

The Practical Path of Dance Healing Intervention in the Psychological Counselling of Youth Groups

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Abstract: With the increasing pressure faced by young people in learning, employment, interpersonal communication and life adaptation, the implementation of psychological counselling also needs to pay attention to individual emotional expression and social interaction needs. Dance healing takes physical movements, musical rhythm and group interaction as the medium, integrates psychological adjustment into specific physical experience, and provides a new practice space for young people to release their emotions, perceive their own state and improve social interaction. Based on the needs of young people's psychological counselling, the article analyses the actual basis of dance healing intervention in psychological counselling, sorts out its mechanism in terms of physical expression, movement participation, group interaction and positive experience, and further puts forward a scientific practice path. By combining dance activities with the actual life situation of young people, it can expand the implementation scenarios of psychological counselling, enhance the active participation and self-adaptation experience of young people, and provide a supplementary way with practical value for young people's mental health services.

Keywords: Dance Healing; Youth Group; Psychological Counselling; Emotional Regulation.

1. Introduction

The youth stage is accompanied by continuous changes in learning tasks, employment choices, interpersonal relationships and living environment. Individuals are prone to nervousness, anxiety, depression and other emotional experiences in the process of responding to external requirements. Traditional psychological counselling relies more on verbal communication. Some young people have certain concerns about direct confession due to factors such as expression habits, willingness to participate or communication environment, and it is difficult to fully express their psychological feelings. As an artistic activity with the characteristics of physical participation, dance can provide non-verbal channels for emotional expression with the help of movement, rhythm and music, so that young people can pay attention to physical feelings and recognise their own emotions in the process of more natural activities. Group dance can also create communication situations of cooperation, imitation and interaction, providing conditions for young people to get peer feedback and reduce social alienation. Based on this, the introduction of dance healing into youth psychological counselling needs to start from the actual needs of young people, recognise the connection between physical expression, movement participation and group interaction, and improve the implementation process through layered activities, digital platforms, life themes, etc., so as to form a richer youth psychological adjustment practice model.

2. The Practical Basis of Dance Healing Intervention in Young People's Psychological Counselling

Young people are in the changing stage of learning, employment, social interaction and lifestyle, and psychological pressure often comes from multiple life situations. Exercise is a cost-effective treatment shown to significantly improve psychological health and cognitive

functioning as well as positively alter health beliefs, ultimately lowering the healthcare burden driven by mental illness. Academic competition, career choices, interpersonal relationships and family expectations are prone to a continuous emotional burden, and some young people may choose to remain silent, avoid or be alone due to lack of effective channels of expression. Traditional psychological counselling mainly relies on language communication. For young people who are not good at confiding or are prone to tension in the counselling environment, the actual participation effect may be affected to a certain extent. Dance healing is mediated by body movements, musical rhythm and non-verbal expression, providing young people with a more natural space for emotional expression. Participants can perceive the physical state through stretching, rhythm, free dancing, etc., shift their attention from stressful events to current experiences, and gradually recognise their emotions during the activity [1-2]. Group dance can also increase the opportunities for interaction among young people, so that psychological guidance extends from simple verbal communication to physical experience and social interaction, so as to expand the practical scenario of youth mental health services.

3. The Mechanism of Dance Healing Intervention in Youth Psychological Counselling

3.1. Physical Expression Promotes Emotional Release

Emotions have a certain physical expression. Muscle contraction during tension, restlessness in anxiety, and reduced activity in low mood may become external reflections of the psychological state at the physical level. Dance healing takes the body as a medium for emotional expression, providing young people with the opportunity to actively adjust their physical state. In the soothing music environment, young people can feel the changes of the body through stretching, swinging, rotation and other movements,

and can also choose the amplitude and speed of movement according to their own state. Such activities do not require participants to complete uniform standard dance movements, but encourage them to pay attention to their own experience. When individuals shift their attention from thinking about stressful events to breathing, rhythm and movement, emotional experience can gain new expression outlets. For young people who are not good at verbal confession, the action itself can take on some of the emotional transmission function. The organiser can also arrange a brief sharing after the dance to guide the participants to describe the physical feelings and emotional changes before and after the activity, so that the physical experience can gradually turn into understandable psychological understanding.

3.2. Action Participation to Improve Self-Perception

In the face of continuous pressure, young people tend to focus on external tasks and result evaluation, and their physical condition and real emotional needs may be ignored. Dance healing emphasises the participants' active feelings

about physical movements, which can help young people re-establish the connection with the body. The activity design can start with simple breathing exercises and body stretching, guide participants to observe the tension of the shoulders, neck, arms, waist and back and other parts, and then perceive body changes through different rhythmic movements. As shown in Table 2, action participation can connect body perception, emotional recognition and stress regulation. In the free dance stage, participants can adjust their movements according to their personal wishes without being limited by professional dance norms. This process helps young people realise that their emotions are not abstract, but can be perceived and recognised through their physical state[3-4]. When young people can find specific experiences such as "I'm nervous now" and "this action makes me feel relaxed", their self-observation ability will also be enhanced to a certain extent. Carrying out such activities for a long time can help young people form more stable physical perception habits, so that they can recognise their own state earlier in the face of stress, and choose appropriate ways such as exercise, rest and communication to adjust.

Table 1. The process of action participation in improving self-perception

Dimensions of analysis	Main manifestations	Dance therapy intervention approaches
Stress state	Attention is focused on tasks and outcomes, while personal feelings tend to be overlooked.	Redirect attention through physical movement.
Body awareness	Tension may occur in the shoulders, neck, arms, lower back and other body parts.	Observe bodily changes by combining breathing and stretching.
Movement engagement	Some young people are constrained by standards of formal dance movements.	Adopt free dance to strengthen autonomous engagement.
Emotion recognition	Emotional experiences are vague, making accurate expression difficult.	Perceive emotional states via bodily responses.
Self-observation	Insufficient attention paid to one's own stress and emotional shifts.	Build sustained habits of body awareness.
Stress regulation	Lack of timely coping strategies when facing stress.	Choose activities such as movement, rest and communication according to bodily conditions.

3.3. Group Interaction to Alleviate Social Alienation

The psychological pressure of youth not only comes from within the individual, but also is closely related to the experience of social interaction. Although the learning environment, workplace and online social networking provide more opportunities for interaction, high-frequency communication does not mean that individuals can get stable emotional support. Some young people lack a sense of security in real-life interactions, and it is easy to reduce active communication due to worrying about evaluation. Group dance provides a more natural interactive situation to improve this state. Participants can establish contact through mirror imitation, double cooperation, circle dance and improvisation interaction, etc. The communication content does not need to enter personal privacy and psychological distress from the beginning. Completing movements together can form a low-pressure cooperative experience, so that young people can gradually become familiar with others in informal communication. The activity organiser can set up interactive

links from shallow to deep according to the situation of the participants, gradually transitioning from individual action experience to group cooperation, and then extending to collective sharing. With the increase in the number of interactions, young people can get more positive group feedback and reduce the strangeness of social activities. Dance healing can provide a practice space for young people to establish social support.

3.4. Actively Experience and Enhance Psychological Adjustment Ability

Psychological counselling should not only focus on problems, but also help young people accumulate positive experiences. Dance activities have strong instant feedback characteristics. Music, movement and group participation can give young people a sense of pleasure, completeness and participation. When participants complete a set of unfamiliar actions or receive peer response in group activities, it is easy to form a positive understanding of their own abilities[5-6]. For young people who have been affected by academic, work or interpersonal pressure for a long time, such experiences can

temporarily change their single negative evaluation of themselves. Activity design can set tasks of moderate difficulty, so that young people with different physical conditions and dance foundations can complete them, and reduce the pressure of failure by freely choosing movements. Organisers can also guide participants to record emotional changes after the activity, turning a one-time pleasant experience into a reusable self-regulation experience. It should be noted that the positive feelings generated by dance healing do not mean that all psychological problems can be solved by dance. For individuals with persistent psychological distress or obvious risks, professional psychological services should be connected in a timely manner, so that dance activities and professional intervention can form a reasonable coordination.

4. The Practical Path of Dance Healing Intervention in the Psychological Guidance of Youth Groups

4.1. Design Layered Dance Activities According to The Needs of Young People

There are obvious differences in psychological needs within the youth group, and dance healing cannot adopt a completely unified activity plan. For young people with great pressure in learning and work, soothing music, breathing

exercises and low-intensity body rhythm can be arranged to guide participants to relax their bodies and relieve tension; in the face of groups with weak emotional expression, free dance and improvisation can be added, so that participants have more space for movement choices; for young people who are troubled by interpersonal communication, activities such as two-person cooperation, group imitation and collective creation can be adopted to create conditions for interactive communication. As shown in Figure 1, the University of Almeria carried out Biodanza intervention on 121 college students with perceived pressure, and finally 95 of them completed the project and entered the statistical analysis. This case shows that dance activities can be continuously designed in combination with the actual state of young people. In the specific implementation, the difficulty of the activity also needs to be adjusted according to the age, physical condition and dance foundation of the participants, so as to avoid frustrating experiences caused by too complicated movements. The organiser can understand the needs of the participants through a simple questionnaire, interview or self-evaluation before the start of the activity, and then determine the theme and implementation method of the activity. After the identification of needs, a differentiated activity plan can be formed, which can establish a closer relationship between dance healing and the actual psychological state of young people, and provide a basis for subsequent adjustment of the content of the activity.

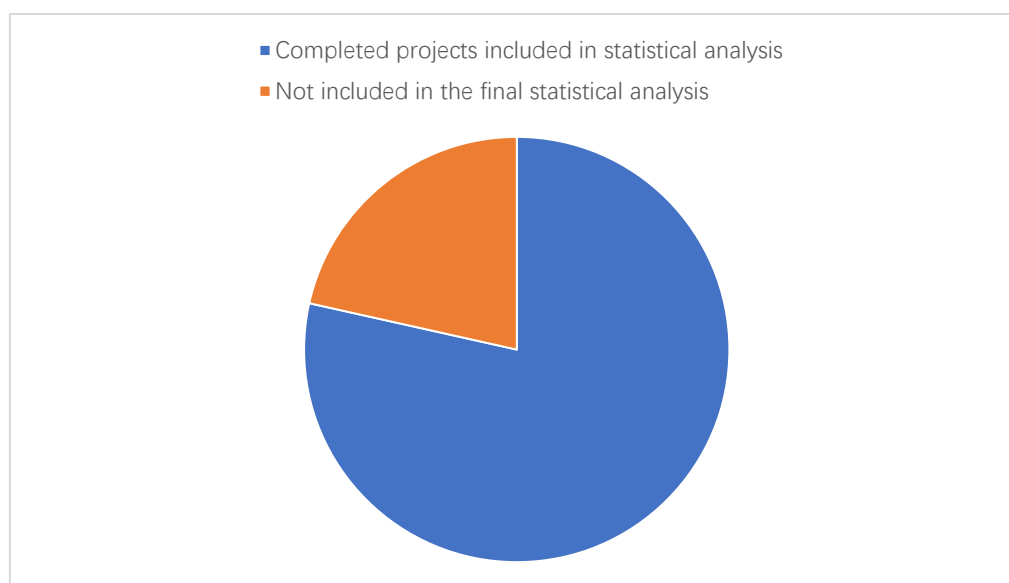


Figure 1. Participation in the dance healing project

4.2. Integrate into Group Activities to Enhance the Interactive Experience

Colleges and universities, communities and youth activity centres have a relatively stable foundation for youth participation, which can become the main space for dance healing and group activities[7]. In the college environment, dance healing can be combined with mental health education, community activities and campus cultural activities, and periodic theme dance courses can be set up; the community can carry out open dance experiences around youth night schools, interest activities and other forms to reduce the threshold of participation. Activity organisations should not simply divide participants into "people in need" and "people who need help", but should create an equal and respectful atmosphere of interaction. Group activities can set up

common rhythm exercises, mirror movements, theme creation and other links, so that young people can establish relationships in the process of cooperation. For participants who are unwilling to express their personal experiences publicly, they can be allowed to give indirect feedback through actions, drawings or words, and respect the participation of different individuals. As the activities continue, stable youth mutual aid groups can also be established, so that participants can form a moderate social support network outside the activities, so that dance healing can gradually change from a one-time activity to a continuous psychological support practice.

4.3. Expand the Participation Scenario with The Help of The Digital Platform

The development of digital platforms provides a more flexible space for young people to participate in dance healing. For young people with heavy learning tasks, fixed working hours or not used to participating in offline activities, you can use short video platforms, online courses and sports applications to provide basic dance exercises. Online content can be classified according to themes such as soothing and relaxing, emotional release, body awareness and bedtime regulation, so that young people can choose independently according to their own needs. Video design should avoid overemphasising dance skills, but should combine movement instructions, breathing rhythm and physical sensation tips, so that ordinary young people can also participate. The online platform can also set up simple activity feedback to guide users to record their emotional state before and after practice. It should be noted that the digital method mainly assumes the function of auxiliary psychological adjustment. It cannot replace professional psychological evaluation through simple online tests, nor can it hand over complex psychological problems to the algorithm for self-judgement. For participants with obvious psychological risk signals in the feedback, manual referral channels should be set up to connect the digital platform with offline psychological services and expand the coverage of dance healing.

4.4. Enrich the Content of Dance Healing Around the Theme of Life

The psychological state of young people is closely related to daily life. Dance participation often requires dancers to

touch, make eye contact and synchronise movements to music, an instructor, a partner or a group. The content of dance healing should not stay at the level of simple physical relaxation and movement practice for a long time, but also need to build a situational activity theme in combination with the real life of young people[8-9]. Organisers can design the theme dance around academic pressure, career choice, interpersonal communication, self-identification, emotional management and other contents, and guide young people to present their feelings about different life events through actions. For example, with the theme of "stress release", emotional change can be expressed through movement changes from tension to stretching; when carrying out activities around "self-awareness", participants can independently choose actions that represent their own state, and briefly share after the dance. As shown in Figure 2, in the 10-week MGW performing arts project carried out by the National University of Singapore, 92% of the students in the dance group in the 5th week said that their mood had improved, and the proportion increased to 100% in the 10th week. This case shows that dance activities are familiar with young people's emotional management, campus life and interpersonal communication[10]. The combination of other themes can make the action experience have a clearer life orientation. The content of the activity can also be adjusted according to the semester stage, campus activities and social interaction situation, so that young people can participate in dancing and emotional expression in specific life themes, and enhance the sense of participation and continuity of psychological adjustment activities.

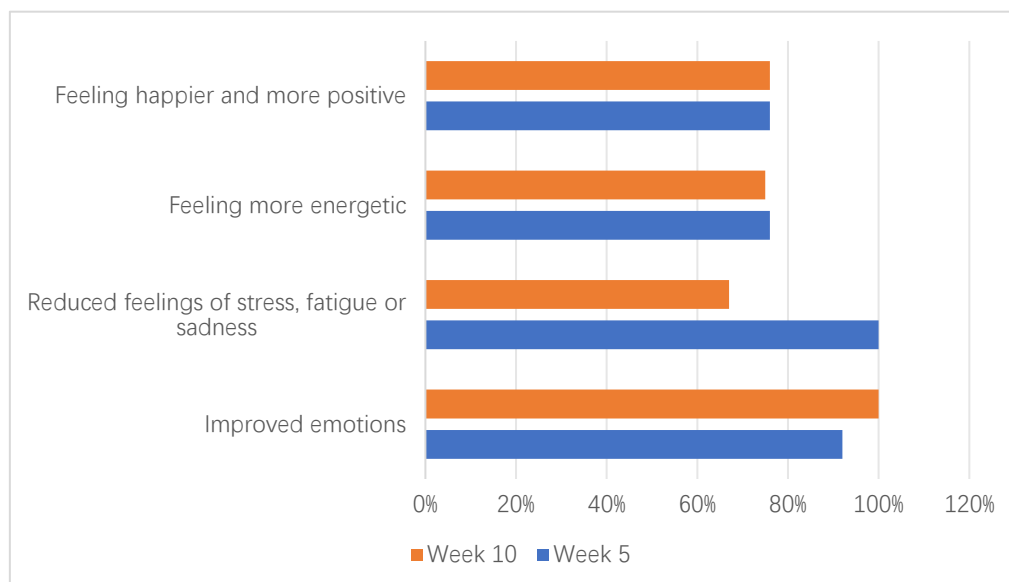


Figure 2. Comparison of the psychological experience of dance activities before and after

5. Conclusion

In summary, dance healing integrates physical activity, emotional expression and group interaction into youth psychological guidance, providing a new practical way for young people to release their emotions, perceive their own state and improve social interaction. Through stretching, rhythm, free dancing and group cooperation, young people can gain emotional expression and positive experience in physical participation, and gradually enhance their self-adulation awareness. To promote the continuous application

of dance healing, it is necessary to improve the design of layered activities in combination with the actual needs of young people, and integrate group interaction, digital platform and life themes into the practical process. For young people with persistent psychological distress or obvious risks, professional psychological services should be connected in a timely manner to clarify the auxiliary positioning of dance healing. Through multi-scene expansion and standardised implementation, the practical value of dance healing in youth psychological counselling can be further improved.

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