition for employment among college students, career planning has become more and more one of the necessary abilities for college students. College students should have a positive sense of career planning and development in order to better cope with the challenges and development opportunities in the workplace. However, in reality, many college students lack sufficient understanding and awareness of career planning and face problems such as difficulty in choosing, unclear direction and confusion[1].

2. Characteristics and advantages of group counseling

2.1 Characteristics of group counseling

2.1.1 Experiential

The experiential nature of group counseling refers to a series of interactive, participatory activities and experiences that help group members gain insight and awareness as they learn and grow together. In group counseling, experiential teaching methods are often applied to create a more participatory and interactive learning environment. For example, it can be used to simulate interviews through role-playing, job scenario exercises, and so on. Such experiences can help students better understand the demands and challenges of professional roles and provide practical opportunities to improve their communication, problem-solving and decision-making skills. Case studies can also be utilized, using

real or virtual cases for analysis and discussion. Students can work together in small groups to analyze the case, explore different solutions and strategies, and discuss and share experiences about the career development issues in the case. This experience allows students to feel and think about challenges and decision-making in career development through real-life cases, improving problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

2.1.2 Reflective

Group discussion and cooperative activities in group counseling can stimulate interaction and cooperation among group members and lead to a rich learning experience through joint problem solving, sharing of experiences and perspectives. Group members can listen and learn from each other, and gain inspiration and cognition from different perspectives and experiences. Feedback and sharing sessions in group counseling provide opportunities for group members to communicate and reflect with each other. Group members can share their learning experiences, confusion and growth, and get feedback and suggestions from others. This experience promotes interaction and support among group members and deepens the knowledge of career development.

2.1.3 Subjective

In the process of group counseling, each participant, as the main body, exerts his or her own mobility and initiative, and it is a process of active participation and interaction, co-construction, co-sharing and common growth. It emphasizes that each individual has a unique value and role in the group, and that each person has the right to express his or her own views, feelings and needs.

2.2 Advantages of Group Counseling Activities

2.2.1 Save time and effort with good results

Group counseling can provide support and guidance to more than one person at the same time, which can be a more efficient use of time and resources than one-on-one counseling. Moreover, in group counseling, members can share their experiences and problem-solving methods with each other, and this collective mutual support and sharing of experiences can effectively speed up problem solving. Members can learn from each other's experience and avoid detours, thus saving time and energy.

2.2.2 High number of participants

In large groups, individuals can build extensive support networks and establish connections and relationships with a wider range of people, which helps to enhance their emotional and social support. In the face of difficulties and challenges, group members can support, encourage and help each other to get through them.

2.2.3 Easy to apply to real life

Gerald Corey, an American psychologist, concluded through his research that the basic principle of group counseling is that group members can acquire knowledge and skills through group counseling and apply them positively and effectively to real life and interpersonal interactions [2]. The key to the easy application of group counseling to real life is its flexibility and adaptability, which can be adjusted and applied according to different needs and situations. Whether in education, work, community or personal life, group counseling can play an important role in helping individuals and groups to achieve goals, solve problems, enhance emotional support and improve the quality of life.

3. Flow of activities

This group counseling activity was aimed at freshmen students in the College of Design at a university in Wuhan, where there are about 100 students in the freshman class. The person in charge of the activity is called the "facilitator". All the students were divided into ten groups of about ten students each. The duration of the activity is approximately 90 minutes.

3.1 Introductory activity "Career parody"

In group counseling activities, the introduction session is a very important one. It aims to attract members' attention and mobilize their interest through various interactive ways, so that they can participate in the group support activities more actively. It lays a good foundation for the next group support activities.

In order to make the group counseling activity more lively and interesting, the facilitator used role-playing in the introduction session to encourage active participation, communication and sharing, creating a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere and increasing the motivation of the members. In this activity, the teacher invites three to five groups of students to perform a certain occupation on the stage by drumming, randomly invites other students to guess the name of the occupation performed by the performers, and to tell the occupational characteristics of the occupation as well as the qualities needed to work in that occupation. Through the occupation mimicry activity, members can choose the occupations they are interested in to mimic, which can help them better understand information about the characteristics, requirements, advantages and disadvantages of these occupations. Understanding the connections and interactions between different occupations leads to a more comprehensive and accurate perception of occupations.

3.2 Thematic activity I "Careers and interests"

According to Hollander's theory of trait factors, an individual's career interests can be categorized into six types: practical, research, artistic, social, entrepreneurial, and conventional. These types are determined by an individual's preference for six basic environmental elements. These six basic environmental elements are practical, investigative, artistic, social, entrepreneurial and conventional. ^[3]Based on this, this activity was designed with four questions that can help participants better understand their career interests.

Question 1: Recall as best you can what you used to do in recent times that gave you pleasure. This question can help group members understand their interests and hobbies. For example, if participants recall experiences where they enjoyed working on crafts or socializing with friends, then they may have a high preference for the two basic environmental elements of sports and socializing. This corresponds to the practical and social types of vocational interest. It is possible then that they are better suited for jobs related to these two types, such as engineers, mechanics, tour guides, and counselors.

Question 2: What is your favorite leisure activity in general. This question can help corps members understand their leisure preferences and interests. For example, if their favorite leisure activity is reading, writing, or other creative activities, then they may have a high preference for the arts as a basic environmental element. This corresponds to the artistic type of career interest type. People who target this type may be suited to careers as writers, editors, composers, etc.

Question 3: Describe an idol or a person who has influenced you the most. This question can help group members understand their own values and interests. For example, if their idol is a social reformer or a philanthropist, their idol may have positively influenced their career interests and thus changed their career preferences to careers related to their idol, e.g., social worker, careers related to

social welfare.

Question 4: The one thing you remember most about yourself. This question can help participants understand their own personality and interests. For example, if they recalled that they had developed a sense of helpfulness as a result of having been helped by others, and felt that great satisfaction could be derived from helping others, in which case they might choose to pursue careers related to helping others, such as: teacher, counselor, medical practitioner, and so on.

In this session, group members share the four questions in turn. Firstly, the facilitator should pay attention to prompting members to think from a deeper perspective, and can encourage group members to share more deeply and meaningfully by asking follow-up or guiding questions to open up a more meaningful discussion. An appropriate time limit can be set to ensure that each group member has the opportunity to share and to avoid some members taking up too much time and preventing others from sharing.

Secondly facilitators have to enhance their interactions with members and can also use techniques such as self-disclosure to create a more authentic and intimate connection with members and increase trust and understanding between them. By sharing their own experiences, challenges, or growth journeys, facilitators are able to build empathy with members and stimulate reflection on their own perceptions and growth. When facilitators demonstrate their vulnerability and authenticity, they can also encourage members to be more open and honest about their thoughts and feelings. Members are also more likely to feel accepted and encouraged, and thus more willing to share their voices and confusion.

The final facilitator guides the group members to make connections between the issues discussed and their career paths. By exploring the relationship between the problem and their individual career paths, members are able to better understand the practical application and career implications of the problem, thus increasing their interest and engagement in the problem.

3.3 Thematic activity II, "Drawing a blueprint for life"

By mapping out future work scenarios, presenting their workplace stories, discussing and sharing their ideas, members can learn from and inspire each other to explore how to realize the future scenarios depicted. Potential opportunities and challenges can be seen more clearly. This helps members to recognize the skills and competencies they need to possess in their future jobs and make development plans accordingly. One can also better understand their goals and directions in their career. This can help them to be more focused in their personal career planning and to be prepared to achieve these goals.

In this session, the facilitator can utilize multimedia technology to put the work scenario diagrams drawn by members onto the big screen, in which all members can participate, share and discuss together. This interactive approach can promote communication and interaction among team members so that everyone can express their views and opinions and deepen their understanding of the work scenarios. Members can also gain inspiration and new perspectives by observing the work of others to further refine and optimize their own work scenario maps.

In addition, facilitators should strengthen their interaction with members and guide them to have a correct understanding of their future work. For example, with the continuous development of technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, the Internet of Things and automation, they will be widely used in various industries and have a far-reaching impact on the way of work and the content of work. Coaches can encourage members to maintain their curiosity, inquisitiveness and motivation to learn, proactively learn new technologies and knowledge, and discuss with them the work opportunities brought about by technological innovations.

4. Conclusions

The closing stage of the activity is an important part of the whole counseling process, which serves as a summary, reflection and future planning. First, the facilitator should review the entire counseling process with all members. This includes reviewing the goals, content and format of the activity, as well as the learning and growth of the participants. Summarizing can help participants deepen their understanding and experience of the tutoring activity and lay the groundwork for planning the next steps. Secondly, facilitators can lead participants to reflect and discuss, allowing them to share their feelings, gains and discoveries during the tutoring process. This can facilitate communication and learning among the participants, as well as help them to think and understand their own career development more deeply. At the end of the activity, a simple closing ceremony can be organized to recognize the participants' efforts and achievements. In addition, the facilitator can collect feedback and comments from the participants to improve future group counseling activities and provide better support and experience.

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