

The Use of the Satir Family Therapy Model in Intervening with Test Anxiety

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Abstract: The Satir Family Therapy model has been widely used in emotional and relationship confusion. In the actual work, the counsellor conducted counselling for a college student with exam anxiety symptoms who had an inferiority complex. Through the counselling, the self-confidence of the client was improved, the exam anxiety was reduced, the grades were significantly improved, and the interpersonal relationship was good, so the counselling achieved the expected effect. The counselling proved that test anxiety is often just a symptom of the problem, and that the inferiority complex may be one of the deep-rooted causes, and that the Satir family therapy model is effective in treating this kind of test anxiety caused by the inferiority complex.

Keywords: Satir, inferiority complex, counseling

1. Introduction

The counsellor is a psychological counsellor of a university, and the visitor is a male, 20 years old, a student of an engineering university, Han Chinese, from the mountainous area, and an only child. He is very anxious about the final exams, and feels relaxed only when he lies in bed at night and reads metaphysical novels. Because he has already been demoted once and is now in the demotion trial stage, he is still unsure whether he can pass the final exams. He has thought about dropping out of school, but he feels that if he drops out, what will his parents do, so he feels conflicted, and the purpose of the consultation is to hope that the counsellor can help him make a decision on whether to drop out of school or not.

2. Past history of the visitor

The client has not received any previous counseling or treatment. The client is an only child, born in a rural mountainous area. Shortly after his birth, his mother gave up her job as a private teacher to care for him. Her former colleagues later became public teachers, a fact his mother often mentions, leading the client to believe it was his fault. During elementary school, he was obedient and performed well academically, often receiving praise from teachers.

In middle school, he studied in a different county and maintained good grades. His performance in the high school entrance exam was average, and he entered a prestigious high school through connections, which made him feel guilty towards his parents. In high school, he found his classmates more knowledgeable and talented, leading to feelings of inadequacy. Despite his efforts, his academic performance remained average. After failing the first college entrance exam, he was scolded and beaten by his father, leading to a suicide attempt that resulted in minor injuries.

He passed the college entrance exam on his second attempt and was admitted to a prestigious university. He admitted that due to the intense pressure in high school, he wanted to relax in college and often stayed up late reading fantasy novels. In his first year, he failed multiple courses and was placed on academic probation. When his father found out, he became furious and scolded the client again.

During the probation period, he forced himself to stop reading fantasy novels and managed to do so. However, with the final exams approaching, he remains uncertain about his performance and fears the consequences of failing again.

3. Consultant observation

The client is physically strong with a thick beard and slightly unkempt appearance. He speaks softly and slowly, avoiding eye contact with the counselor. When discussing sensitive topics like exams and grades, he becomes nervous, frequently scratching his head and rubbing his hands, displaying a helpless and demeanor.

4. Etiology Analysis And Psychological Assessment

Social Factors: Negative life events: Failure in the college entrance exam, academic probation. Parent-child communication issues: The client perceives his father as strict, prioritizing academic performance over his well-being.

Psychological Factors: The client lacks effective problem-solving strategies and struggles to communicate with his father or study efficiently. He is plagued by anxiety, fear, and inferiority, unable to alleviate these emotions on his own. Personality traits: Introverted and sensitive.

Psychological assessment: Based on the comprehensive data collected, the client's issues stem from a cycle of "pressure--inferiority---avoidance---failing courses," leading to anxiety and interpersonal sensitivity. The key to resolving these issues lies in recognizing the root cause and reconstructing coping mechanisms to enhance self-confidence and alleviate anxiety. The diagnosis is psychological normality with unhealthy mental state, general psychological issues, suitable for psychological counseling.

5. Counseling Goals And Counseling Principles

Based on the assessment and in consultation with the client, the following goals were established: Enhance self-confidence and alleviate exam-related anxiety. Improve communication with his father. Teach each family member to see and deal with problems in a new way[1]. Establish a robust social support system to promote mental health and personality development.

The Satir therapy model, also known as "Conjoint Family Therapy," guides clients to understand themselves better and learn new communication skills or behaviors to help themselves, understand their feelings, and affirm their self-worth. The family is viewed as an organic, dynamic system where any individual's change affects the entire system. Changing the family may be the most effective way to change the individual. In summary, Satir teaches people how to affirm themselves and interact with others. The model is based on four assumptions: Humans are capable of growth and change. Everyone possesses the necessary resources for growth and development. The family is a system where everyone and everything is interconnected; outcomes cannot be simply attributed to one person. Every family member is influenced by the family atmosphere - prevailing attitudes received while growing up[2]. The therapist and their philosophy are the most important tools in therapy.

6. Counseling Process

The counseling process is divided into three stages: establishing the counseling relationship, identifying and solving problems, and integration.

(1) First Stage: Establishing the Counseling Relationship (Session 1).

Objectives: Understand basic information. Establish a good counseling relationship. Explore solutions.

Methods: Conversation, drawing.

Process: Introduce counseling rules and procedures. Collect information through conversation. Explain the principles and mechanisms of Satir family therapy, emphasizing potential temporary anxiety, fear, and discomfort during the process to gain the client's cooperation. Draw a genogram.

(2) Second Stage: Identifying and Solving Problems (Sessions 2-4).

Objectives: Help the client identify the root of his problems. Help the client focus on the present and regain control over his life. Align with the client's growth goals and establish new stress-coping mechanisms.

Methods: Conversation, drawing, meditation.

Process: Identify issues. The counselor asked the client to draw a communication scene with his father. Establish new coping mechanisms. The counselor used meditation to help the client release hidden anger and establish new ways to cope, focusing on the present and recognizing his resources to communicate with his father as an equal.

The counsellor tells the client that he can now fully experience his anger and resentment towards his father. Once he clearly recognises the connection established between his father's behaviour and his reaction, he feels focused and hopeful and feels that he now has control over the matter. The counsellor reminds the client that as a child he is both the agent and embodiment of change[3].

(3) Third Stage: Integration (Session 5).

Objectives: Reinforce the insights gained in the second stage.

Methods: Conversation.

Process: Encourage the client to actively communicate with his father and reinforce new parent-child communication methods. The client decided to continue his studies after careful consideration, not just for his parents but because he believed it was the right choice. He discussed how to study and boost his confidence with the counselor. Help the client develop future parent-child communication and study plans, and schedule follow-up phone sessions. Conclude the counseling: Encourage the client to focus on his inner self and utilize his resources to address potential issues.

7. Conclusion

The client reported that through counseling, their test anxiety was alleviated, interpersonal relationships improved, self-confidence increased, and most importantly, they learned to communicate with their father in a new way. Through counseling, they could correctly understand learning, no longer avoid it, and served as a student cadre, whose work was recognized by teachers and classmates. The client's parents stated that through counseling, not only was their child's academic problem solved, but also the parent-child communication improved, and they were satisfied with the counseling effect. The counselor believed that after counseling, the client's anxiety and inferiority complex were significantly relieved, interpersonal relationships improved, and they could study, live and work normally. The client's self-evaluation was significantly improved. From this case, it can be seen that the Satir family therapy model effectively intervenes in the inferiority complex by improving family communication, enhancing self-worth, family restructuring and emotional expression, helping individuals and families achieve mental health. This proves that the Satir family therapy model is effective in treating test anxiety caused by inferiority complex among college students.

References

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