

The Logical Necessity and Realistic Path of Combining Solution-Focused Technology with Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities

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Abstract: The concept of solution-focused brief therapy is in line with the “people-oriented” principle in modern ideological and political education. It can stimulate the subject consciousness of the educated, and is in line with the distinct positive guidance of the ideological and political education. In the process of combining the solution focused technology with ideological and political education in colleges and universities, we should create a conversation mode with the focus concept to improve the effectiveness of ideological and political education, build a teaching system of solution-focused mode to enhance the affinity and pertinence of the ideological and political course, and build a solution-focused platform for psychological consultation and group counseling to highlight the humanistic care of ideological and political education.

1. Introduction

The solution-focused technique is a kind of psychological technique which takes the party involved as the main body and problem solving as the orientation. Compared with the traditional counseling mode, it is positive, brief, focusing on solution and action oriented; the solutions are brief, concise and efficient. It advocates respect and cooperation, and helps clients to build targets which are concrete, positive, action oriented and situational. It has been proved to be an effective negotiation and guidance technique.

2. The Connotation of Solution-Focused Model

2.1 Concept and Development of Solution-Focused Technology

The solution-focused brief therapy originated in the United States in the 1980s and was born in the post-modern and constructivist social trend of thought. Its development was influenced by brief counseling and positive psychology. It advocates people-oriented and future oriented, and makes full use of the parties' own resources and advantages to achieve the goal. As psychological technology, it was first developed by Steve de Shazer, the founders of the brief family therapy center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as well as Innsoo Berg Kim and their colleagues.[1] At the beginning of this century, the solution- focused technology was introduced into China. With the active promotion of domestic experts and scholars, after nearly 20 years of development, the concept of this technology has been widely used for reference and applied in many fields, mainly in the fields of psychological consultation, counseling and education.

2.2 Concept and Main Skills of Solution-Focused Technology

The traditional consultation mode focuses on the causes of crisis, attaches importance to risk assessment and ignores the resources of the parties. The solution focused model is a revolution of consulting methods. It changes from focusing on the cause to focusing on the solution, from focusing on the negative part to focusing on the positive side, and from focusing on the past to focusing on the future. They no longer consider clients as the weak; on the contrary, they think that clients are experts

who can solve their own problems. Such a concept can give full play to the subjectivity and initiative of clients, and fully reflect the idea of “people-oriented”.

The solution focused technology has very clear attitude and position. It includes active listening and natural empathy which are contained in general consultation and counseling, but it also has very distinctive characteristics which reflect the direction of empowerment and solution construction. For example, skills like normalization, changing inquiry before consultation, presupposition inquiry, the scale inquiry, praise, inspiring encouragement, and changing the first signs show the direction of empowerment; skills like miracle inquiry, the relationship inquiry, coping inquiry, looking for exceptions and assigning homework reflect the solution construction orientation. Its basic spirit and ideas include, there is no definite reason for something; the party concerned is an expert on his own problems; “problem symptoms” also have positive functions; successful exceptional experience can guide the direction of problem solving; a good start is half of success.

Taking the “generalization technology” as an example, counselors often use generalization techniques to respond to the confusion or anxiety of the client. They often use sentences such as “most people have such feelings or thoughts” and “it is normal for you to have such feelings” to convey the meaning, the difficulties and reactions of clients are normal, so as to change the parties' views on the absoluteness of their problems, and achieve the purpose of enabling the parties.

3. The Necessity of Combining the Solution-Focused Concept with Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities

From the concept of modern ideological and political education, the relationship between educators and educatees is equal and interactive. They are both independent, subjective and dynamic subjects. They are not in dominant or controlled relationship, but in a two-way interactive relationship. Based on this concept, it is reasonable and necessary to integrate the solution-focused concept into the ideological and political education in colleges and universities.

3.1 It is in Line with the “People-Oriented” Educational Principle of Modern Ideological and Political Education

The theory of modern ideological and political education holds that in the process of ideological and political education, there are two main bodies: the educator and the educated. Only by giving full play to the initiative of two subjects can education achieve good results. Under the guidance of the “people-oriented” principle, educators should have a comprehensive and objective understanding of the educated, take the initiative to study new changes of the times and human development, refine education contents in line with current situation, and select and create flexible and diverse education methods. The educated need to actively interact with educators, actively respond to changes in the environment, teach themselves and be self-disciplined in the process. Under that situation, the whole education activity can develop well.

The solution-focused technology does not explore the underlying causes of problems, but focuses on clients' choice of consulting objectives. Consultants establish a trust relationship with clients by listening, accepting and praising. Through full communication with clients, they inspire clients to find out their own resources and strength, so that clients can re understand themselves and find solutions to problems. In this interactive process, the self-confidence and self-efficacy of clients are fully stimulated, which urges them to have positive thinking, fully tap their own potentials, and then shape positive and healthy personality. Therefore, both the solution focused technology and the ideological and political education contain the concept of “people-oriented” which can promote the free and comprehensive development of students.

3.2 It Can Stimulate the Subject Consciousness of the Educated

In the process of ideological and political education in colleges and universities, it is necessary to cultivate the subject consciousness of the educated. The so-called subjective consciousness refers to the ability of self-determination, self-choice and self-control.[2] The students consciously identify

with educational objectives and requirements, make independent judgments and choices, and adjust behaviors independently, so as to enrich and develop their own autonomy, initiative and creativity to a certain extent.

The solution focused technology believes that most parties are smart and positive. They are willing to make progress and have strength and potential resources. The current problem is a developmental problem that can be solved. The problem itself is not a problem; how to solve the problem is the key. Under this concept, consultants accept the feelings of clients, but they do not make evaluation or suggestions on events or problems. They guide clients to put forward their own problems, encourage them to choose and establish reasonable goals, and make them believe that they have solutions to these problems. Consultants rely on “one small step”, “miracle inquiries” or “exception” skills to guide clients to gradually achieve their goals. In this process, they respect the independence and autonomy of clients, cultivate their self-awareness and ability, give them the right of choice and enhance their self-control ability. This coincides with the idea of cultivating the subject consciousness of the educated in ideological and political education.

3.3 It is in Line with the Distinct Positive Guidance of Ideological and Political Education

Compared with the general social environment, ideological and political education has distinct positive guidance on people's ideological quality. In order to promote the all-round progress of society and the all-round development of human beings, the value content system of ideological and political education must be composed of parts that are conducive to social development and personal happiness.[3] In addition, educators need to carefully organize and arrange the value content and provide the best environment for education; they play a key role in guiding the process.

The solution focused technology also has distinct positive guidance like the ideological and political education. First, the solution focused technology helps clients to clarify problems, get rid of shackles of problems, and examine problems from a new perspective. It believes that the problem itself has positive significance, and we should try to find resources from the problem. According to the problem described by the client, the consultant interprets the problem with positive language and viewpoint after construction, and endows it with positive meaning, so that the client can see the positive meaning behind the problem. Second, the solution focused technology focuses on “what do you want to replace the problem” to help clients find new perspectives and resources, and make the conversation develop in a constructive direction. It guides the party concerned to make a positive change of “one small step”, so as to bring about great changes from small changes and make the problem develop towards a positive side. Therefore, the solution focused technology and the ideological and political education process reflects the same direction of distinct positive guidance.

4. Practice of Combining the Solution-Focused Technology with Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities

The ideological and political education in colleges and universities should respect the rules of students' psychological development, and it is necessary to carry out ideological and political education combined with psychological principles and technology. It is a beneficial attempt to optimize the ideological and political education in colleges and universities through introducing the solution focused technology.

4.1 Create a Conversation Mode with Focus Concept to Improve the Effectiveness of Ideological and Political Education

In colleges and universities, the team of ideological and political education is mainly composed of counselors, class teachers, Party and League cadres, teachers of the ideological and political course and management service personnel. Among them, counselors and class teachers are the main forces to carry out daily ideological and political education. The communication skills of counselors and head teachers are closely related to the quality of ideological and political education. The solution focused concept holds that “the parties are their own experts, and it is up to the parties themselves to

decide what kind of changing objectives to set.”[4] However, in the traditional communication, the roles of ideological and political workers and students are not equal. “Teachers say; students listen. How teachers say, students do accordingly”. This “arranged” mode violates the “student-oriented” principle. It can not stimulate students' subjective consciousness, and make the ideological and political education difficult to achieve the actual effect. Some scholars have pointed out that the solution focused model can be divided into six stages: positive opening, problem description, good goal construction, discussion on exceptions, feedback and the follow-up interview.[5] In the actual operation, the conversation focus concept mode can be divided into six steps: listening and empathy, focusing on problems, structural goals, looking for exceptions, positive feedback and affirming previous efforts, summarizing and refining. These measures can strengthen ideological understanding, and realize the purpose of education.

Under the guidance of the solution focused concept, when students encounter difficulties and want to seek the help of counselors or class teachers, counselors and class teachers should pay less attention to the cause of problem, but put the breakthrough point on problem-solving. They “respect the ability of students, and use positive and encouraging words to guide students to actively discover changing clues and explore the methods to solve the problem.”[6] Therefore, through creating a solution focused concept in the conversation mode, ideological and political workers can skillfully use these conversation skills to help students in problems of cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, behavioral and personal development. It will not only improve the professional ability of front-line ideological and political workers, but also shorten the distance between teachers and students. It can effectively improve the effectiveness of ideological and political education.

4.2 Construct the Solution-Focused Teaching System to Enhance the Affinity and Pertinence of the Ideological and Political Course

The ideological and political theory course is the main position of ideological and political education in colleges and universities, and is the key course to fulfil the fundamental task of moral education. General Secretary Xi said at the Forum for Teachers of Ideological and Political Theory Course, teachers are the key to good ideological and political theory course; and the key is to give full play to teachers' enthusiasm, initiative and creativity.” [7]

The traditional ideological and political course mainly focuses on theoretical explanation and value indoctrination, neglecting to mobilize the psychological factors of students. Students are often in a passive position in receiving education and can not play their subjective initiative, which affects the teaching effect to a certain extent. By introducing the solution focused model into the ideological and political theory course in colleges and universities and constructing the solution focused teaching system, we can adjust and improve teaching contents, teaching methods and discourse expression skills. First, in the selection of teaching contents, on the one hand, teachers should follow the system and content of the thematic teaching of ideological and political course; on the other hand, they should also adhere to the concept of taking students as the main body, so as to promote students' autonomous and research-oriented learning. Second, in terms of teaching methods, teachers should learn from the art of dialogue in the solution focused model, change the traditional teaching mode, introduce the teaching method of “teacher led and student centered”, and guide students to speak on the stage, so as increase the communication and interaction between teachers and students, and stimulate students' enthusiasm for active learning and exploration. Thirdly, in terms of discourse expression, teachers can use advantage oriented heuristic questions as well as active and open induced questions to organize classroom Q & A and discussion activities to guide students to think and express actively. For students' progress in the classroom, teachers should give affirmation and praise in time, so as to stimulate students' positive self-confidence, and make students better maintain the long-term input of the sense of efficacy. The active cooperation and equal dialogue between teachers and students not only enhance the affinity and pertinence of the ideological and political course, but also greatly enhance the sense of acquisition of students in learning the ideological and political course.

4.3 Build the Counseling Platform of Solution-Focused Mode Can Highlight the Humanistic Care of Ideological and Political Education

The psychological counseling and tutoring of the solution focused model mainly focuses on developmental counseling, which has practical significance for promoting the growth and development of college students. It guides clients to find the positive side of the problem and find resources and strength to solve the problem, which is consistent with the goal of mental health education in colleges and universities: to attach importance and respect people, and pay attention to the spirit, interests and value of people.

Compared with the ordinary intervention method, the solution focused mode also carries out data collection and problem assessment, but then it improves the effect of psychological counseling by setting goals, analyzing exceptions, discussing solutions, following the development of the situation, and evaluating counseling results. The traditional intervention method explores the causes of problems, but it is easy to cause greater trauma. The advantages of the solution focused model are embodied in the empowerment of parties, so that parties can recall the positive experience they have experienced and imagine positive events that may occur in the future. The whole model embodies clear problem solving and goal orientation. To apply this model to college students' psychological counseling can effectively enhance students' autonomy in psychological counseling and crisis intervention. In addition, it is committed to the care, maintenance and pursuit of the life meaning of students as human beings. It is the promotion of students' individual subjectivity and can actively promote the comprehensive and diversified development of students. Therefore, the solution focused model can fully demonstrate the humanistic care of ideological and political education for young students.

5. Summary

The solution-focused brief therapy is a useful technique in psychological counseling. It focuses on the potential of clients and their problem-solving ability, which complies with the "people-oriented" principle of modern ideological and political education. Through introducing the concept and specific skills of solution-focused technology, ideological and political education workers in colleges and universities can carry out their work more effectively, and achieve expected goals with less effort.

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