

Research on the Influencing Factors and Optimization Path of College Counselors' Mental Health Education in the New Media Era

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Abstract: This study investigates the new challenges, influencing factors, and optimization pathways for university counselors' mental health education in the new media era. Through comprehensive analysis of current conditions, it identifies multidimensional factors including evolving student psychological characteristics, impacts of new media technologies, counselors' competency frameworks, and institutional support systems. The research reveals that the openness, immediacy, and interactivity of new media environments present both opportunities and challenges for mental health education, such as information overload, privacy concerns, and effectiveness evaluation. Based on systematic analysis, this paper constructs an optimization pathway model encompassing five dimensions: conceptual renewal, competency enhancement, platform development, mechanism innovation, and evaluation systems. Practical recommendations are proposed to provide theoretical references and practical guidance for improving the effectiveness of university mental health education in the new media era.

Keywords: New Media Era; University Counselors; Mental Health Education; Influencing Factors; Optimization Path

1.The Evolution of the Times Background and Characteristics of Mental Health Education in Universities in the New Media Era

The advent of the new media era signifies a profound transformation in human information dissemination and social interaction patterns. As the forefront of knowledge dissemination, universities are at a pivotal juncture in this historic transformation regarding their mental health education. The traditional mental health education model, primarily based on

face-to-face counseling, classroom lectures, and group counseling, is now facing unprecedented challenges and restructuring^[1]. In the digital age, college students exhibit distinct generational shifts in psychological traits. Their self-identity evolves through fluidity, with online personas and real-world identities interacting dynamically. These evolving psychological characteristics directly shape their preferences and approaches to mental health services.

However, the flip side of technological empowerment brings new challenges and risks. Information overload fuels choice anxiety, online comparisons distort self-perception, virtual social interactions create physical detachment, and privacy breaches pose security threats. As frontline practitioners in college students' mental health education, counselors must not only address these emerging psychological issues but also master new technological tools, which demands higher professional competence and innovative work approaches^[2].

2.Multidimensional Analysis of Influencing Factors of College Counselors' Mental Health Education in the New Media Era

2.1 Environmental Factors: Dual Shaping by Technological Ecosystem and Institutional Environment

The rapid evolution of new media technology ecosystems has established a foundational framework for counselors' work. The widespread adoption of mobile internet enables mental health services to transcend geographical and temporal constraints, ensuring round-the-clock responsiveness. The proliferation of social media has transformed information dissemination patterns, allowing psychological crises to escalate into viral hotspots in an instant. While big data analytics offers unprecedented opportunities for identifying student psychological risks, it

simultaneously imposes heightened demands on data ethics and personal privacy protection. These technological characteristics fundamentally shape the operational approaches and service models of mental health education. The influence of institutional frameworks cannot be overlooked. In institutions prioritizing mental health education, counselors typically enjoy more training opportunities, better-equipped facilities, and fairer workload distribution. Conversely, in environments with insufficient attention, counselors may face challenges like resource scarcity, inadequate support, and ambiguous responsibilities. Currently, many universities' mental health education systems remain stuck in outdated models, failing to adapt to the demands of the new media era^[3].

The technical, institutional, and cultural environments are critical factors that cannot be overlooked. Platform diversity fragments career pathways, while the immediacy of information dissemination demands rapid response capabilities. Data accessibility transforms risk assessment methods, and the pace of technological updates challenges continuous learning. Policy support levels determine resource allocation scales, evaluation system orientations influence career focus choices, cross-departmental collaboration mechanisms constrain resource integration effectiveness, and professional development channels affect team stability. Campus mental health culture influences students' willingness to seek help, public opinion shapes perceptions of psychological issues, family support systems moderate psychological crisis risks, and online subcultures may exacerbate mental distress.

2.2 Subject Factors: Professional Competence and Modern Transformation of Counselors' Role Positioning

The professional competencies of counselors constitute the core variables influencing work effectiveness. Traditional mental health education primarily relies on professional skills such as interview techniques, crisis intervention, and group counseling, while the new media era requires counselors to additionally master new capabilities including digital literacy, online communication, and online crisis identification. However, surveys indicate that a significant proportion of counselors exhibit deficiencies in new media skills, difficulties in identifying

online psychological issues, and lack of experience in online intervention^[4]. This mismatch between competency structure and job requirements directly impacts the quality and effectiveness of mental health education in the new media environment.

The evolution of role perception is equally pivotal. In traditional frameworks, counselors primarily functioned as knowledge transmitters and problem solvers. Within the new media landscape, however, they must transform into resource connectors, platform administrators, atmosphere cultivators, and digital mentors. This transformation requires counselors to not only possess professional psychological expertise but also comprehend new media communication principles, master online community management, and be adept at designing digital services. Yet many counselors remain entrenched in conventional roles, demonstrating inadequate adaptability and creativity in embracing these new responsibilities. This constraint has significantly hindered the innovative advancement of mental health education.

2.3 Object Factors: Intergenerational Changes in the Psychological Characteristics and Needs of College Students

Contemporary college students exhibit distinct intergenerational psychological traits. As digital natives, they process information through diverse and rapid channels. While their social networks are predominantly virtual, their real-world interpersonal skills might be weakened. Their self-expression tends to be more open and direct, yet emotional regulation could face challenges. These intergenerational differences in psychological characteristics necessitate corresponding adjustments in the content, format, and methods of mental health education.

The evolution of psychological needs has become particularly pronounced. While traditional mental health concerns primarily revolved around academic stress, interpersonal conflicts, and emotional distress, the digital age has introduced emerging issues like internet addiction, information anxiety, cyberbullying trauma, and virtual identity confusion. These new psychological challenges differ from conventional problems in their formation mechanisms, behavioral patterns, and intervention approaches, requiring counselors to

continually update their knowledge and strategies. Furthermore, college students' expectations for mental health services have shifted from passive reception to active engagement, from one-dimensional counseling to multifaceted support, and from problem-solving to growth-oriented guidance. This evolving demand places higher expectations on service providers^[5].

3.The Realistic Difficulties Faced by the Mental Health Education Work of College Counselors

3.1 Capacity Dilemma: A Significant Gap Between Professional Competence and Contemporary Demands

The growing disparity between the rapid evolution of new media technologies and the slow pace of professional skill updates among counselors has become increasingly pronounced. Most counselors receive traditional psychological and counseling training during their pre-service education, lacking systematic cultivation of new media literacy. Confronted with the constant emergence of new media platforms and tools, many counselors find themselves overwhelmed and struggle to effectively utilize these resources in mental health education. While technical operational difficulties are superficial, the deeper challenge lies in how to organically integrate psychological theories with new media technologies, thereby creating innovative mental health education models that align with the characteristics of the digital era.

The homogeneity of existing knowledge frameworks restricts the breadth and depth of professional practice. Traditional mental health education primarily focuses on developmental psychology, counseling psychology, and crisis intervention, while neglecting emerging interdisciplinary fields such as cyberpsychology, digital behavior studies, and virtual community dynamics. This knowledge gap leaves counselors without systematic theoretical guidance or effective intervention strategies when addressing new media-related psychological issues like cyberbullying, gaming addiction, and social anxiety. The disconnect between knowledge updates and evolving challenges has become a critical constraint on professional efficacy.

3.2 Resource Dilemma: Supply-Demand Imbalance Between Limited Supply and Diversified Demand

The structural imbalance in resource allocation is strikingly evident. On one hand, mental health education requires sustained funding, equipment upgrades, and platform maintenance, yet many universities fall short in these areas. On the other hand, the adoption of new media tools demands specialized technical support and ongoing operational maintenance, which counselors often lack. Such resource constraints make it difficult to implement innovative mental health education initiatives, often reducing them to low-level, repetitive practices.

The challenge of time and energy allocation deserves equal attention. The new media environment has blurred the temporal and spatial boundaries between work and life, allowing students' requests for help to reach counselors through any channel at any time. While this model enhances service timeliness, it also leads to extended working hours, mounting work pressure, and increased risks of burnout. How to ensure service quality while safeguarding counselors' physical and mental well-being and work-life balance has become an urgent practical issue to address.

The fragmentation in platform development is a serious issue. Many universities face problems such as multiple entities building platforms, redundant investments, incompatible systems developed by different departments, lack of data sharing, and overlapping service functions. This fragmented state not only wastes resources but also causes confusion and inconvenience for students seeking services. The ideal scenario would be to establish a unified digital platform for mental health education, integrating various resources and services to achieve data sharing and operational coordination. However, departmental barriers and interest divisions in reality make this goal difficult to achieve.

4.Optimization Path of College Counselors' Mental Health Education in the New Media Era

4.1 Conceptual Renewal: Establishing a New Framework for Comprehensive Mental Health Education Involving All Personnel and Throughout the Entire Process

The transformation of mindset serves as the logical starting point for work optimization. We

must shift from traditional remedial interventions to developmental prevention, from individualized counseling to ecological construction, and from specialized services to full-staff participation. Specifically, we should establish a holistic mental health perspective by integrating mental health education into all aspects of teaching, management, services, and campus culture. We must adopt a prevention-first approach, enhancing students' psychological immunity through mental health literacy improvement, resilience cultivation, and positive mindset development. Additionally, we need to establish an ecological service model, creating a four-in-one support system that integrates schools, families, society, and digital networks^[6].

4.2 Capacity Building: Developing a Multidisciplinary and Professional Counselor Workforce

It is crucial to establish a systematic competency development framework. This framework should encompass three dimensions: foundational skills, professional competencies, and innovative capabilities. The foundational skills dimension focuses on mastering new media tools and basic online communication techniques. The professional competencies dimension emphasizes identifying and addressing online psychological issues, as well as developing professional skills for online counseling. The innovative capabilities dimension highlights the innovative design of mental health education models and the development and application of digital resources. These three dimensions should be progressively integrated to form a complete competency development chain.

Innovative training models are pivotal for capability enhancement. Traditional centralized, lecture-based approaches have become inadequate for the new media era, necessitating the development of hybrid online-offline models that balance theory with practice and offer personalized customization. Flexible combinations of formats like micro-courses, workshops, case studies, and mentorship programs can be implemented. Multi-channel resources, including university alliances, and international exchanges that should be strategically integrated.

4.3 Platform Development: Establishing a

New Intelligent, Precise, and Convenient Carrier for Mental Health Education

Platform development must adhere to three core principles: integration, intelligence, and personalization. Integration entails consolidating fragmented resources and services to establish a unified digital platform for mental health education, enabling information sharing and operational synergy. Intelligence involves leveraging advanced technologies like artificial intelligence and big data to achieve intelligent monitoring of psychological states, precise risk alerts, and smart service recommendations. Personalization means respecting students' individual differences and preferences, delivering customized mental health services and growth plans.

The functional modules should be designed to cover the entire process of mental health education. The early warning and monitoring module achieves early identification and dynamic monitoring of psychological risks through multi-source data collection and intelligent analysis. The education and promotion module enhances mental health literacy and awareness of seeking help through multimedia content production and targeted delivery. The consultation service module provides convenient and professional psychological support through various forms such as online appointment scheduling, video consultations, and text communication. The intervention and follow-up module ensures the scientific and effective nature of intervention services by formulating personalized plans and evaluating outcomes. The community support module builds a positive psychological support network through peer assistance and experience sharing.

5. Conclusion

This study systematically analyzes influencing factors, identifies practical challenges, and proposes optimization strategies, revealing the challenges and opportunities faced by counselors in mental health education. The findings indicate that success hinges on achieving a systematic transformation from traditional to modern approaches, from singular to diversified methods, and from passive to proactive engagement. As key players in students' mental health education, counselors shoulder unique missions bestowed by the times. Through multidimensional optimization,

including conceptual updates, capability enhancement, platform development, and mechanism innovation, this will provide solid psychological support for nurturing well-rounded individuals with moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor development, while making substantial contributions to advancing the innovative development of mental health education for college students.

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