

Analysis of Mental Health Education Methods in Adolescent Family Education under Self-Determination Theory

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Abstract: This thesis analyzes the mental health education methods in adolescent family education based on self - determination theory. It expounds the core concepts of autonomy and intrinsic motivation in self - determination theory and their significance for adolescent education, explores the universality of current adolescent mental health problems and the influence of family education methods. It proposes mental health education methods applying self - determination theory, such as encouraging autonomous choice and providing a supportive environment, and gives implementation strategies and suggestions, including regular family meetings and carrying out interest - based activities, aiming to provide theoretical basis and practical guidance for improving the mental health level of adolescents.

Adolescence is an important stage of rapid psychological and physiological development for individuals, and family education plays a crucial role in this process. However, in modern society, adolescents are facing a great deal of pressure, and mental health problems are becoming increasingly common. Self - determination theory provides a new perspective for mental health education in adolescent family education. This theory emphasizes core elements such as autonomy and intrinsic motivation. In - depth exploration of how to integrate self - determination theory into family education is of great significance for promoting the mental health development of adolescents.

1. Core Concepts of Self - Determination Theory and Their Influence on Adolescent Education

1.1 Autonomy

Autonomy occupies a central position in self - determination theory. In the context of adolescent family education, autonomy means giving adolescents sufficient freedom to make choices, which covers many aspects of study and life. In study, adolescents have the right to decide on study methods suitable for themselves. For example, some children may prefer to organize knowledge by making mind maps, while others like to take notes to summarize key points. In terms of time arrangement, they can choose according to their own learning rhythm, whether to complete the homework of more difficult subjects first or preview simple subjects first. In life, for some family

decisions, such as the choice of family travel destinations, adolescents can express their preferences. The cultivation of this autonomy enables adolescents to learn to think independently and weigh the pros and cons in the process of constantly making choices, thereby improving their decision-making ability. It helps adolescents establish self-awareness, understand their own needs and preferences, and is an important basis for shaping a healthy mind and an indispensable part of self-determination theory in family education^[1].

1.2 Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is manifested as an individual being driven by inner interests and a sense of satisfaction to carry out activities. In family education, attaching importance to stimulating adolescents' enthusiasm for study and life has far-reaching significance. When adolescents can find internal pleasure in activities in study or life, they will show a more positive and active attitude. For example, when studying scientific knowledge, if adolescents are full of curiosity about space exploration, this internal interest will prompt them to actively read relevant books, watch popular science videos, and deeply explore the mysteries of the universe, rather than just to cope with school exams. In life, if a child is interested in photography, they will use their spare time to find beautiful scenery for shooting and enjoy the satisfaction brought by the creative process. This behavior driven by the heart helps adolescents form a self-directed learning and living pattern, fundamentally stimulates their growth potential, and has an irreplaceable positive impact on their mental health and all-round development.

2. Current Situation of Mental Health in Family Education

2.1 Universality of Mental Health Problems

In today's society, adolescents are facing various sources of pressure, resulting in mental health problems such as anxiety and depression becoming more and more common. In terms of academics, the competition for further education is becoming increasingly fierce, and the difficulty of courses is constantly increasing. Adolescents need to achieve good grades in many subjects and are facing great academic pressure. In terms of social interaction, they need to adapt to different interpersonal relationships, such as getting along with classmates, teachers, and family members. If they fail to handle them well, contradictions and troubles may arise. And the lack of scientific guidance in family education has contributed to this situation. Many parents lack knowledge of mental health and do not understand the psychological needs of children in the growth process. For example, when a child fails in an exam, the parent may simply blame without paying attention to the child's psychological feelings. This makes the child unable to get correct guidance when facing pressure, and the psychological burden is further aggravated, thus increasing the risk of mental health problems.

2.2 Influence of Family Education Methods

The traditional family education model often focuses too much on grades and behavioral norms. In terms of grades, parents regard their children's test scores as the main standard to measure whether their children are excellent or not, and constantly put pressure on their children, requiring them to achieve high scores in academics. For example, arranging a large number of extracurricular tutoring for children, ignoring their tolerance. In terms of behavioral norms, parents set strict rules and require their children to abide by them unconditionally, and children lack the opportunity to express their own ideas. This education method goes against the autonomy emphasized by self-

determination theory. Adolescents are in a period of rapid psychological and physiological development, and they have their own ideas and feelings. Being in this repressive educational environment for a long time, children's autonomy is suppressed, their emotional and psychological needs are not met, and they are prone to psychological problems such as inferiority complex and rebellion, which have a serious negative impact on their mental health^[2].

3. Mental Health Education Methods Applying Self - Determination Theory

3.1 Encouraging Autonomous Choice

It is very important to encourage adolescents to make autonomous choices in family education. This requires parents to give children a certain decision - making power in family affairs and study planning. In family affairs, for example, in daily family shopping, parents can let children participate in choosing the styles and colors of daily necessities or home decorations, which makes children feel that they are a member of the family and their opinions are valued. In study planning, children can participate in formulating semester - long study goals, whether they want to improve the grades of a certain subject or expand knowledge in a certain area. For the study methods, children can also choose independently, such as whether to adopt the group study method to improve their cooperation ability. Through these opportunities for autonomous choice, adolescents gradually learn to be responsible for their own choices, and their autonomy is continuously strengthened in this process, which helps them build self - confidence and actively face various choices in life, having a positive promoting effect on their mental health development^[4].

3.2 Providing a Supportive Environment

The family should provide an open and supportive environment for adolescents. In this environment, first of all, adolescents should be encouraged to share their inner feelings. Parents should listen to their children's joys, sorrows, angers and joys with patience, understanding and tolerance. For example, when a child has a conflict with a classmate at school, the parent should let the child fully express their grievances, anger or confusion, instead of interrupting or despising the child's feelings. Then, parents should give positive feedback, help children analyze problems and provide reasonable suggestions. At the same time, the family should help adolescents establish good social relationships. Parents can organize family gatherings, invite their children's friends to visit their homes, and let children interact and communicate with their friends in a familiar environment. They can also encourage children to participate in community volunteer activities, interest groups and other social activities. Good social relationships can make adolescents feel a sense of belonging. They learn to communicate, cooperate and understand in the process of interacting with others, which has an important guarantee role for their mental health^[3]..

4. Implementation Strategies and Suggestions

4.1 Regular Family Meetings

Holding regular family meetings is an effective strategy to promote communication and understanding among family members. Family meetings can be scheduled at a fixed time every week or every month. At the meeting, every family member has an equal opportunity to speak and can freely express their ideas and feelings. For adolescents, they can share their study situations at school, such as recent progress, difficulties encountered, or interesting stories or contradictions that occurred with teachers or classmates. Parents can share their experiences, pressures and gains at

work. Through this open - ended communication, family members can understand each other more deeply. Parents can timely discover the possible mental health problems of adolescents in study and life. For example, if a child shows a sense of weariness towards a certain subject in sharing, the parent can timely guide and help. At the same time, family meetings also help to create a democratic atmosphere in the family, making adolescents feel their importance in the family, enhancing their sense of belonging and responsibility, which has a positive impact on their mental health^[4].

4.2 Carrying out Interest - based Activities

Supporting adolescents to participate in various interest - based activities is of crucial significance for their mental health development. Parents should actively guide their children to participate in different types of interest-based activities according to their personality characteristics and interests. For example, if a child is interested in music, parents can sign up for music courses for the child or buy musical instruments for the child to practice at home. In the process of children participating in interest-based activities, they will continuously explore and learn. For example, in the painting interest-based activity, from the initial simple line drawing to gradually mastering color matching and composition techniques, each progress will bring them a sense of achievement. This sense of achievement will further stimulate their intrinsic motivation, making them love this activity more. At the same time, interest-based activities also provide a space for adolescents to relax their bodies and minds and release pressure. In this space, they can temporarily forget the troubles in study and life and focus on the things they like, which is helpful for regulating their emotions, enhancing their self - confidence, and has an inalienable role in promoting their overall mental health^[5-6].

5. Conclusion

In adolescent family education, mental health education is of vital importance. From the perspective of self - determination theory, by understanding its core concepts, recognizing that the current situation of adolescent mental health is affected by family education methods. Using mental health education methods such as encouraging autonomous choice and providing a supportive environment, and adopting implementation strategies such as regular family meetings and carrying out interest - based activities, can effectively promote the mental health development of adolescents. This not only helps to solve the mental health problems faced by adolescents, but also provides strong support for building a healthy and positive family relationship, and lays a solid psychological foundation for the all-round development of adolescents.

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