

The Research on Individual Differentiated Mental Abnormality of Disabled Children and the Application of Art Therapy

Xiangxue Kong

Shanghai Yangpu District Flower of Happiness Public Welfare Development Center, Shanghai, China.

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***Corresponding author:** Xiangxue Kong, Shanghai Yangpu District Flower of Happiness Public Welfare Development Center, Shanghai, China.

Abstract

Objective: To investigate the individual differences of mental abnormality in disabled children and evaluate the effect of art therapy on disabled children with mental abnormalities. **Methods:** The psychological status of 530 disabled children was investigated and the factors affecting the differences in mental abnormality in disabled children were analyzed. Then 120 cases of children with mental abnormalities were selected and divided into a control group and an observation group. Psychological counseling and art therapy were used respectively to compare the psychological status of the two groups of disabled children. **Results:** After intervention, the dimensions of mental state and the total score of the observation group were significantly better than those of the control group ($P < 0.05$). **Conclusions:** Individual differences in mental abnormality in disabled children easily occur, and giving these disabled children with mental abnormalities art therapy can significantly improve their psychological status and make them actively face life.

Keywords

Art therapy, disabled children, mental abnormality

Introduction

According to the data released by China's Disabled Persons' Federation, by 2022, the number of disabled children in China has reached 30 million, among which the number of physically disabled children is about 12 million, the number of intellectually disabled children is 15 million, and the number of visually and hearing disabled children and children with multiple disabilities is about 4 million. These special children have physical defects, which, as a disadvantageous factor, seriously restricts their healthy growth and future development. Special children belong to the vulnerable groups of society. Paying active attention to and attaching importance to the physical and mental health of special children, maintaining their mental health, and helping them actively adapt to society is not only an important embodiment of educational equity but also an important part of improving people's livelihood and promoting the harmonious development of society [1]. This paper will investigate the psychological abnormalities of intellectually disabled children and analyze the intervention effect of art therapy on disabled children with psychological abnormalities.

1. Materials and Methods

1.1 General Information

530 children and adolescents with disabilities were selected as the research objects, and all parents of the children

gave informed consent to the study.

1.2 Research methods

A questionnaire survey was conducted among disabled children and their caregivers to evaluate the psychological abnormalities of the research objects. The questionnaire included: (1) Demographic data scale. The demographic data scale was used to investigate the general situation of the children, including age, gender, disease, course of disease, and other information [2]. (2) Mental health status. The Mental Diagnostic Test Scale was used to evaluate the mental health status of the children [3]. The scale consists of 8 content scales and 1 validity scale. The total score is the sum of the scores of each content scale. A score between 1 and 55 is normal, a score between 56 and 64 is prone to mental health problems, and a score above 65 is serious mental health problems, which has constituted a mental disorder. The score of a single content scale indicates the anxiety level of a certain aspect. The higher the score is, the worse the mental health status of this item is. Specifically, a score below 8 points indicates that this item is normal, and a score above 8 points indicates that there are problems with this item.

1.3 Art Therapy

120 disabled children with psychological abnormalities were selected, aged 8-17 years old, with an average age of 12.18 ± 2.74 years old, 68 males and 52 females. They were randomly divided into the control group and the observation group. There was no statistically significant difference in the general information between the two groups ($P > 0.05$). The control group received routine psychological counseling, including communication with the children, understanding the psychological state of the children, and psychological intervention for the children. The observation group received art therapy, including before intervention, the purpose and content of this study were first explained in detail to the parents of the children to obtain their support. The specific content of art therapy is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Activity Scheme Design

Stage,	frequency	content	objective
1	The first time	Song "Today the new teacher came"	Establish a good relationship
	The second time	Know colors	Let children have a preliminary contact with painting, stimulate interest
2		Game "Find friends"	Improve children's interest in social interaction
	The third time	Song "You and I pat"	Improve children's body consciousness
The fourth time		Lantern visual game	Strengthen interaction between children, stimulate the vision
	The fifth time	Game "Take the bus to visit"	Improve children's observation and imitation
The sixth time		Clay handmade game	Strengthen children's interest in colors
	3	Drawing and coloring with parents	Promote positive interaction between children and parents
The seventh time		Song "My father and mother"	Strengthen communication and interaction between children
	The eighth time	Rope game	Guide children to express their own intentions in painting
The ninth time		Emotional painting	Guide children to express their own intentions in painting
	The tenth time	Game "Little hands pat"	Improve children's ability to express their emotions correctly
4		Game "My senses"	Improve children's body consciousness
	The eleventh time	Freely create painting "What am I like"	Guide children to give vent to their feelings and correctly express themselves
The twelfth time		Color "My little dog"	Strengthen children's observation and cognitive ability
	The Thirteenth Time	Activity "Stop and go"	Stimulate children's listening, memory, and attention
The Thirteenth Time		Game "Numbers"	Improve children's physical reaction ability and sensitivity
	The Thirteenth Time	Sitcom "My friend"	Strengthen children's communication level and cognitive ability
The Thirteenth Time		Sitcom "I am a Little Ambassador of Civilization"	Improving the Cognitive Ability of Children and Correction of Language Barriers

1.4 Implementation Process

In the first experimental activity, the researchers used the song "Today the New Teacher Came" to organize the children into groups in a circle and let them introduce themselves while singing. The purpose was to promote their mutual understanding and hope that the students could accept the researchers. At the end of the activity, most children accepted this new therapeutic education method and could say their names loudly. Of course, some children still had low enthusiasm for participating in the activity and went their own way without interacting with others.

In the second, second to fourth activities, the researchers arranged three music games respectively: "Find a friend", "You and I pat", and "Go to visit by bus". The purpose was to improve the interpersonal communication awareness of disabled children and cultivate their interpersonal communication interests. In the music game "Find a Friend", the students were first invited to walk around the classroom. The researchers sang a song out of the blue and asked the students to find a good friend for themselves immediately when they heard the song. At the beginning of the activity, the students did not have a strong awareness of active participation but just waited for the volunteers to interact with them. Driven by the volunteers, they began to listen to the researchers' commands carefully and find friends to shake hands. In the music game "To Take a Bus to Visit", the researchers asked all the students to sit in two rows and play the role of passengers. During the driving, the driver turned left and right, and the passengers also made corresponding actions. Meanwhile, the researchers deliberately acted as an old man on the bus to test whether everyone had the awareness to give up their seats [4]. At first, they did not understand what the researchers meant. After the researchers explained that they were an old man, one student stood up and gave up his seat. Through this activity, everyone learned about traffic signals, learned life adaptation skills, and also had a certain understanding of bus etiquette. In addition, through the first three activities, let the children be familiar with the color, and observe their interest in painting through the performance of the children in the group. For the children who already like painting, they should strengthen their ability to express their thoughts with painting in the subsequent group. For those who are not interested in painting, they try to intensify their interest in painting in the group. At the same time, we need to stimulate the children's vision, attract their attention to color, and stimulate their understanding and interest in color. Since cultivating children's interest in painting is a long-term process, for some children with autism, most of them have sensory integration disorder. In the world of many children with autism, they will not observe or even pay attention to the existence of colors and the differences between colors. Therefore, an important step in this section is to stimulate their vision. In the three activities, the disabled children's awareness of participation was significantly enhanced, showed their attention and curiosity to the surroundings to a certain extent, and improved their willingness and interest in interpersonal communication and self-expression.

The third stage of the activity was basically centered on improving the interpersonal emotional control ability and cognitive ability of the disabled children. The researchers arranged the song "My Parents", the propositional painting "My Parents and Me", the rope game, and the music game "Little Hands Clap". At the beginning of the music game "Little Hands Clap", the students could only point out the position according to the lyrics and could not sing with the researchers. After the researchers made timely adjustments, they slowly followed up. With progress, the researchers further accelerated the rhythm and trained their reaction speed. They began to be flustered, singing "ears here", but their hands pointed to the eyes. The researchers laughed at them kindly, and they also laughed, feeling very funny and not depressed. The game continues, and they are more and more proficient. Not only can they accurately and quickly say the name of a part of their body, but also can accurately say the meaning of others' expressions. In the rope game, we use rubber bands as props to dance body and mind, hoping to strengthen the communication and communication between the body and mind between classmates, classmates and volunteers. Accompanied by music. Each group is free to play, free action. Through pulling and twisting rubber bands, the students give vent to the negative emotions stored in the body, and at the same time increase their emotional awareness of themselves and others. Through this stage of activities, disabled children generally improve their ability to emotional awareness of themselves and others, and their interpersonal emotional control ability has been greatly improved, and the goal of the activity has been successfully completed. In the painting activity, the main content of this link is to teach children to hold a brush and draw simple graphics. Because most of the children have drawn simple triangles, circles, and other patterns, the special education teacher leads them to complete somewhat complex graphics in the group process, such as flowers, small animals, etc. Although some children did not cooperate well in the first group activity, they basically cooperated with the group workers to complete the group activity content in the subsequent groups. At the same time, they also initially showed non-resistance to the group content in the group. This non-resistance is enough to show their progress in the group and their improvement of interest in painting. Therefore, in this section of the group, the group workers tried to assist them in completing simple graphics,

such as simple lines, geometric figures, etc. After experiencing the "ignorant stage - meditation stage - decision stage - action stage" before the "change wheel", the children entered the maintenance stage, in which the children showed interest in painting. The boys who were intervened from the initial tension, passivity, not talking, and not participating, gradually became more relaxed and active, able to freely express their opinions and ideas, and actively engaged in interpersonal communication, showing significant progress.

The fourth stage, also the last stage of the activity, is to improve the interpersonal cognitive ability and interpersonal communication skills of disabled children. The researchers used the painting "What am I Like", music games "Stop and Go", games "Count", the situational dramas "My Friend" and "I am a Small Envoy of Civilization", which enriched the means of interpersonal communication of disabled children, improved their interpersonal communication ability, and better transferred the acquired ability to real life. The activities at this stage are aimed at improving the interpersonal cognitive ability and communication skills of disabled children and showing themselves, and the results show that they have achieved good therapeutic effects.

For older adolescent patients, on the basis of the above measures, according to the specific psychological problems of patients, adding vocal music, instrumental music, painting, clay, creative production, and other courses, guiding patients to gradually accept art therapy and participate in it [5].

2. Results

2.1 General Information

Among the 520 disabled children included in the survey, there were 270 males and 260 females, aged 8 to 18 years old, with an average age of 12.17 ± 3.29 years old, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. General information about the children

Item	Classification	Case number	Proportion
Gender	Male	270	50.94%
	Female	260	49.06%
Age (years)	< 10	113	21.32%
	10~14	321	60.57%
	> 14	96	18.11%
Enrollment	Yes	332	62.64%
	No	198	37.36%
Illness	Autism,	187	35.28%
	Down syndrome	33	6.23%
	cerebral palsy	35	6.60%
	developmental delay	211	39.81%
	mental retardation	64	12.08%

2.2 Individual differentiated psychological abnormalities

The psychological status of 530 disabled children was evaluated, and the results showed that most of the children had psychological abnormalities, mainly including learning anxiety, people anxiety, loneliness tendency, terror tendency, impulsive tendency, etc., as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Analysis of psychological abnormalities of disabled children

Metrics	scores
Study anxiety	7.45±1.13
People anxiety	7.66±1.05
Loneliness tendency	8.18±1.16
Self-blame tendency	7.06±1.07
Allergic tendency	7.04±1.11
Physical symptoms	7.34±1.07
Terror tendency	7.86±1.21
Impulsive tendency	7.75±1.22
Total score	60.34±8.21

2.3 Effect of art therapy

Before treatment, the psychological state scores and scores of various dimensions of the two groups were basically similar. However, after treatment, the improvement effect of psychological state scores in the observation group was significantly better than that in the control group ($P < 0.05$), as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Assessment of psychological state before and after art therapy

Indicators	control group		observation group	
	before treatment	after treatment	before treatment	after treatment
Study anxiety,	7.45±1.13	7.14±1.01	7.48±1.15	6.11±1.08
People anxiety,	7.66±1.05	7.26±1.17	7.65±1.08	6.42±0.89
Loneliness tendency,	8.18±1.16	7.68±1.03	8.17±1.13	6.84±0.95
Self-blame tendency,	7.06±1.07	6.65±0.96	7.11±1.03	6.01±0.78
Allergic tendency,	7.04±1.11	6.47±0.89	7.09±1.14	5.89±0.83
Physical symptoms,	7.34±1.07	6.69±0.94	7.31±1.05	6.17±1.01
Terror tendency,	7.86±1.21	7.03±1.06	7.85±1.25	6.26±0.98
Impulsive tendency,	7.75±1.22	7.11±1.07	7.69±1.19	6.38±0.95
Total score	60.34±8.21	56.03±7.13	60.35±9.02	50.08±6.98

3. Discussion

For a long time, because our country did not give enough attention to the psychological health education of children and adolescents, resulting in the slow development of the psychological health education of children and adolescents. With the deepening of reform and opening up and the influence of advanced educational ideas at home and abroad, more and more people began to realize that psychological health education plays a decisive role in the development of human beings, and the research on psychological health problems of children and adolescents is gradually increasing [6]. But at present, these studies are mainly concentrated in the normal population, and the research on the psychological health problems of disadvantaged groups such as disabled children is less. There are many reasons for the existence of this problem, which mainly include: (1) the first line of special education workers do not have a deep understanding of the meaning of psychological health education, and lack the basic knowledge of psychological health education. The weak theoretical basis will inevitably make the practical work of psychological health education have no actual effect. (2) the understanding of psychological disorders of disabled children is not in place. Some researchers believe that physical defects will inevitably bring psychological defects, so almost all disabled children have psychological disorders. In fact, there is no inevitable causal relationship between the two. If the inevitable impact of physiological development on psychological development is stressed too much, it will lead to the situation of heavy medical treatment and light education in concept. In this study, the psychological problems of 530 disabled children were investigated. The results showed that this part of the children had more serious psychological abnormal problems, mainly including learning anxiety, anxiety about people, loneliness tendency, terror tendency, impulsive tendency, and so on. There are many factors that lead to this problem, mainly including the mental health status of special children is generally low, and the situation is not optimistic. The reasons are as follows: (1) the physiological defects of the individual. Due to the physiological defects of special children, they are prevented from learning and adapting to the normal way or speed, and their psychological development will have more problems; (2) the lack of school education. The teaching environment of special education schools is poor, the teaching force is weak, and the mental health problems of special children are not paid enough attention to. In addition, the management mode of special education schools is closed or semi-closed, which restricts the development of social communication and practical ability of special children. (3) the improper family education. The education methods of parents of special children are often easy to go to extremes. Some parents will overprotect and spoil their disabled children, which is easy to cause the children's lack of independence and self-centered, selfishness, and can not stand setbacks. Other parents will be too strict with their children, and endless condemnation, sarcasm, and pressure on the children will cause serious psychological burdens to the children, making the children anxious and timid. (4) The influence of a bad social atmosphere. At present, society has not fully formed a good social atmosphere to care for and help special children and disabled people. Some people, especially normal children who do not understand, will discriminate and laugh at special children, which is very easy to hurts their self-esteem,

making special children unwilling to communicate with others, which is easy to lead to loneliness and inferiority of special children [7].

Art therapy is a kind of psychological therapy or medical auxiliary method that combines art and counseling, consultation and treatment. It is based on the theory and method of psychotherapy, based on the unique physiological and psychological activity effects of people in artistic activities, to help the patients relieve or remove psychological problems and restore physical and mental health [8]. The results of this study show that art therapy can improve the interpersonal communication ability of mentally retarded children and improve the performance of children with mental retardation. This is mainly because art therapy can stimulate the interest of mentally retarded children in interpersonal communication, improve their interpersonal cognitive ability and communication ability, and improve their interpersonal emotional control ability, which helps to improve the psychological state of children with mental retardation and improve their mental health level.

4. Conclusion

Disabled children have different degrees of individual differences in psychological abnormalities, and giving them art therapy intervention is a real practice of art therapy integrated into fine arts education. The application of art therapy can effectively help children obtain a sense of security, improve their psychological state, and fundamentally improve their mental health level.

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