

# Innovative Research on Mental Health Education Paths for College Students in the New Media Environment

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**Abstract:** New media fully permeates college life, profoundly changing the way college students obtain information and their daily behavioral habits, and has a two-way impact on their mental health: it provides new channels for psychological services, but also brings hidden risks such as cognitive bias and Internet addiction. At present, mental health education in colleges and universities generally has problems such as lagging concepts, single carriers, imperfect mechanisms and insufficient coordination, and the traditional model is difficult to meet the needs of digital education. This paper uses literature research and case analysis methods to sort out the mechanism and practical predicament of the effect of new media on the psychology of college students, construct innovative paths from the four dimensions of concept, carrier, mechanism and ecology, and propose corresponding implementation strategies. The study can provide a reference for the digital transformation of mental health education in colleges and universities.

**Keywords:** New media; College students; Mental health education; Precision intervention

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## Introduction

Digital new media has developed rapidly and is deeply integrated into college teaching, social interaction and daily life. As a generation that has grown up with the Internet, college students' psychological development is closely linked to the new media environment. At the same time, multiple factors such as academic pressure, job competition and interpersonal conflicts have combined to increase the incidence of psychological problems among college students, presenting new challenges to mental health education. The Ministry of Education has explicitly required colleges and universities to build an all-round mental health education system and promote the regular and refined development of education. Traditional mental health education, which is mostly carried out offline, has insufficient precision in intervention and limited coverage, and is difficult to cope with the characteristics of hidden and regular psychological risks in the new media environment. Existing research has mostly focused on improvements in a single dimension and has not yet formed a systematic innovative path. For this reason, this paper focuses on the integration of new media and mental health education for college students, analyzes the influencing mechanisms, sorts out the real predicaments, and constructs the implementation paths to provide ideas for improving the effectiveness of mental health education in colleges and universities.

## 1. The two-way influence mechanism of new media on college students' mental health

### 1.1 Positive empowerment effect

New media have broadened the access of college students to mental health knowledge and broken the time and space limitations of traditional education. Lightweight, fragmented mental health science popularization content spreads widely on the Internet, and students can use their spare time to study independently and master basic emotional regulation methods. This kind of self-study helps to enhance students' psychological cognition, actively identify psychological problems, and establish healthy psychological concepts <sup>[1]</sup>.

New media also enriches the emotional support channels for college students. The online environment weakens the tension of offline social interaction. Students who are introverted or socially sensitive can express their inner confusion, release negative emotions and relieve loneliness and depression through anonymous means. The various interest communities and online communication circles also build a stable emotional support network for students. In addition, new media has lowered the threshold for seeking psychological help. Traditional face-to-face counseling

can easily make students resistant. Online counseling, anonymous answers, intelligent guidance and other forms reduce the awkwardness when seeking help, increase students' willingness to seek help actively, give timely attention to hidden psychological problems, and expand the coverage of psychological services.

### **1.2 Negative impact effect**

The network information environment is complex, and platform algorithmic push can easily form information cocoons, limiting students' information horizons. College students' minds are not fully developed and their ability to distinguish is limited. One-sided and extreme online remarks can easily mislead value judgments and cause cognitive confusion and anxiety. The entertainment nature of new media can lead students to be overly dependent on the Internet, spending a lot of time on online entertainment and virtual socializing, squeezing out time for real interaction, outdoor activities and study. Long-term detachment from real social interaction can weaken communication skills and even lead to problems such as social avoidance and emotional apathy. In addition, the showy nature of online social interaction can easily lead to blind comparisons among students, causing psychological imbalance. Social media platforms often present glorified lives and achievements, and students are prone to feelings of inferiority and self-denial in comparison. Verbal attacks, rumors and other negative content on the Internet can directly hurt students' psychology, bring continuous stress and trigger emotional disorders. Some students are overly immersed in the virtual world, gradually distancing themselves from real life and intensifying their sense of psychological emptiness and alienation.

### **1.3 The underlying logic of the impact mechanism**

The characteristics of new media, such as instant communication, two-way interaction, and anonymous expression, interact with the growth traits of college students, such as large emotional fluctuations, strong curiosity, and psychological sensitivity, both magnifying the educational advantages of new media and intensifying the potential risks in the online environment, forming a two-way influence pattern [2].

Individual differences moderate the impact of new media. Students' adaptability to the online environment varies depending on personality traits, media literacy, and psychological resilience. Students with good psychological resilience and a good understanding of the Internet can make good use of online resources to improve themselves, while those with weak psychological resilience and poor discrimination ability are more likely to be influenced by negative information. The external environment, such as family, school and society, can also indirectly affect the extent to which new media affects students' mental health.

## **2. The real dilemma of mental health education for college students in the new media environment**

### **2.1 Lagging concepts: Deviation in educational positioning and value orientation**

Most mental health education in colleges and universities still falls into the misunderstanding of "emphasizing crisis management while neglecting development and cultivation". In practice, schools only conduct general mental health tests during the freshman enrollment and graduation seasons, and focus on identifying severe mental health problems and sudden crises on a daily basis. Preventive and developmental training for all students has long been marginalized and difficult to deal with the regular and concealed characteristics of mental health risks. At the same time, the education team has a polarized perception of new media: some middle-aged and elderly teachers stick to the offline model and reject digital tools, while some young teachers overly rely on technology and ignore the humanistic core of psychological education, resulting in a disconnection between technology and the essence of education. In addition, psychological education operates independently, with insufficient interaction with modules such as ideological and political education and career planning, and educational resources are scattered, making it difficult to form a synergy [3].

## **2.2 Single carrier: Insufficient innovation in educational channels and forms**

Mental health education in colleges and universities is still dominated by traditional forms such as offline classrooms, lectures and class meetings, with weak development of online channels and superficial integration of education. Most campus mental health public accounts merely reprint online articles, lack original and customized content, have long update cycles and monotonous forms, making it difficult to motivate students. The construction of new carriers such as VR psychological experiences and immersive stress training lags behind. Most colleges and universities do not have dedicated psychological experience rooms. The popularity of digital education forms is low and cannot match students' fragmented and personalized online learning habits.

## **2.3 Lack of mechanisms: Inadequate effectiveness of precise services and crisis intervention**

The current psychological work mechanism is difficult to adapt to the demands of refined education, and the capacity for precise service and crisis intervention is prominent. Psychological screening relies on annual static surveys, with lagging data updates, unable to capture implicit online psychological signals such as students staying up late to watch short videos and Posting negative copy on social media platforms, and the absence of a regular dynamic monitoring mechanism. There are data barriers in departments such as student affairs, psychological center, and network center within the school, and multi-dimensional information of students cannot be shared. Risk assessment is based solely on a single assessment data, which is prone to missed or delayed judgments. At the same time, teachers have insufficient digital literacy, are good at offline counseling but lack the ability to operate new media and analyze big data, focus on the number of lectures and tweets, ignore the improvement of students' psychological state, and it is difficult to measure the actual results.

## **2.4 Ecological imbalance: Weak collaborative education and support network**

Universities have not yet established a multi-party collaborative education ecosystem, and there is a lack of multi-party linkage mechanisms. Psychological education mainly relies on psychological centers. Families only focus on students' academic performance and employment and ignore their online psychological distress. Cooperation with social professional psychological institutions is loose. Lectures are held only occasionally and there is a lack of regular interaction. A comprehensive protection network is not formed. The talent cultivation system lacks systematic media literacy courses, only briefly mentioning rational Internet use in ideological and political classes, and does not specifically cultivate students' ability to distinguish information and avoid risks. In addition, there is a lack of norms for the collection and storage of psychological and online behavior data, and the privacy encryption mechanism is not sound, which poses data security risks and restricts the standardized development of digital education.

# **3. Innovative approaches and implementation strategies for mental health education of College Students in the New media environment**

## **3.1 Conceptual Reshaping: Establishing the core of "development-oriented + technology for good" education**

Colleges and universities need to completely reverse the rigid mindset of "emphasizing crisis intervention over development cultivation", and establish the concept of positive psychological education for all staff, throughout the entire process, and in all aspects. Shift the focus from passively dealing with sudden psychological crises to shaping a sound personality and fostering psychological resilience for all students, such as launching "positive psychological growth camps" and "emotion management workshops" covering different groups such as freshmen adaptation, academic pressure, and graduation anxiety, and promoting the forward and regular implementation of mental health education. Adapt to the covert and regular characteristics of psychological risks in the new media environment. At the same time, rationally balance the empowerment of technology with the humanistic core, abandon the bipolar cognition of rejecting digital tools or blindly believing in technology, adhere to the principle of "technology serving education" - using online questionnaires for initial screening, intelligent tools to assist emotional guidance, one-on-one in-depth counseling still adheres to offline humanistic care, and relying on new media to enhance the

precision of education, Always maintain the emotional core of mental health education. Based on the differentiated psychological traits of college students, abandon the template education model, precisely target for different grades and different psychological pain points, and meet the individualized growth needs of students [4].

### **3.2 Carrier Upgrade: Build a full-media integrated psychological education service matrix**

Relying on new media to break down the barriers of time and space, create a diversified, scenario-based, and convenient educational carrier system. Build a one-stop mental health service mini-program that integrates core functions such as psychological assessment, knowledge popularization, online consultation, emotional guidance, and crisis reporting, adapted to mobile usage scenarios, allowing students to self-test their emotions, make appointments for consultation, and access popular science content at any time, providing 24/7 contactless psychological services. Build a small psychological experience room simultaneously, introduce new scene carriers such as VR social phobia simulation and immersive stress relief training, allowing students to relieve anxiety and improve adjustment ability in immersive experiences and enhance educational appeal. Form professional content teams, focus on high-frequency issues such as academic stress, interpersonal conflicts, and online psychology, modularize and develop lightweight digital content such as "3-minute pre-exam anxiety relief" short videos, "Online comparison coping Guide" text and images, "Daily Emotional Check-in" interactive activities, and establish a dynamically updated resource library. Integrate public accounts, short video platforms, campus communities and other channels to build a three-dimensional communication matrix, and carry out group counseling and emotion sharing activities based on class groups and psychological club groups to integrate psychological science into students' daily social interactions and enhance communication and penetration.

### **3.3 Mechanism Optimization: Build a precise intervention and evaluation system driven by big data**

With big data technology at the core, build a closed-loop working mechanism of dynamic monitoring, graded early warning, precise intervention, and scientific evaluation. Break down the data barriers within the school, integrate multi-dimensional data such as student psychological assessment, attendance check-in, online interaction, and borrowing records, build a refined psychological profile, capture implicit signals such as staying up late, frequent absences, and surging negative emotions on social media platforms in real time, and make up for the lagging static census. Establish a three-level graded early warning system, divided into three levels by risk: normal concern, key concern, and high-risk risk: push daily science popularization to normal students, counselors have regular heart-to-heart talks to key students, and high-risk students immediately activate intervention plans to achieve early identification and early handling of risks. Implement a personalized and precise intervention model, using a linkage model of "AI intelligent consultation + one-on-one human tutoring + offline group activities", with online initial guidance, offline in-depth intervention, and group counseling for common problems to enhance the pertinence of intervention. At the same time, build a three-dimensional evaluation system of "process + result + satisfaction", collect data on the education process and students' status based on big data, focus on core indicators such as psychological literacy improvement, negative emotion improvement, and online habit optimization, dynamically feedback and optimize educational strategies to ensure the effectiveness of education.

### **3.4 Ecological Synergy: Creating a multi-dimensional psychological education ecosystem with home-school-community interaction**

Break the limitations of single education in colleges and universities and build an all-round education ecosystem that involves collaboration within schools, interaction between schools and families, and social participation. On campus, resources from student affairs, psychological center, academic affairs, and network center are integrated, with clear division of labor: student affairs is responsible for daily screening, psychological center is responsible for professional consultation, and network center is responsible for public opinion monitoring, achieving information sharing and forming an all-staff educational synergy. Build a home-school-community collaboration platform, push the "New Media Psychological Risk Guide for College Students" through online parent-teacher

meetings and parent groups to guide parents to pay attention to their children's online psychological state, link up with local professional psychological institutions, sign long-term cooperation agreements, and introduce resources such as off-campus expert lectures and teacher training to form a regular linkage pattern. Strengthen the cultivation of media literacy by offering compulsory courses such as "New Media and Mental Health" and "Online Information Discrimination", and through courses, lectures and activities, teach students to identify rumors, avoid comparison and stay away from cyber violence to reduce the negative impact of new media from the source [5].

### **3.5 Strengthening of Assurance: Consolidating the foundation of technology, teaching staff and risk prevention and control**

Provide comprehensive support for the implementation of the path and lay a solid foundation for digital psychological education. Technically, integrate decentralized online systems, iterate and upgrade the integrated service platform, optimize assessment, early warning, push functions, standardize data management, implement collection notification, storage encryption, permission control, and eliminate privacy leakage risks. At the faculty level, specialized training on new media operation, big data analysis, online guidance, etc. is conducted each semester, interdisciplinary teams of psychology, education, and computer science are formed, and an inter-school exchange platform is established to share practical experience and enhance the professional capabilities of the team. In terms of risk prevention and control, formulate norms for the use of new media on campus, guide students to allocate their online and offline time reasonably, have dedicated personnel monitor campus public opinion and students' online emotions, promptly address adverse effects, improve the green channel for psychological crises, simplify the process for handling high-risk issues, and comprehensively safeguard the bottom line of students' mental health.

## **4. Conclusions**

The impact of new media on the mental health of college students is dual. Its characteristics such as communication interaction and anonymity interact with the psychological traits of college students, providing new opportunities for psychological education as well as new risks such as Internet addiction, cognitive bias and psychological imbalance. At present, mental health education in colleges and universities has obvious deficiencies in terms of concepts, carriers, mechanisms and ecosystems, and is difficult to meet the educational needs of the digital age. This paper constructs an innovative path from four dimensions: conceptual reshaping, carrier upgrading, mechanism optimization, and ecological synergy, and proposes implementation strategies from aspects such as technology, faculty, and risk prevention and control, providing feasible ideas for solving the traditional educational predicament. The research focuses on the construction of a general system, does not conduct differentiated analysis for different types of universities, and does not delve deeply enough into the exploration of technical ethics. In the future, we can further explore the deep integration of artificial intelligence, big data and mental health education, refine the stratified and classified education paths, improve the long-term mechanism of home-school-community collaboration, and promote the high-quality development of mental health education in colleges and universities.

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