

The Application of Music Therapy to the Mental Health Education of College Students

Yuxi Liu

Qilu University of Technology, Jinan, Shandong, China

Abstract

Concerns about mental health issues have been a popular research topic among college students. In China, the start of higher education was late, but the development speed was fast. At present, society is in the stage of "normalization" of the new coronavirus pneumonia (NCP) epidemic, and in the situation of prevention and control of the NCP epidemic in China, the mental health of college students has become a hot topic and an urgent problem in colleges and universities. So, how to effectively alleviate the mental health problems of college students? In addition to traditional psychological guidance, music therapy has been introduced as a more forward-looking psychological treatment method, and it has been increasingly used in mental health education in a more diversified way. This paper will explore the feasibility of music therapy to effectively solve the mental health problems of college students, starting with the connotation of music therapy and discussing the application and significance of music therapy in the mental health education of college students.

Keywords

Music Therapy; Mental Health; College; University Students.

1. Introduction

Many students do not know how to relieve these pressures, and over time, they develop psychological problems, which is a major obstacle to the growth and development of college students. Therefore, university education should emphasize mental health education with the goal of cultivating students' good psychological qualities and carrying out various activities to stimulate students' psychological potential and promote their overall healthy development. Music therapy mainly uses music as a means to heal people's hearts and minds, which is more easily accepted by students and produces better results for the psychological problems that occur in college students. Therefore, the application of music therapy in the psychological education of college students is of positive significance. For students, it is a simple and pleasant treatment, and for teachers, it is a new research path. In the long run, music therapy is bound to have a broad developmental prospect, and the mental health education of colleges and universities will also slowly turn their attention to music therapy.

2. The Current Situation of Psychological Stress among College Students

2.1. Lack of Adaptability

After entering university, the main activities of college students in school have changed from single studies to multiple studies, combining study, life, employment, interpersonal communication, and love, and the way of studying has changed from joint supervision by parents and teachers to self-study nowadays. All these changes require students to have strong self-control abilities. For students who are not self-motivated, have poor study habits, and are used to relying on others to supervise them, college learning is a huge challenge, and the learning effectiveness of college students is highly volatile compared to the past. If students are

unable to discipline themselves and concentrate in the college classroom, it may lead to situations such as not being able to keep up with the teacher and not completing assignments on time, thus creating psychological stress.

2.2. Interpersonal Conflict

When college students move from high school to college, they feel unfamiliar with the new environment because there are many differences between high school and college. Most students have grown up with parents who prioritize their studies and live mostly inside the school, so they lack social experience and necessary interpersonal skills. As a result, they inevitably exhibit certain deficiencies in interpersonal communication, such as not being able to express themselves appropriately in public, lacking sufficient courage to interact with others, and hesitating to participate in various activities. In the long run, they not only lose their love for life, but also hinder the development of good communication skills with others. Because of the lack of interpersonal interaction, emotions and thoughts cannot be expressed, and more psychological problems are likely to arise.

2.3. Emotional Tension

The main sources of emotional stress for college students are family and relationships. After entering college, students need to deal with romantic relationships and interpersonal relationships among classmates on their own, and once they encounter setbacks, they are prone to feelings of loneliness and frustration. Emotional frustration or lost love caused by the source of pressure and campus love. There is a gap between reality and ideal, affected by a variety of reasons. Many campus relationships are fruitless, resulting in more students having mental health problems and even affecting the concept of college students in love. On the other hand, the family of origin plays a vital role in the growth of students, and the parents' words, behaviors, mutual relationships, and educational methods will affect the healthy physical and mental growth of children. Most parents have high expectations of their children, and improper communication methods will inevitably cause conflicts between parents and children, which will gradually turn into stress for the children.

2.4. Pressure on Further Education and Employment

The university stage is different from the high school stage in that it faces the pressure of entering society and the huge pressure of further education and employment. Due to the yearly increase of university graduates today, it becomes increasingly difficult to find a good job of your choice. Therefore, more and more college students are facing the choice of further education or employment. And factors such as parental expectations, confusion about the future, and enormous life pressures lead to confusion among college students' egos, which makes college students facing these choices in their junior and senior years experience significant anxiety and a need to get help.

3. The Importance of Music in Mental Health Education

Today, the ubiquity of music with the development of music technology has led to a dramatic increase in the mobility and personalization of music, features that allow listeners to utilize music in a variety of settings and situations.

3.1. The Intimate Relationship between Music and Physiology

Numerous studies have confirmed that music affects human physiological reactions and hormone secretion. First, music can promote the secretion of dopamine, which can produce happy hormones and affect the change of mood. For example, when hearing the melody of light and joyful music, you can associate it with joyful and happy scenes, and then the mood also becomes relaxed. Second, music can affect the secretion of norepinephrine, and this hormone

can promote the production of passion. Many famous international painters choose to listen to music when creating. Listening to music can bring a lot of creative passion and inspiration to painters; Third, music can also increase the content of endorphins in the blood to play the role of analgesia. At present, music to assist childbirth is not an unfamiliar word. The actress Medina only used an hour to give birth, relatively smooth, which is mostly due to the charm of music; Fourth, music. In addition, music can affect the changes of brain waves, which can coordinate the left and right brain, develop the right brain, and enhance the intelligence, creativity, and imagination of children.

3.2. Music can Regulate Bad Emotions

Music is a language of emotions. Although not everyone can appreciate music, those who listen to the same music will certainly have different feelings. This is the charm of music and the embodiment of individuality.

In daily life, people create and enjoy music mostly for the purpose of expressing emotions, and through music, one can transpose one's inner emotions into music, thus achieving emotional transference. For example, listening to soothing and beautiful music can stimulate the secretion of dopamine in the brain, evoke positive emotions and a happy mood in the heart, maintain a positive and optimistic attitude, and thus influence the emotional changes in life.

3.3. Music can Assist Students in Discovering Who They Are

As early as Plato's Ideal State, the power of music is found to involve the concept of "self." Music, for example, gives male characters a strong energy and a courageous attitude that can help them deal with the tough challenges of everyday life. Today's pop stars such as Rihanna, Lady Gaga, and Katy Parry show elements of strength, power, confidence, and love in their songs in order to attract attention, and researchers believe that songs not only convey positive emotions but also help listeners overcome obstacles and boost their self-esteem. This research clearly shows that the positive energy given off by music is at the heart of today's popular music culture. Everyone has a different interpretation of music, and everyone can find their own piece of music that is a reflection of their individual self. Therefore, college students who suffer from emotional distress should listen to more music to help them regulate their emotions, and those who suffer from serious emotional distress can also use music therapy through professional therapists to heal themselves, regulate their bad emotions, and find and reinvent themselves.

3.4. Music can Help with Interpersonal Social Relationships

Music is an art form of nonverbal communication, and musical activities are themselves a form of social interaction, such as choral singing, ensemble playing, and composition, which can create a safe and pleasant environment for interpersonal interaction. Musical activities can be used to learn and improve interpersonal skills, language skills, self-restraint, and cooperation skills, as well as to help improve self-confidence and self-esteem. In addition to this, musical activities can express and vent inner emotions through music and verbal communication. Students can support and understand each other in musical communication and create a state of empathy, thus achieving psychological and spiritual resonance and relieving pain and distress.

3.5. The Music Therapy Approach is More Easily Accepted

Music is a product of melody and lyrics. Music can calm the mind, lyrics can resonate, and the combination of the two can vent emotions, which shows that music is indeed a remedy for healing the soul. Music can be a direct physical stimulus as well as a medium for self-expression and interpersonal interaction, and it can be a way for students to express their emotions and participate in invisible interpersonal interaction. Traditional psychological interventions sometimes present a didactic state, which can make students reluctant to take the initiative.

Music therapy, however, is a relaxed and comfortable way for psychologically stressed students to learn, and a comfortable environment and state are very rare, so it is feasible and very effective as a psychological intervention for college students' mental health education.

4. Music Therapy Theory Investigation

4.1. Concepts and History of Music Therapy

Music therapy is an emerging interdisciplinary discipline that integrates musicology, medicine, and psychology and is a scientifically effective intervention that uses various forms of musical experience and the therapeutic relationships established in therapy to promote the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social health of individuals. The emergence of music therapy has a long history. The ancient Chinese combined music with emotion therapy early on, using the "five elements of the five tones," i.e., Gong to Earth, Shang to Gold, Jue to Wood, Zhi to Fire, and Yu to Water, to treat different emotions such as loneliness, sadness, anger, irritability, and despair. Modern music therapy originated in the United States, and its development was marked after World War I and II, when a variety of musicians continued to come to hospitals to play music for soldiers with physical and emotional trauma, and as a result, these patients showed great physical and emotional improvement, so hospitals began to hire musicians to play in hospitals. In the 1990s, a number of music therapy-related associations began to emerge in the United States, which later evolved into the current American Music Therapy Association (AMTA), to promote the development of music therapy education, application, and research.

4.2. Music Therapy Techniques and Methods

There are many different methods and techniques included in music therapy. Each music therapy method represents a form of musical experience, while each music therapy technique refers to the specific application of different operational steps. The four approaches in music therapy are: receptive, improvisational, re-creative, and song-writing. Some scholars, of course, have grouped re-creative music therapy and creative music therapy together into three common interventions in music therapy. These music therapy approaches include a variety of different application techniques. For example, in the receptive music therapy approach, the subordinate techniques include music listening, progressive music muscle relaxation, guided music imagery, semi-guided music imagery, non-guided music imagery, music guided imagery, music system desensitization, song discussion, and music paroxysmal birth.

4.3. Populations and Application Areas for Music Therapy

Over the decades, music therapy has been applied to a wide range of fields and populations. From the available literature, it can be found that music therapy has been applied in different settings such as hospitals, schools, and professional institutions in the fields of mental retardation, mental illness, geriatric diseases, physical disabilities, autism, sensory perceptual disorders, and neurological rehabilitation, with good results. It is used by people ranging from premature babies, special children, adolescents, college students, adults, and the elderly, and it can be said that music therapy is used throughout a person's life.

5. The Use of Music Therapy in College Students' Mental Health Education

In response to the increasingly serious mental health problems of college students nowadays, universities should actively promote music therapy according to the actual situation of schools and students, so as to help college students better reinvent themselves, restore their health, face life, and study positively. Specifically, music therapy can be done in the following three ways: Receptive music therapy; re-creative and creative music therapy; and improvisation music therapy are the three types of music therapy.

5.1. Music Therapy based on Acceptance

Receptive music therapy aims to stimulate positive energy in the student's mind through the melody and lyrics of music, thus regulating their emotional state and ultimately healing. In the case of individual therapy, before the formal treatment, the therapist should have to select music of different styles according to the current situation of the treated person, and at different stages.

Different music should also be used. In the case of group therapy, the therapist chooses the theme and uses the corresponding music for group discussion, which not only enhances group communication but also taps into the deeper psychological problems of the person being treated, ultimately achieving the purpose of healing. For group music therapy, the order of activities is usually fixed each time, and the time can be adjusted according to the actual situation.

5.2. Music Therapy for Recreation and Creativity

Recreative and creative music therapy is the process of learning to play, sing, or participate in music production in which the therapist's musical abilities are strengthened and improved along with his or her psychological abilities, thus achieving the effect of psychological adjustment. This approach consists of two main aspects, namely learning to play and sing, and music production skills, and emphasizes that the participant should not only listen to music, but also actively participate in various activities.

5.3. Music Therapy that is Improvised

Improvisational music therapy emphasizes the nature of music and the innate musical ability of the person, which is spontaneous, natural, flexible, and more expressive of the person's personality and self. The therapist and the participant improvise on instruments, and the participant may choose a simple instrument, such as a percussion instrument, and the therapist plays the instrument to complete a piece together. This method can make the therapist more relaxed and can also show their personality. Therefore, the integration of music therapy into the psychological education of college students is a good and effective way.

6. Summary

Music therapy as an emerging psychotherapeutic tool still has some shortcomings, such as fewer experiments and less thorough research. College students are the pillars of the nation, but stress is inevitable, so it is necessary to strengthen college students' mental health education, and music therapy as an effective and easily accepted tool should be applied in it to help students better express themselves and regain their lives.

References

- [1] Gao T. Basic theory of music therapy [M]. Beijing: World Book Publishing Company, 2008: Preface.
- [2] Zhu Zhiluo. Exploring the integration of music into college students' mental health education [J]. Journal of Shandong Open University, 2022(01):57-60.
- [3] Jue Zhang, Rui-Guang Yu. A study on the intervention of music therapy on college students' anxiety [J]. Modern Business Industry, 2021, 42(35):86-87. DOI:10.19311/j.cnki.1672-3198. 2021. 35. 038.
- [4] Sun Mengru. The application strategy of music therapy in college students' mental health education [J]. Psychological Monthly, 2022, 17(03):216-218. DOI:10.19738/j.cnki.psy.2022.03.074.
- [5] Song Xue -Trade Rucong. A Thousand Pre-study of Acceptance Music Therapy on College Students' Anxiety in the Context of Epidemic Prevention and Control - A Case Study of Foreign Language College of Shandong First Medical University [J]. Contemporary Music, 2020, (12):178-180.

- [6] Krause A. E. ,Dimmock,J. ,Rcbar. A.8. Jackson, B. Music listening predicted improved life satisfaction students during early stages of the COVID - 19 pandemic[J].Frontiers in Psychology, 11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.631033>.
- [7] Baker. F. , Wigram. T. Songwriting: methods, techniques and clinical applications for music therapy clinicians, educators and students [J]. London. PA :Jessica Kingsley Publishers,2005.
- [8] Deogharia., A. Song - writing: an effective tool in music therapy for expressing emotions during the pandemic of COVID- 19. The Journal of Integral Health.2020.28(3).