

Implementation Frameworks for Cultivating Students' Emotional Regulation Competencies in Secondary School Mental Health Education

Dongxu Tan

Party School of the CPC Yanling County Committee, Xuchang, Henan Province, China 461200

Abstract: The secondary school years serve as a crucial period for students' rapid physical and mental development, and also a core stage where emotional fluctuations occur frequently and emotional regulation competencies are forged. Secondary school students are in a special stage of adolescence. Influenced by various factors such as academic pressure, family interaction, and interpersonal relationship, they are prone to experiencing negative emotions like anxiety, dysphoria, and low self-esteem. Without scientific guidance, they will be affected negatively on physical and mental health, academic development, and social adaptation. Secondary school mental health education serves as an important vehicle for cultivating students' emotional regulation competencies. It is not merely simple theoretical indoctrination, but rather requires integrating with the psychological development laws of students to help students recognize, express, and regulate their emotions through systematic, regular, and diverse practical measures. Based on the current situation of secondary school mental health education, this paper deeply analyzes the existing problems in the current educational process, and explores targeted practical pathways, aiming to provide practical reference for secondary schools to enhance students' emotional regulation competencies through mental health education, and achieve organic integration of psychological nurturing and holistic development.

Keywords: Secondary School; Mental Health Education; Emotional Regulation Competencies; Implementation Frameworks

DOI:10.12417/3029-2328.26.02.018

1. Introduction

With the continuous changes in the social environment, the growth pressure faced by secondary school students has become increasingly prominent. Seemingly rebellious behavior, such as chronic insomnia, school-weariness, and interpersonal tension, are the actual manifestations of insufficient emotional regulation competencies. As the core literacy of individual mental health, emotional regulation competencies directly determines whether secondary school students can properly deal with the setbacks and challenges during their growth process and whether they can develop a positive and healthy personality. Secondary school mental health education bears the important mission of cultivating students' psychological literacy and guiding their healthy growth. Its cultivation of students' emotional regulation competencies not only affects their current quality of learning and life, but also has a profound impact on their lifelong development. At present, in some secondary schools, the mental health education still suffers from issues such as formalization and lack of targeted relevance, struggling to meet the actual needs of students for emotional regulation. Based on this, it is of significant practical significance and value to conduct in-depth exploration of the practical pathways for cultivating students' emotional regulation competencies through secondary school mental health education, and resolving the practical challenges.

2. Core Correlations Between Secondary School Mental Health Education and Students' Emotional Regulation Competencies

2.1 Emotional Regulation Competencies Are the Core Objectives of Secondary School Mental Health Education

The core objectives of secondary school mental health education are to promote the physical and mental health of students and cultivate their positive psychological qualities. And emotional regulation competencies are an important component of psychological qualities. The emotions of secondary school students are characterized by significant emotional fluctuations, rich experience and relatively weak self-control. Faced by the pressure of

academic rat race, conflicts in parent-child communication and confusion in peer interaction, they are prone to problems such as emotional outbursts and emotional repression. The essence of mental health education is to guide students to understand and accept themselves. The cultivation of emotional regulation competencies is to enable students to identify their own emotions, understand the causes of those emotions, and master scientific methods for regulating emotions, thereby reducing the impact of negative emotions on themselves. This aligns highly with the core objectives of secondary school mental health education. Absent intentional scaffolding of emotional regulation competencies, secondary school mental health education loses its actionable lever for developmental efficacy, consequently failing to achieve its educational value.

2.2 Mental Health Education Serves as the Key Vehicle for Cultivating Emotional Regulation Competencies

The emotional regulation competencies of secondary school students do not develop naturally. Instead, they need to be gradually enhanced through systematic educational guidance and practical training. The family environment and the campus atmosphere do have an impact on students' emotional regulation. However, as a special educational activity, secondary school mental health education possesses the advantages of professionalism, systemic coherence and targeted relevance, serving as the key vehicle for cultivating students' emotional regulation competencies. Mental health education integrates emotion regulation knowledge and methods into students' daily study and life through various forms such as course teaching, psychological counseling, and practical activities to help them establish correct emotion cognition, master practical emotional regulation skills, and guide them to apply emotion regulation competencies in practice, and gradually forge a stable and healthy emotional regulation model, laying the solid foundation for their lifelong development.

3. Practical Challenges in the Cultivation of Students' Emotional Regulation Competencies in Secondary School Mental Health Education

3.1 Educational Philosophy Misalignment, Insufficient Emphasis

At present, some secondary schools do not attach sufficient importance to mental health education, and suffer from significant educational philosophy misalignment. Some schools equate mental health education with psychological problem intervention, believing that only students with psychological abnormalities need to receive mental health education, while neglecting the sustained cultivation of the emotional regulation competencies of all students. Some other schools regard academic performance as the primary evaluation criterion, resulting in the marginalization of mental health education, and that their class time is occupied by other subjects, failing to carry out systematic emotional regulation education activities. Furthermore, some teachers and parents lack sufficient understanding of emotional regulation. They mistakenly interpret children's emotional fluctuations as adolescent rebellion, resorting to unidirectional preaching instead of equal dialogue, and even using improper methods to undermine children's self-esteem. As a result, students' negative emotions cannot be promptly addressed, further increasing the difficulty in cultivating emotional regulation competencies.

3.2 Structural Misalignment in Curriculum Design, Manifesting as Targeting Deficits

Course teaching is the main form of secondary school mental health education. However, at present, there are many problems in mental health course design in some secondary schools, which make course teaching struggle to meet the actual needs of students' emotion regulation. Some course content is overly theoretical, mainly focusing on concepts and theories related to emotions, lacking integration with the life reality of secondary school students, which make students struggle to apply the knowledge they have learned in real life. As a result, the course teaching effectiveness is not satisfactory. Furthermore, the curriculum design lacks a tiered structure, failing to design differentiated content based on the psychological development characteristics and emotional regulation needs of students of different grades. Schools treat the emotional adaptation problems of junior school freshmen and the emotional problems brought about by enrollment pressure of junior high school third-year students equally, failing to achieve precision education. Simultaneously, the course forms are rather monotonous, mainly classroom lectures,

lacking practical components such as interactive experience and scenario simulations, failing to arouse students' enthusiasm for participation in.

3.3 Monolithic Implementation Modalities, Absence of Sustained Mechanisms

Secondary school mental health education aims to cultivate students' emotional regulation competencies. And its implementation cannot be separated from the support of regular practical activities. However, at present, the implementation modalities are relatively monotonous in some secondary schools, lacking systemic coherence and sustainability. Most schools only carry out some simple promotional activities on Mental Health Days or Mental Health Weeks, such as handwritten newspaper competition and psychological lectures. After the activities, there is no further extension or consolidation, failing to have a long-term impact on the improvement of students' emotional regulation competencies. Furthermore, there is a shortage of psychological counseling resources. Some schools lack professional psychological teachers, and their part-time teachers lack systematic training on emotional regulation, failing to carry out professional psychological counseling activities. Meanwhile, the utilization rate of counseling rooms is not high. Due to the fear of being misunderstood, some students are unwilling to actively seek psychological help, which makes it difficult for psychological counseling to leverage its practical value.

3.4 Insufficient Family-School Collaboration, Failing to Forge Education Synergy

The cultivation of students' emotional regulation competencies requires the collaborative efforts of schools and families. However, at present, there is a lack of effective synergistic collaboration between secondary school mental health education and family education, and the educational synergy has not been forged. Some parents do not attach sufficient importance to their children's emotional regulation, fail to communicate with their children on an equal footing, ignore their children's psychological needs, and even adopt inappropriate educational methods. As a result, the family cannot serve as a safe haven for students to seek emotional support, but a source of stress instead. Furthermore, there is limited communication between schools and parents, and most communication focuses on students' academic performance. There is insufficient communication regarding students' emotional state and psychological needs, which makes schools struggle to understand the emotional environment of students' families, and parents fail to acquire scientific methods for emotional guidance, and struggle to cooperate with the schools in conducting emotional regulation education, leading to a significant reduction in the effectiveness of emotional regulation competency cultivation.

4. Implementation Pathways for Cultivating Students' Emotional Regulation Competencies in Secondary School Mental Health Education

4.1 Establishing a Scientific Educational Philosophy, Enhancing Strategic Prioritization

Secondary schools should establish the educational philosophy of "Fostering Mental Health with All-Staff Involvement and Full-Process Engagement", integrate the cultivation of emotional regulation competencies into the entire process of school education, abandon the erroneous notions of "emphasis on academic studies over mental health" and "emphasis on problem-solving over prevention", and clearly define the important position of mental health education, guaranteeing the resources such as class hours, teachers, and venues for mental health education. Schools should enhance the mental health training for teachers, improve their awareness of emotional regulation and educational capabilities, guide teachers to pay attention to students' emotional state during daily teaching, promptly identify and alleviate students' negative emotions, and integrate emotional regulation education into the teaching of all disciplines, achieving all-round education. At the same time, they should strengthen the publicity and guidance for parents, help parents establish sound educational philosophy, master scientific methods for guiding emotions through parent education classes and family-school communication meetings, encourage parents to attach importance to their children's emotional regulation, and guide them to learn to communicate with their children on an equal footing and realize affective resonance with them, thereby creating favorable family environment for the cultivation of students' emotion regulation competencies.

4.2 Optimizing the Curriculum Design and Enhancing the Targeted Relevance of Teaching

Curriculum design is the core factor in enhancing the effectiveness of emotional regulation education. It should align with the psychological development characteristics of secondary school students, optimize the mental health curriculum system, and enhance the practical efficacy, and targeted relevance of teaching. According to the emotional regulation needs of students of different grades, schools should design differentiated course content. For lower grades, they should focus on the education of emotion recognition and expression, helping students understand different emotions and learn to express their emotions reasonably. For higher grades, they should focus on the education of emotion regulation and stress coping, helping students master the emotion regulation methods to cope with academic pressure and interpersonal conflicts. Concurrently, they should enrich the course content, reduce pure theoretical explanations, and add more real-life case analyses, emotional experience sharing, other content, converting the abstract emotional regulation knowledge into appreciable and exercisable methods for students. In addition, they should innovate teaching methods, employ scenario simulation, group discussions, role-playing, and sand table games, etc. to enable students to feel emotions, learn to regulate them, arouse the enthusiasm for participation in, and improve the effectiveness of the course teaching.

4.3 Enriching Implementation Modalities and Establishing a Sustained Mechanism

Regular practical activities are an important pathway for cultivating students' emotional regulation competencies. It is essential to enrich the implementation modalities and establish a systematic and complete implementation mechanism. Schools should rely on the psychological counseling rooms to carry out sustained psychological counseling activities, offering services, such as emotional guidance and psychological support, for students, and encouraging students to proactively seek psychological help. At the same time, they should organize various mental health activities, such as emotion exchange blind boxes, psychological carnival, sitcom performance, and Soul Tree Caves, enabling students to release negative emotions and learn emotional regulation methods through these practical activities, thereby enhancing their emotional regulation capabilities. In addition, they should establish a mechanism for monitoring students' emotional dynamics to pay attention to changes in students' emotions, provide targeted intervention for students who have emotional problems promptly, and regularly organize emotional regulation-themed activities, forging a sustained educational model of "classroom teaching + practical activities + psychological counseling" to ensure that emotional regulation education continues to exert its influence.

4.4 Strengthening Family-School Collaboration to Forge Education Synergy

Establishing a family-school collaborative education mechanism is an important safeguard for enhancing students' emotional regulation competencies. Schools should strengthen communication and collaboration with parents, establish a sustained family-school communication mechanism, regularly inform parents about their children's emotional state, understand the family emotional environment of students, jointly analyze the causes of students' emotional problems, and make targeted educational programs. Concurrently, schools should launch a psychological education class for parents, invite professional psychological teachers to explain relevant knowledge and guidance methods on emotional regulation to parents, catalyze parents to enhance their emotional guidance capabilities, and encourage parents to respect their children's privacy and psychological needs, employ affective resonance methods to reach the inner world of their children, and make the family a warm haven for students to seek emotional support. Furthermore, they should encourage parents to participate in their mental health activities, so as to forge a family-school synergistic and collaborative educational ecosystem to provide comprehensive support for the cultivation of students' emotional regulation competencies.

5. Implementation Effectiveness and Reflection

Through the implementation of the aforementioned practical pathways, secondary school mental health education has achieved certain results in cultivating students' emotional regulation competencies. Students' emotion recognition capabilities have significantly improved. They can accurately recognize their own and others' emotions.

They have learned to express emotions appropriately. And they will no longer blindly suppress or freely vent negative emotions. Their emotional regulation competencies have been effectively developed. They can use scientific methods to deal with negative emotions caused by academic pressure, interpersonal conflicts, etc., and maintain a more stable mental state. Concurrently, the campus atmosphere has become more harmonious. Conflicts have significantly decreased among students. Communication has become smoother between teachers and students, as well as between parents and children, creating a favorable atmosphere that values mental health and pays close attention to emotional regulation.

However, during the implementation process, there are still some shortcomings. For instance, the professional capabilities of some teachers need further enhancement, the targeted relevance of emotional regulation education still needs to be strengthened, and the depth and breadth of family-school collaboration still require expansion. In the future, secondary schools should continuously optimize the implementation modalities of mental health education, strengthen the construction of psychological faculty teams to enhance the professional competence of teachers, constantly innovate educational forms and content, align with the actual needs of students to carry out more precise and efficient emotional regulation education, further deepen the family-school collaboration, promote families and schools to forge stronger education synergy, continuously improve students' emotional regulation competencies, and promote the healthy development of students' physical and mental health.

6. Conclusion

The secondary school years are a crucial period for the development of students' emotional regulation competencies. Secondary school mental health education is inseparable with the cultivation of students' emotional regulation competencies. It serves as not only the pivotal actionable lever to actualize core objectives of mental health education, but also the key vehicle for cultivating students' emotional regulation competencies. Through the practical exploration of cultivating students' emotional regulation competencies through secondary school mental health education, this paper discovers that in the current practice process, there are still several practical challenges such as educational philosophy misalignment, structural misalignment in curriculum design, monotonous implementation modalities, and insufficient family-school collaboration. These challenges have restricted the efficacy of emotional regulation education and made it struggle to fully meet the psychological development needs of secondary school students.

In response to the aforementioned challenges, by implementing targeted practical pathways, such as establishing scientific educational philosophy, optimizing curriculum design, enriching implementation modalities, and strengthening family-school collaboration, secondary schools can effectively enhance students' emotion recognition and regulation capabilities, improve the educational atmosphere in schools, foster a good situation of family-school co-education, and effectively leverage the supporting role of mental health education in cultivating students' emotional regulation capabilities. It is essential to recognize that cultivating students' emotional regulation capabilities through secondary school mental health education cannot be achieved overnight. It is a long-term and systematic project that requires continuous efforts from both schools and families.

References:

- [1] Xiufen Feng.(2025,November 19)*Integrated Teaching Practice of Physical Education and Mental Health Education in Juancheng No.2 High School,Shandong Province*[N].*China Teacher Paper*,6.
- [2] Qing Li.(2024)*Mental Health Education Models in Secondary Schools from the Perspective of Positive Psychology*[J].*Xinkecheng Daoxue*,36,9-12.
- [3] Gaoliang Wang.(2023)*The Integration Pathways for Positive Psychology in Secondary School Mental Health Education*[J].*Tianjin Education*,14,4-6.
- [4] Zhenzhen Ma,Zengqiang Wu.(2016)*Constructing a School Mental Health Service System Based on Students' Psychological Development Needs*[J].*Mental Health Education in Primary and Secondary School*,3,12-14.
- [5] Yanling Sun,Xiaoqing Chang,Xiaocong Yan,Jiansi Qu.(2015)*Impact of Secondary School Mental Health Education Course on Students'Academic Emotions*[J].*Course Education Research*,14,2-3.