

Application Analysis of Music Therapy in the Mental Health Education of Teenagers in China

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Abstract: Music therapy is a treatment method that uses music as a medium, listening, singing, writing and other methods as a way to promote the physical and psychological rehabilitation of patients. In recent years, with the further development of psychology, music therapy has also been widely used in adolescent mental health education. This paper explores and analyzes the principle of music therapy in psychotherapy, the application methods and feasibility of music therapy in adolescents' mental health education, so as to provide a new treatment method for people who cannot recover through traditional psychotherapy for various reasons in adolescence. This paper puts forward the ways and methods of applying music therapy based on school education, achieves the purpose of promoting music therapy in primary and secondary schools in China. At the same time, it points out the limitations of its application and development, and puts forward the corresponding countermeasures to promote the development of music therapy in China. Finally, this paper demonstrates the feasibility of music therapy in adolescent psychotherapy by analyzing the music therapy case of a 20-year-old patient with bipolar disorder.

Keywords: music therapy, application methods, adolescent psychotherapy, traditional psychotherapy

1. Introduction

Music therapy is a branch of traditional psychological therapy, and is an emerging interdisciplinary field that integrates music, medicine, and psychology [1]. According to the American Music Therapy Association, Music Therapy is the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to help the treated person achieve physical and mental health.

The teenage stage is a critical period of psychological development in life. During this period, the physical and mental development of individuals showed complex and varied characteristics, and psychological contradictions and conflicts occurred from time to time [2]. The 2022 Youth Mental Health Survey Report shows that about 14.8% of adolescents are at varying levels of depression risk [3]. An old saying is that "A strong youth means a strong country", therefore, the psychological development of adolescents not only affects individuals, but also has profound implications for society. Necessary support and assistance should be provided and help adolescents to smoothly go through this critical period, lays a solid foundation for their future health and happiness.

This article aims to analyze literature and cases to study the potential role of music therapy in the psychological development of adolescents and the application forms of music therapy in adolescent

mental health education, providing a reference for the future popularization of music therapy in school education. Of course, compared to traditional psychological therapy, music therapy further expands the scope of the treatment by using non-verbal music as a therapeutic medium. However, the subjectivity of music is stronger than that of language, so targeted treatment is necessary. In addition, music therapy can also be used to improve memory and social skills. In addition, there are currently few music therapists in China, so universities can take relevant measures to increase the cultivation of talent.

2. The Potential Role of Music Therapy in the Psychological Development of Adolescents

Music therapy, as a non-drug intervention that does not produce side effects, can help adolescents alleviate psychological stress, improve emotional stability, and enhance social skills and self-regulation.

Firstly, music therapy can promote the emotional development of adolescents. According to Combarieu, music can promote or alleviate emotions and stimulate or relax at any time. Music can trigger emotional responses including happiness, sadness, anger, and fear [1]. Through activities such as playing musical instruments and singing, adolescents can better understand and express their emotions and improve their self-awareness of emotions. In addition, research has shown that music therapy can also help adolescents deal with emotional distress, such as anxiety and depression. Music training can help children improve their attention, control their emotions, and reduce anxiety [4, 5].

Secondly, music therapy can promote the cognitive development of adolescents. Research shows that music therapy can effectively stimulate and strengthen people's memory and improve cognitive behavior, among other things [6]. Music can promote the development of brain neural pathways, enhancing attention and memory. By learning musical instruments or participating in music activities, teenagers can exercise their coordination ability, concentration and memory. These skills are crucial for their performance in academics and other fields. In addition, music therapy can also help adolescents develop nonverbal communication skills such as body language and facial expressions.

Finally, music therapy can promote the development of social skills in adolescents. By participating in music activities, teenagers can establish cooperative relationships with others and cultivate teamwork spirit. At the same time, they can also make friends with like-minded people through music and expand their social circle. This social support is crucial for the mental health of adolescents and can help them better cope with challenges in life.

3. Theoretical Basis of Music Therapy

3.1. Definition and Classification of Music Therapy

Music Therapy is the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program [7]. As a new medical method, has received more and more attention and research. It uses music's melody, rhythm, harmony, and other elements to help patients achieve therapeutic and rehabilitative goals. In the treatment of adolescent mental health, music therapy can be divided into various forms according to different treatment goals, including individual therapy, group therapy, improvisational therapy, and so on.

3.2. The Principle of Music Therapy

The principle of music therapy is mainly reflected in both physiological and psychological aspects. From a physiological perspective, research has shown that music training experience can shape brain structure and function, and affect human speech skills. Music performance or singing experience

promotes the ability to encode and integrate verbal information by affecting the structural basis of the auditory-motor neural circuit in the white matter [8].

From a psychological perspective, music therapy follows the “emotion-cognition principle” in emotional psychology. Traditional psychological therapy tends to change patients’ negative emotions by changing their cognition. From the “emotional-cognitive principle” in music therapy, we can see that the therapist uses music to change the emotions of the patient, thereby achieving the effect of changing the patient’s cognition [1].

3.3. Application Scopes of Music Therapy

The application scope of music therapy is very wide. Music therapy can help alleviate symptoms in children with autism, improve social skills, and help the elderly delay cognitive decline.

In adolescent mental health education, it can help anxiety and depression patients alleviate their emotions, improve sleep disorders, reduce pain, and improve concentration, memory, and learning ability, as well as relieve learning pressure. In addition, music therapy can also be used as a preventive measure to help people improve their physical health, enhance their immunity and psychological endurance.

4. Methods (Forms) of Music Therapy

Music therapy methods can be divided into receptive, improvisational, and re-creative music therapy. The methods of receptive music therapy include listening, song discussion, and many other methods. Re-creative music therapy includes song creation, music composition, music psychodrama, and so on. Improvised music therapy includes instrumental improvisation, verbal improvisation, and other methods.

In the context of the majority of young people living in schools in China, music therapy should be combined with school education, considering the treatment goals and forms, mainly including individual therapy, group therapy, and creative therapy.

4.1. Individual Therapy

Individual therapy is a highly targeted and small-scale treatment method, usually conducted by a therapist and a patient together. This treatment method focuses on in-depth understanding of the patient’s personal situation, including the music background, emotional state, and problem presentation of the treated person. The therapist will choose appropriate music works for treatment based on the different situations of each patient. Through individual therapy, the treated person can achieve more comprehensive and in-depth therapeutic effects, but requires a therapist with high professional level and rich clinical experience. Because the subjects of individual therapy are only the therapist and the patient, this method of therapy cannot improve the social skills of the patient.

4.2. Group Therapy

In a situation where there are a large number of students in schools and therapists are extremely scarce, not all adolescents can receive individual treatment time and opportunities, which leads to group therapy.

Group therapy is a more common form of music therapy, typically conducted by a therapist with a group of patients. This treatment method promotes interaction and communication between the treated individuals by engaging them in musical activities together. The therapist will select appropriate music works and activities for group therapy based on the common problems and needs of the treated individuals. Group therapy can reduce treatment costs, improve treatment efficacy, and

promote emotional communication and social adaptation among the treated individuals. Improve the social competence of the treated person.

4.3. Creative Therapy

Individual therapy and group therapy both combine receptive and re-creative music therapy. And creative therapy is more inclined to be improvisational. Creative therapy achieves its therapeutic purpose by allowing the treated person to independently create musical works. This treatment method focuses on the emotional expression and creativity of the treated person, which can stimulate their interest and enthusiasm. The therapist will guide the patient to create music works autonomously based on their needs and emotional state, and apply them to the treatment process. Creative therapy can not only improve the emotional expression and creative abilities of the treated person, but also promote self-awareness and self-growth [9].

5. Adolescent Psychological Development and Music Therapy

5.1. Characteristics of Adolescent Psychological Development

The stage of adolescent psychological development is a challenging period. The characteristics of this stage include rapid changes in physical and cognitive abilities, a strong focus on self-identity and social relationships, and vulnerability to emotions and stress. The psychological development of adolescents is also influenced by various factors such as family, school, and society, which interact and shape adolescents' personality and behavior together. With the development of the Internet, there are also studies showing that Internet use may have a negative impact on adolescents' academic achievement, cognitive development, emotional development, behavioral activities, and so on. Social networking and online games also make the psychological development of teenagers unstable [2].

5.2. Common Psychological Problems of Adolescents

During the teenage years, many common psychological problems may arise. For example, emotional problems (depression and anxiety), interpersonal problems (social barriers and family conflicts), and learning problems (academic pressure and learning difficulties). If these problems are not addressed in a timely manner, they may have long-term negative effects on the development of adolescents.

5.3. The Application of Music Therapy in Adolescent Psychological Problems

As a non-drug intervention method, music therapy has played an important role in addressing psychological problems among adolescents. Through various forms of music creation, performance, and appreciation, music therapy can help adolescents express emotions, relieve stress, improve mood, and promote their physical and mental health. Research shows that music therapy has significant effects on improving adolescent depression, anxiety, social barriers, and learning difficulties. At the same time, music therapy can also enhance the creativity and self-confidence of adolescents, improving their social skills and emotional intelligence.

5.4. The Influence of Music Therapy on Adolescents

5.4.1. The Influence of Music Therapy on Teenagers' Emotions and Feelings

Music therapy plays a significant role in regulating the emotions and feelings of adolescents. Professional music therapists can use various music therapy methods, such as music creation, performance, singing, listening, etc., to help adolescents alleviate negative emotions such as anxiety,

depression, and stress. These treatments can effectively promote emotional stability in adolescents and help them better control their emotions.

Research shows that music therapy has a positive impact on improving emotional disorders in adolescents. With the help of music therapy, many adolescents can gradually overcome emotional barriers and reduce the occurrence of behavioral problems. At the same time, music therapy can also enhance the self-esteem and self-confidence of adolescents, helping them better cope with challenges in daily life. Therefore, music therapy is widely used in various mental health services and has received widespread recognition and attention.

5.4.2. The Influence of Music Therapy on Adolescent Cognitive Ability

Music therapy has a positive impact on the cognitive development of adolescents. During the music therapy process, adolescents need to focus their attention, enhance their memory, and improve their imagination and creativity, which can help improve their cognitive abilities. At the same time, it also helps to improve academic performance.

5.4.3. The Influence of Music Therapy on Teenagers' Social Skills

Music therapy can not only help adolescents build self-confidence and expressive skills, but also enhance their social skills. During music therapy, adolescents need to interact and collaborate with therapists and other participants, which helps develop their communication skills and teamwork abilities. Research shows that music therapy can improve social barriers, enhance interpersonal skills among adolescents, and help improve their social adaptability.

5.4.4. The Influence of Music Therapy on the Physical and Mental Health of Adolescents

Music therapy has a positive impact on the physical and mental health of adolescents. According to Combarieu, music at any time has the effect of promoting or alleviating emotions and stimulating or relaxing, either stimulating various pathological states or tending to heal certain disorders, stabilize emotions, and promote their return to normal [1]. Music therapy can reduce stress, relax the body and mind, thereby improving sleep quality, enhancing immunity, and alleviating pain. Research shows that music therapy can also alleviate the symptoms of chronic diseases, relieve pain and anxiety.

6. Case Analysis of the Application of Music Therapy in Adolescents

Case: music therapy for adolescents with bipolar disorder

In traditional psychotherapy, we usually develop treatment plans based on cognitive-emotional principles, and achieve the effect of changing emotions by changing the cognition of the treated person. With the development of emotional psychology, the emotional-cognitive theory in music therapy has also gained theoretical support [1].

Based on the theoretical principles of music therapy, the author developed a first music therapy program for a 20-year-old patient A with bipolar disorder [10].

From A's self-report, we can see that her depression and manic moods stemmed largely from domestic violence during her teenage years and a series of bullying incidents at school. The condition is more serious because the illness has lasted for five years. After a series of relaxation activities, the author led the patient through three music experiences. Next are some music association clips.

In the first music experience, the author played a sad song:

A: From the beginning of the music, I felt very heavy, as if I couldn't float up in the sea, and I felt suffocated. I seem to remember my father scolding and beating me when my exam results were not

satisfactory. I was in the same mood as I am now. It seems that I can't escape the fate of being denied all my life.

It can be seen that in the association fragments of A, most of them are things that have happened to her in the past, which exist in her subconscious memory. At the same time as the music appeared, her subconscious bad memories were awakened under the influence of a sad mood atmosphere. And that's what she said, the feeling of suffocation. After this music experience, the author discussed some details of her imagination with A. so that she can freely express her sadness.

In the second music experience, the author played a song created by a singer that A liked, helping her better vent her emotions. This time, the music experience added singing to the listening. She chose this song because familiar songs can help her vent her negative emotions smoothly. After singing the entire song, A described her musical experience:

A: I feel like climbing a high mountain. Usually, I reach a platform after a few steps. Finally, I reach the top of the mountain. I stand at the highest point, surrounded by clouds. I shout into the valley, and the mountain responds to me.

From A's description of her second music experience, it can be seen that she accumulated her emotions bit by bit with the help of music, and was able to vent at the critical point.

In the third music experience, the author and A closed their eyes and lay together, playing a soothing piano piece to restore her inner calm.

A: If I were still on the top of the mountain, it would be nighttime now, and I would be lying on the top of the mountain with you, counting the stars. I haven't been so relaxed for a long time.

In the music experience, after experiencing the catharsis of the hidden painful emotions in her heart, A's positive emotions gradually began to emerge. After this music therapy, her memories and emotions about heights were not just "If I jump down", and the three music experiences increased her possibilities of "relaxing", "counting stars", and "talking to the valley".

7. Conclusion

The importance of music therapy in the psychological development of adolescents cannot be ignored. The application of music therapy is very extensive, and can be used to alleviate and treat psychological problems, as well as regulate and manage emotions. Through music perception activities, adolescents can resonate with the music they listen to, regulate their emotional development, and improve their emotional stability. In addition, music learning can also exercise teenagers' memory and attention, improve their cognitive ability, and have a positive impact on their learning and life.

In short, music therapy plays an important role in the psychological development of adolescents, providing them with a new, non-drug form of complementary therapy to help them solve various psychological problems and improve their quality of life. Therefore, we should attach importance to the application of music therapy in the psychological development of adolescents and give full play to its due role.

Suggestions for future research on music therapy and adolescents: (1) Explore the application of music therapy in adolescent mental health. Researchers can explore the advantages and disadvantages of music therapy and other psychological treatment methods from the perspectives of efficacy, safety, and cost through comparative experiments and other methods. (2) Develop the potential of music therapy in young people's cognitive and learning abilities. Researchers can study the role of music therapy in improving adolescents' attention, memory, and learning abilities, and explore its neuropsychological mechanisms. Through comparative experiments and other methods, explore the advantages and disadvantages of music therapy and other educational intervention methods in terms of effectiveness and sustainability. (3) Promote the application of music therapy in adolescent development and education. Educational institutions can promote the application of music therapy in

adolescent education through activities such as offering courses. The government and relevant institutions can provide policy and financial support to promote the application and promotion of music therapy in adolescent development and education. (4) Train professional music therapy talents to provide better services for adolescents. Universities can offer music therapy majors and train professional music therapists to provide better services for adolescents. Relevant institutions can provide training and continuing education opportunities to improve the skills and knowledge level of existing music therapists.

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