

The Achievement, Problems and Prospect of Mental Health Education in Chinese Schools

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Since 1980s, mental health education in Chinese schools has been paid much attention and developed quickly. It is helpful to the movement of education reform. It plays a significant role in students psychophysical health. But there are some problems and negative tendency existing in Chinese mental health education. In the future, Chinese schools mental health education will make progress in the present basis. It will make more contribution for the reform and development of education.

Key Words: China, schools mental health education, students

Carrying out and promoting diathesis education in an all-round way is a magnificent task and main tone for Chinese educational reform and development. One of the main contents and tasks for diathesis education is to make student develop favorable psychological diathesis and enhance students mental health. With the reform, opening-up and social development, the mental illness of students nowadays have aroused the national attention, the society in the future asks more for peoples psychological diathesis. The working experience of the schools at home and abroad indicates that the mental health education is not only a kind of method and technique, but the embodiment of advanced educational concept. The popularization of mental health education is helpful to the movement of educational concept and method. Therefore, an educational consensus has been reached worldwide to

reinforce schools mental health education, which has become a giant sign for modern school from all over the world.

I . The Achievement of Schools Mental Health Education in China

1. The CPC and central government attach great importance to reinforcing schools mental health education.

In 1994, the CPC and the state council issued The several propositions on further reinforcing and improving schools moral education, pointing out clearly that the mental health education and guidance should be undertaken to students of different ages and levers through various ways. In 1999, The decision on deepening educational reform and promoting all-round diathesis education indicates again that we should strengthen students mental health education according to the characteristics of the growing up of adolescents in the new situation. In August the same year, the ministry of education for the first time issued The several propositions on promoting mental health education in Middle and Primary schools, making specific requirement and stipulation for mental health education in secondary and primary schools. At the beginning of the year 2001, the central government of CPC and the state council again issued The propositions on further strengthening and improving the moral education in primary and secondary schools under new situation, signifying that the primary and middle schools should promote mental health education. The 10th 5-year program on national economy and social development of PRC, approved by the fourth session of 9th people s congress on March 15th, 2001, clearly indicates: especially promoting adolescent education on ideology, moral quality, mental health and law education, This was the first time to include the adolescent mental health education into the five-year program on national economy and social development. In April 2001, the Ministry of education once again issued Propositions on promoting the mental health education of students of higher education, the main concern of which is to college students, after the

documents oriented to the mental health education of primary and secondary school students in August 1999. These two documents play a significant role in guiding the mental health education in primary, middle school and higher institutions. The decision on reform and development of fundamental education by the state council issued on June 14th 2001, stated: strengthening mental health education of primary and middle school students. Moreover, in April 2001, the Ministry of Education issued the guideline on the implementation of the mental health education of students of higher education. In August 2002, The guideline to psychological education in primary and secondary schools was issued. And in July, 2004, The guideline to mental health education of students of vocational schools and etc. All these give full expression to the great attention from the CPC and the central government paying to the mental health education of the adolescent students.

2. The educational and administrative departments have strengthened the organizational leadership to the schools mental health education.

The Ministry of Education has set up the consultation committee for mental health education of primary, middle schools and higher institutions, so as to strengthen the macro guidance to the schools mental health education nationwide. Meanwhile, most province, cities and regions have established the research and guiding committee of mental health education, forged by leaders, experts and experienced teachers, undertaking the work of organization, policy formulating, science and research, training and evaluation to promote the mental health education. For example, Beijing has set up a team of experience field, school and research staffs from basic educational research institution, psychological centre, Beijing normal university, Qinghua University and so on. And the mental health education research centre is required to be established to guide the work of mental health education and research. Besides, the cities, such as Shanghai, Tianjing, Chengdu, Shijiazhuang, Liaoning, Zhejiang, Jiangsu and so on, have set up a leading group about mental health education in primary and middle school to formulate corresponding programming and guiding principles, and undertake the planning, guiding,

adjusting and researching of schools' mental health education in their own regions.

3. Holding various kinds of activities about mental health education

The practice often precedes theory whenever a new thing arises. Since 1980s, many

Schools in Beijing, Shanghai, Hunan, Hubei, Jiangsu, Hebei, Liaoning, Henan, Tianjing, Sichuan, Chongqing, Guangxi, Leimengu, Sanxi, Zhejiang, Fujian, Jiangxi & Anhui undertake series of campaigns about schools' mental health education, with various colorful forms and contents. For example, Carrying out mental measurement for students, establishing students' mental files, carrying out mental counseling, undertaking mental guidance courses, popularizing knowledge on mental health via radio, TV, and mailbox and so on, establishing psychological guidance center, opening psychological counseling hotline and etc. The schools' mental health education activity becomes popular, which involves the participation of teachers, students and combines society with family.

4. Valuing the theory research on schools' mental health education

With the development of schools' mental health education activities, there are groups of scholars, experts and teachers launching theory and realistic research. The research subjects concerning about schools' mental health education & psychological guidance reporting to the state educational science planning & leading group have more than 70 only in the 9th 5-year program, and the concerning educational research subjects of every kind from every province are beyond counting. At the same time, the experiment research has become the centre of public attention, having abundant significant subjects such as <students' mental health education research> composed by Professor Zhengrichang, <The study of middle and primary students' mental health operating research> by Wuzengqiang from Shanghai educational science department, <The research on middle and primary students' psychological

diathesis construction and cultivation> by Doctor Wojianzhong from Beijing normal university, <The development of middle and primary schools students in harmony and psychological development research> by Zhenghejun from Hunan normal university, <Improving students psychological quality & reinforcing the fundamental educational quality> edited by Professor Zhanglvxiang from Anhui normal university & <The theory of constructional research on schools mental health education> composed by Professor Yaobenxian from Anhui normal university and so on, all those being with glorious contents ,many staffs and abundant time involving, & high efficiency , which play a giant role for high institution, middle , primary schools mental health education. At present, the study in this field is still popular.

5. Strengthening the teaching staffs cultivation on schools mental health educational

There are various teaching training tasks on schools psychological education and different long & short-term training courses relating to mental health education all round china, some higher institutions even adjusting the original specialty and courses, training specific staffs of mental health education in accordance to the need of local education development, which have positive influence to set up a basic mental health educational staffs. These examples are that: Training for 1500 professional and vocational teachers in Beijing, 2000, one-year position training on mental health education holding in Shanghai from 1999, and issuing the qualified certification & teaching schools mental health education courses. It is instructed that one-third psychological guidance teacher must have qualified certification and 12000 teachers have been trained at present in Tianjing, the others provinces such as Jilin, Liaoning, Sichuan, Hebei , Jiangsu, Hubei all adopt various methods to cultivate groups of teachers. The state-lever academic group as Chinese psychological society, Chinese Association for Mental Health, Chinese Association for Social Psychological, The Chinese Society of Education and other relevant provincial associations hold many training work and contribute to teachers' cultivation on mental health education

6. Publishing series of readings on schools' psychological education

Nowadays, There are many publications such as monographs and textbooks on institute, middle, primary schools' mental health education used by teacher, students, parents, those theory monographs by researching groups on giant subjects are of higher quality and greater influence. Such as <Psychological guidance for modern school> by Wuzenqiang , < Guideline for schools psychological guidance> publishing by Shanghai technique & science press, <Mental health education for middle and primary schools> by Jianghaiyan, <Improving students psychological diathesis> by Zhanglvxiang, <Psychological guideline for middle and primary schools students> by Wojianzhong, < Mental health education for primary schools students >&< Mental health education for middle schools students> by Conglixin, <Mental health education> by Yaobenxian. And others academic monographs from Linchongde, Liuhuashan, Zhengrichang, Chenjialin, Yaobenxian and so on. All those monographs have great influence and high circulation, playing a certain role for propelling the popularity of schools mental health education.

II. The Problems Existing in Chinese Mental Health Education

1. Backward concepts and strong formalism

The mental health education holding in schools are not only to meet the need of students health development themselves, but the requirement for talents diathesis asked from the social development, which are the main part of diathesis education and cultivation of century-striding talent. So, it is the necessary requirement to educate students on mental health and an urgent task faced by teachers. However, some schools headmasters, teachers, parents don't pay enough attention to those education, insisting that testing education is the foundation, and quality and mental health education just meet the time's need only with passive watching, simply handling. There are some superficial actions, such as setting up lessons on mental health education,

building up psychological counseling room, running lectures on students mental health education, all those are just doing superficially due to the ignorance of the alternation and teachers' concepts renewing. Furthermore, some schools resort to deceit and hold some mental health education activities apparently in accordance to meet the need of testing, appraising, standard-reaching, all being high formalism, which is the great imperil to Chinese schools mental health education development in a nature and general way.

2. Great discrepancy in different districts and low level on the whole

At present, it is being researched and experiencing nearly 20 years on mental health education in some Chinese district such as Beijing, Shanghai with much successful experiences, but there is great unbalance in the national respect. Many districts are still beyond understanding for those, even lacking of the basic concepts. Events and activities that violate mental health education occur frequently. On the whole, there is high development and popularity in big cities, highly developing district & coastal areas in the southeast China and less attention and popularization in the small cities and less-developing areas, especially the middle and primary schools in the countryside. Thus, the whole level of schools health education is low in the national aspect.

3. Shortage of teachers and experts

The giant proposition to insure the favorable development of mental health education is to strengthen teachers' cultivation, enhancing their teaching technique on mental health, it is often reflected in the two aspects: one is the shortage of teaching staffs. In American, the proportion between schools mental health education and students is 1:1500, comparatively, if there should be a expert for every 5000 students in China, we should need 40 thousand ones for schools' mental health education, nationally taking 200 millions students for calculation, the total number of all psychological staffs can't

reach, only accounting for 1/10, and most or less of them are not concentrated on this circle. While in American, the number of master is reaching 96030 and doctors is 9071 with one year graduation. The second is the low quality, According to the investigation, most of those teachers engaged in the schools mental health education, who used to be cadres of groups and teams, headers of classes, doctors at school, political teachers and so on, are lacking of solid training, having less understanding and mastering for the basic knowledge of mental health education, so the scientific-making and seriousness of this job have been endangered, and a few teachers may mislead the jobs' developing direction.

4. Shortage of theory and instructing practice

In China, mental health education is just at the beginning stage, especially needing theory support and instruction in the practice, But at present which is under the shadow of the traditional education research and appears various research straits. The real troubles are lacking of specific, higher, series, arguing research and etc in theory aspect and shortage of representative people being studying, injustice of researching result, inaccuracy of analyzing, out of control on research variable, arbitrary statistics analyzing in reality research and so on. In addition to those, the theory research being divorced from educational practice leads to the ineffective guides to school mental health education in the long term, which make scientific research of mental health education invaluable owing to out of joint with practice and make them operate blindly. The researching level of mental health education is low as a whole, lacking the systematizing mental health education theory, for instance, the publications about mental health education are the most first-rate selling ones, but most of them are low in quality besides those referring ahead and the writers are multifarious, most of those lacking the basic psychology quality, all those being the proof of low theory and can't guide practice strongly.

5. Standardization shortage and notable negative tendency

Mental health education is a kind of specific work with strong practice. Standardization lacking will directly influence its science and normal development. Due to the low specific level of staffs relating, especially lacking the related behavior standard restrictions and coaching, the situation with out of controlling always occurs and brings to exceedingly passive affect, such as misusing the testing book or other testing skills, explaining testing result arbitrarily, opening the testing result and students' mental illness to public and directly using the western theory, skill, technique on psychological counseling and guidance to Chinese schools' educational activities with extraordinary different culture background and so on, which have more disadvantages than advantages. There also exists passive tendency in modern schools' mental health education, such as individualism with little emphasized and total omitting, medicine science tendency with treatment stressing and development omitting, curriculum tendency with teaching stressing and action neglecting etc, all those obvious and potential passive tendency have caused different adverse effects.

III. The Prospect of Chinese Schools Mental Health Education

1. Mental health education has become the main part of modern schools

Mental health education becoming the main part of modern schools is not only the requirement for students self-growing, but also for person diathesis from future society. Mental health education is more educational concept and idea with advanced skill and technique, than a kind of method and technique. With the deepening and popularity of that concept, schools' mental health education will be infused into educational concepts, students' and talents' concepts, becoming the inner requirement of schools' education and need of every student asking for harmony development in health and mentality. Then,

mental health education will seep into whole process and every aspects of schools' education, becoming the main part of schools' whole work. Besides, the various mental and spiritual problem will be more prominent in 21century, especially the children's action problem and middle-primary students' mental health problem according to the announcement from authoritative academy, Which promote the great attention on students' mental health education from society and schools to encounter and prevent various psychological problem occurrences, Then schools' mental health education would be promoted strongly and become the important part of schools' education.

2. Schools' mental health education will get general and common development.

Schools' mental health education will get general and common development with the concepts changing, civilization improving, educational developing and life level raising from modern few practicing schools to general ones, from big cities, coastal cities with high economic progress to small towns and inland districts gradually, especially popularities in those countryside, from high schools, middle-primary schools to pre-education sides, furthermore, the people being served will be enlarged, gradually from schools to society, both students and teachers, parents, guardians' mental health would be attentive and their need would be met, making schools' mental health education implement in general.

3. The technique of schools' mental health education will be highly developed

Nowadays social science and technique progress unbelievably, especially the development of informative science, neuroscience and psychology, which assure the moderation of future schools' mental health education. With the computer and network development in the schools' mental health education, what could be forecasted are those : students' mental measurement can be completed directly by using computer, the storage and administration, applying

of psychological information will not be handled by man-power, students will receive more information from computer due to the scope of psychological guiding; Teachers will be trained masterly and professionally by internet; Bigger schools' mental health education network will be built all round the nation, people can communicate and share the common resources; Expert network and imitating network on schools' mental health education will appear and students could ask for some expert guidance and instruction directly according to one's situation and need. In total, schools' mental health education will develop more quickly and better by this convenient, quick, plentiful modern technique.

4. Specialization of schools' mental health education will be beefed up gradually

It is very important that teachers should be trained highly and increased in large scale in order to make schools' mental health education more scientific and standardizative because of strongly practicing, standard and scientific-making, asking highly for staffs' specific requirement and only those people with specific training can be suitable. In future, the training time and number of teaching staffs will be enlarged, further education will be more standardized and include teaching specific standard, qualified testing in more areas in order to assure the specific level and servicing quality. More high schools will develop greatly related specific course, cultivating more qualified students to various schools apart from the short-term training. The schools' mental health teaching staffs from high schools, scientific research academy, medic and health department and related unit will be more positively engaged in promoting their specification.

5. Indigenous tendency of schools' mental health education will be more obvious

At present, the indigenous tendency is not only a kind of research on society culture problem, but as the problem of future development of Chinese

psychology. Schools mental health education as the main part of psychology should be required for the indigenous tendency, that is to say that the theory, technique, skill should be suitable for the real situation of nation, district, more reflecting the psychological feature suitable for native country, people and building schools mental health educational system of Chinese feature. In future, the development of schools mental health education will be suitable for Chinese feature, Chinese need & the real educational effect and modern theory abroad will be connected with Chinese education, students development feature both in health and mental, which will cause the great and lasting development of schools mental health education with Chinese feature.

Schools' mental health education are developing formally only 20-years, which are developed highly, efficiently and also low with various problems. Chinese schools' mental health education will overcome their problem and make progress in the present basis with the social development, educational reform deepening, mass quality enhancing. The newly adolescent will be grown-up well with benefiting from the new educational activities provided by the time.