

Research on the relationship between self-esteem, psychological help-seeking stigma and psychological help-seeking attitude of college students in private colleges and universities

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Abstract: College students are in the transition stage between school and society, who are facing with various problems such as academic pressure, interpersonal communication, work practice and so on. Their mental health has always been the focus of the whole country and society. Therefore, taking measures to reduce the risk of college students' mental health problems and improve the mental health work of colleges and universities is conducive to improving the overall mental health level of colleges and universities. In order to study the factors that affect psychological help-seeking, this paper aims at the factors that have an important influence on psychological help-seeking attitudes, and explores the multiple mediating effects of college students' professional psychological help-seeking stigma in self-esteem and professional psychological help-seeking attitude. In addition, this paper tries to find effective intervention methods to reduce psychological help-seeking stigma, improve psychological help-seeking attitudes, and increase the use of mental health services.

1. Introduction

Under the background of increasingly severe social psychological problems, college students are at a special turning point in their lives, and may face psychological pressure caused by a series of problems such as intense social competition, greater academic pressure, interpersonal troubles, and emotional factors. The college stage has become a high incidence stage of psychological problems, with a higher incidence of psychological problems, and even the suicide rate of this group is significantly higher than that of the same age group. At present, the enrollment age of college students is between 17 and 19 years old, and this age group is basically in an early adult state, which belongs to the transition period from immature to mature. College students at this stage will face various pressures, such as: study, love, interpersonal and employment[1]. The generation of these pressures will cause the mental health of college students to be compared with other normal youth groups of the same age. The mental health is generally lower, so the situation of psychological problems is greater than that of the general population. The survey found that in more than 20 colleges and universities. The data of the mental health study of more than 5,220 college students showed that 16.51% of the students had moderate or higher psychological problems. In this way, the current mental health of college students is not very optimistic. At present, my country's national economic and cultural level is constantly improving, and the state pays more and more attention to the mental health of college students. A series of measures have been taken to carry out mental health education, and a variety of professional psychological help methods have been provided for the mental health of college students. In order to improve this situation and increase the utilization rate of mental health services among college students who need help, researchers have studied the predictors of psychological help, and professional psychological help attitude is one of them[2]. Studies have shown that there are many factors that influence the attitude of seeking psychological help. Perfectionism is an important personality factor, which refers to a personality trait that endlessly pursues high goals and high standards. Perfectionists have a negative attitude

towards seeking psychotherapy because seeking therapy can make family members and peers perceive themselves as vulnerable and incompetent. Therefore, in order to improve the mental health of college students, it is necessary to explore the relationship among psychological help-seeking stigma, self-compassion and psychological help-seeking attitude, further understand the factors that affect college students' psychological help-seeking, and find effective intervention methods for psychological help-seeking stigma[3].

2. The stigma of mental illness

2.1. The concept of mental illness stigma

Foreign scholars have obtained the concept of "mental disease stigma" by summarizing previous studies on "stigma". "Stigma" originally refers to the marks or symbols on people, originated in ancient Greece, and the concept of "stigma" officially entered the field of psychology. Mental illness stigma refers to the negative comments, alienation and neglect of people with mental illnesses that individuals have learned during their growth, and are emotionally unwilling to contact them. As the patient himself, he has already suffered the pain caused by mental illness, and because of the existence of stigma, he has to suffer the prejudice and discrimination that the public holds against him. Stigma consists of two components. They are public stigma and self-stigma. Some kind of prejudice or discrimination against a group in the outside world is public stigma, while self-stigma refers to the internalization of external discrimination by individuals[4]. There is a decrease in self-evaluation and self-worth. Using different classification criteria to classify mental illness stigma can be divided into different types. Psychological help-seeking stigma is an assumption made by the public for individuals who take psychological help-seeking behavior. Some studies have shown that psychological help-seeking stigma is the main obstacle that prevents individuals from seeking psychological help. The psychological help-seeking stigma is mainly divided into self-stigma and public stigma. Self-stigma, also known as "feeling" or "internalizing" stigma, refers to the individual's internalized beliefs and associated stigma that others discriminate against psychoseekers. It is the influence of negative stereotypes on individuals when considering whether to seek psychological help. Public stigma refers to the negative stereotypes that other people in society have about individuals seeking psychological help[5]. Public stigma and self-stigma in almost all groups and in different environments are significantly associated with a decrease in psychological help-seeking willingness, a lower individual's lower psychological well-being and a decrease in self-efficacy. In general, the psychological help-seeking stigma has a negative impact on the behavior of seeking psychological treatment, because of the negative impact on the attitude of seeking help, even if individuals have obvious psychological and behavioral problems, they often do not seek psychological help.

2.2. Measurement and coping of mental illness stigma

After searching, we found nearly 30 scales that measure the stigma of various mental illnesses, such as: questionnaires about the attitudes of the mental illness community, questionnaires about attribution issues, and so on. Self-stigma seeking professional psychological help was developed by Vogel, called the Self-Stigma Scale or SSOSH for short[6]. The scale consists of 10 items and measures participants' self-stigma. After studying the causes and mechanisms of stigma, people began to experiment with various methods to slow down or reduce mental illness stigma. Generally speaking, it can be divided into four ways: opposition, teaching, contact, and awareness. . Opposing tactics means repeating the inequalities and injustices of various stigmas, prompting people to stop stigmatizing them for moral reasons. Opposition tactics are often used where stigmatized media coverage, advertising, newspapers, and public discourse are opposed. Opposition is necessarily a repressive one that may inspire deep psychological opposition in people. In the face of public attitudes, it is impossible to change the public attitudes, and in serious cases, it will have a more negative effect. The teaching method has long been intended to declare war on the stereotype of the uncertainty of mental illness. The teaching method expresses the correct understanding and real

situation of mental illness through radio and television, media advertisements, various books, newspapers and magazines and other channels, so as to remove all the misunderstandings about mental illness that people have always had. The method of contact is interpersonal interaction with members of the stigmatized group. Studies have found that compared with objections and teachings, contact with people with mental illnesses can actually improve attitudes. Interpersonal contact is more difficult to implement than teaching, because it cannot be promoted and popularized like education, but requires proper arrangements. Cognitive therapy is often one of the ways in which people can change their cognitive schemas due to depression or anxiety, as well as self-stigma[7].

Therefore, according to the label theory, if an individual is diagnosed with a mental illness, he believes that social others will reject him, because he is afraid of being rejected and rejected by social others, so he takes a series of defensive measures (such as social avoidance, active rejection) to protect himself from Being discriminated against by others, but this way exacerbates the impact of mental illness and brings more serious consequences, such as emotional disorders, lack of sense of worth and belonging, social avoidance or rejection, etc. These problems will lead to more serious problems. mental disorder[8].

3. Professional psychological help-seeking attitude

The attitude of seeking professional psychological help is referred to as psychological help attitude in this paper. Some studies have pointed out that psychological help-seeking refers to the behavior of individuals taking the initiative to seek professional help for their own psychological problems in life, so as to alleviate the distress of various psychological problems. Foreign research has pointed out a model of college students' attitude towards psychological help. In this model, it is proposed that seeking professional psychological help mainly includes the following three aspects: (a) problem identification, (b) decision to seek help, (c) choice of psychological services. A key assumption underlying this model is that cultural worldviews, including those shaped by race/ethnicity and gender, are important in the help-seeking process and influence three main aspects of the model. Cognitive bias correction is a general term for an experimental paradigm that achieves cognitive training and cognitive bias change by subjecting subjects to a series of stimuli[9]. Cognitive bias correction is based on the improvement of cognitive therapy, a kind of program operation based on the network. It has been shown to be significantly effective in modifying maladaptive cognition. Research has shown that self-stigma is ingrained and automatic. Even if an individual can understand that mental illness is not a sign of weakness, seeking help does not mean that there is something wrong with the practice. However, they still have difficulty applying these beliefs to how they use mental health services. Because we really want to change a person's psychological help-seeking behavior, it is more effective to increase the understanding of psychological problems than mental health education, and to focus on the cognition that affects psychological help-seeking. It is precisely because the relationship between self-stigma of mental illness and professional psychological help-seeking attitude is very close, and other factors related to self-stigma, such as self-esteem and self-worth, may have an impact on professional psychological help-seeking attitude through self-stigma of mental illness. Societal perceptions of mental illness and its associated groups are mostly incompetent, exclusionary, and threatening, and this internalized negative view can lead individuals to be reluctant to seek psychotherapy. The study pointed out that public stigma, self-stigma and self-compassion were significantly negatively correlated, which could negatively predict the level of self-compassion. The lower the level of public stigma and self-stigma, the higher the level of self-compassion. Studies have shown that in obese subjects, self-compassion partially mediates self-stigma and depression, and self-compassion and self-stigma are significantly negatively correlated. Individuals with higher levels of self-compassion tend to take more proactive actions when dealing with personal shortcomings. Studies have shown that people with higher levels of self-compassion tend to regard self-experienced harm as a shared human experience, not just a personal experience, so they have a stronger sense of psychological stability and control. Both in terms of self-stigma and public stigma, men scored significantly higher than women, which is consistent with previous studies. Exploring

the reasons may have a deep relationship with the gender roles of boys. From ancient times to the present, men have been endowed with strong characteristics. Under this gender role label, men will be considered to have psychological problems or diseases. Those accepted and recognized by society are more likely to be stigmatized by mental illness[10].

4. Research methods and results

The stigma questionnaire of seeking professional psychological help (referred to as psychological help stigma) was used to measure the two dimensions of public stigma and self-stigma. There are 10 questions in total, 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) are scored on a 5-point positive scale[11], the higher the score, the higher the level of stigma. Psychological help-seeking attitude scores were measured using the short version of the attitude towards seeking professional psychological help (referred to as psychological help-seeking attitude) questionnaire, including three dimensions: independence, effectiveness and openness. The scale includes 10 questions, 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (very much disagree) Agree) are scored on a 4-point scale, the higher the score, the more positive the individual's psychological help-seeking attitude. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was used to measure the self-esteem level of college students. There are 10 questions in total, 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) are scored on a 4-point scale, the higher the score, the higher the level of self-esteem. After the questionnaires were collected uniformly, SPSS 19.0 was used for descriptive statistics and correlation analysis of each variable. The fitness test of the model was carried out with AMOS17[12]. Finally, Mplus8.0 was used to test the mediating effect and effect size of each pathway in the model. Public stigma was used as a predictor variable, psychological help-seeking attitude was used as an outcome variable, and self-esteem and self-stigma were used as mediating variables for path analysis to establish a chain mediation model. The model is shown in Figure1.

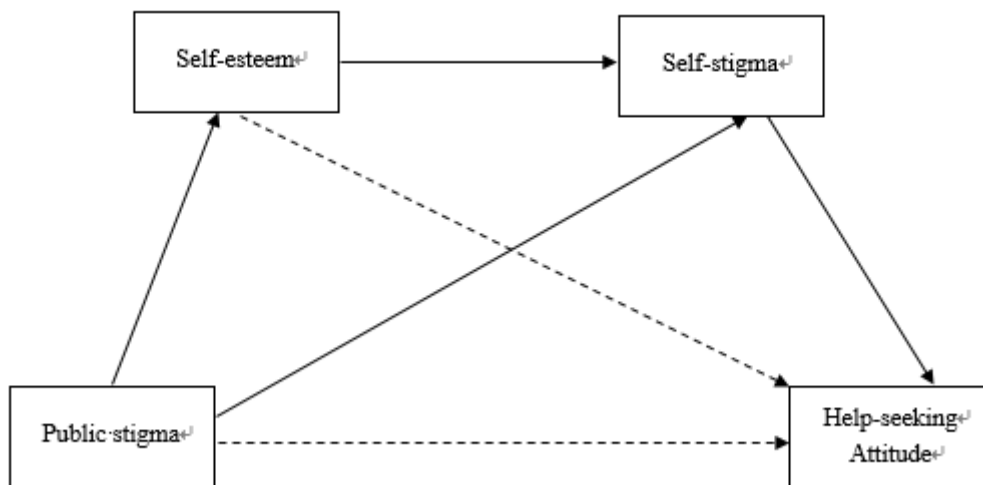


Figure 1. The standardized road map of the relationship between public stigma and help-seeking attitudes

According to the mediation analysis procedure and the multi-step mediation variable test method proposed in the previous literature, the deviation correction percentile Bootstrap method was used, the selected sampling size was 5000, and the 95% confidence interval was set. If the interval estimate contains 0, the mediation effect is not significant, and if the interval estimate does not contain 0, the mediation effect is significant[13]. After testing, there are two mediating paths in the model that meet the significant conditions, namely, public stigma affects psychological help-seeking attitude through self-stigma, and public stigma affects psychological help-seeking attitude through self-esteem and self-stigma.

5. Conclusions

The research results show that the self-stigma of mental illness plays a complete mediating role between self-esteem and professional psychological help-seeking attitude, which suggests that we can improve the professional psychological help-seeking attitude of college students by improving the self-esteem level of college students and reducing the self-stigma level of college students' psychological illness. College students, as the backbone of the country, are the focus of mental health workers, and the mental health level of college students in my country is relatively low, which is closely related to the professional psychological help-seeking attitude of college students. This study starts from the mental illness stigma of college students, and explores its influence on college students' professional help-seeking attitude through the path of self-esteem and self-stigma. The research results provide theoretical basis for school mental health education, family education and social psychological work. A series of intervention measures to improve the mental health of college students. College educators and managers should take a multi-pronged approach in improving the mental health of college students, pay attention to the current mental health of college students, and at the same time focus on building a good school atmosphere and creating an open, inclusive and safe campus culture for college students environment, so that they can dare to seek help from professional psychological institutions, have the courage to reveal their inner world, and actively solve their own psychological problems. Specifically, mental health courses can be set up to educate students on mental health; leaflets on mental health knowledge can be distributed to strengthen the publicity of professional psychological help; full-time psychology teachers can be set up in various colleges, and experienced psychology graduate students can be arranged as assistants. Provide convenient mental health services for students; set up a psychological department in the student union, add a mental health committee to the class cadres, train mental cadres, teach them basic mental health knowledge, and make them public among their classmates; open a public account, Make full use of Weibo, WeChat and other network platforms to popularize mental health knowledge to college students and publicize professional psychological help; carry out psychological quality development camps, group psychological counseling, psychological salons, etc.; also regularly invite college students to visit the school's mental health center and experience sandplay games and many more.

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