

Causes and Countermeasures for the Psychological Problems of Infant Teachers

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Abstract

The psychological problem of infant teachers results from heavy work burden, heavy life pressure, high expectation from children's parents, harassment about interpersonal relationship and the shortage of their knowledge on psychological health. In order to effectively maintain infant teachers' psychological health, a harmonious and stress-free environment should be created in kindergartens and education on psychological health should be attached importance to; infant teachers are expected to love their cause, to attach importance to the establishment of sound interpersonal relationship, to improve their own resistant ability to frustrations and to grasp specific methods of psychological adjustment.

Keywords: Infant teachers, Psychological health, Cause, Countermeasure

Infant teachers play a quite important role in the process of promoting children's healthy psychological development. As the leader of education, they must have high-level psychological health so that they can educate and guide children to form health psychology. In the recent years, infant teachers' psychological health seems increasingly striking, which has been proven in the investigations in many provinces and cities. For example, a survey on 270 infant teachers reveals that 36.7% of the surveyed teachers have psychological problems (Yu, 2009); another survey on Guangxi infant teachers shows that 22.7% of the surveyed teachers have psychological problems (Yu, 2003). To be more specific, many infant teachers display some psychological symptoms including sensitivity, depression, anxiety and hostility in interpersonal relationship. Therefore, their psychological health should be attached importance to.

1. The Causes for Infant Teachers' Psychological Problems

1.1 Heavy Work Burden

Taking the commitment of education as well as bringing up children, infant teachers have quite hard work. Lying in the period of rapid growth, children's physical growth is a pressing matter of the moment, so infant teachers have to spend much time in taking care of children's living. Besides, children's safety is a huge stone weighing on their teachers. Since children are active and lively, teachers have to be alert all the time about their safety. Otherwise, they may be blamed by parents and criticized and punished by kindergartens. With the current large scale of classes, a teacher has to deal with tens of children. It is not an easy job to control them, not to mention teaching them knowledge. In addition, in order to be adapted better to their job, they need to spend much time in taking a variety of continuing education. As a result, they tend to feel exhausted and anxious with such heavy work burden.

1.2 Life Pressure

Income is another important factor influencing infant teachers' psychological health. In spite of their hard work, their income is not proportionate to the importance and intensity of their work. In China, pre-school education is not included in compulsory education and many kindergartens are private ones, so there is no obligatory regulation and financial guarantee for infant teachers' salary, leading to their income hard to satisfy their basic living demands. Under such huge life pressure, some psychological problems seem inevitable.

1.3 Parents' High Expectation

With the development of our society, parents are paying much more attention to their children's education. Realizing the importance of infant education on children's life-long development, parents don't regard kindergartens as a place taking care of their children any longer but hope that their children will gain excellent

education there. Therefore, they attach greater importance to kindergartens' education quality now, having higher requirement for infant teachers' knowledge level, teaching ability and quality, which, therefore, increases their psychological stress.

1.4 Harassment about Interpersonal Relationship

Interpersonal relationship sometimes exerts some negative effects on infant teachers' psychological health. Since most infant teachers are female, they have the same psychological weaknesses, such as unstable emotions, sensitivity, strong group psychology, taking others' evaluation to heart, being much concerned about some minor things and so on. Consequently, they tend to have relatively complicated interpersonal relationship, which also increases their worries.

1.5 Lacking Knowledge about Psychological Protection

In spite of their skill practice in music, dancing and fine arts or theoretical education, infant teachers are lacking in psychological education and necessary psychological health knowledge. Therefore, when faced with practical pressure and harassment, they fail to maintain their psychological health with effective methods for psychological adjustment.

2. The Countermeasures to Maintain Infant Teachers' Psychological Health

2.1 Creating Positive Environment and Emphasizing Psychological Education

Positive environment is the basis for psychological health, so creating a stress-free and harmonious environment comes first in order to maintain infant teachers' psychological health. They will be devoted to their work with an active and relaxed mood in such an environment. Only in an equal and democratic atmosphere will teachers' enterprise be stimulated and they gain recognition and respect through their hard work, hence realizing their value. In addition, such an atmosphere can satisfy their belonging need so that they will love their working unit as well as their job better and will gain happiness and satisfaction from their work. Kindergartens should also care for their teachers' life by trying their best to improve teachers' treatment, helping them to improve living conditions in order to make them experience the warmth of the big family. Besides, psychological education activities should be organized actively in kindergartens. Newspapers, magazines, lectures or forums should be organized to publicize knowledge on psychological health to avoid psychological problems; teachers' psychological documents can be established to correctly learn about their psychological health condition through psychological test; full-time educational staff should be cultivated to organize daily psychological education activities; professional psychological consultation institutions and psychological experts can be invited to correct teacher's specific problems.

2.2 Infant Teachers Expected to Love Their Cause

For many infant teachers, their job is only for living and their expectation for their job only lies in treatment, salary and good working conditions. If these demands cannot be fulfilled, they will feel bored with it. Actually, it is a fundamental vocational morality standard for a teacher to love the education cause. Infant teachers should regard their job as a lifelong cause and love it from the bottom of their heart. Only in this way will they be devoted to it, enjoy it and experience the feeling of happiness and accomplish as a member of the teaching staff.

2.3 Emphasizing the Establishment of Favorable Interpersonal Relationship

It is an important aspect in infant teachers' interpersonal communication to communicate with colleagues. Unsuccessful communication will cause loneliness, doubt, hostility or even depression and sense of loss. Infant teachers are supposed to have a big heart and optimistic attitudes to life, to be kind and understanding to others, not to be bothered by trifles and to understand and respect each other during their communication. Only in this way will some worries caused by unfavorable colleague relationship be reduced. They should also attach importance to establishing good relationship with parents. Because most children are the only child in their families, parents may tend to spoil them. They even hope that infant teachers center on their children in kindergartens and they may express their dissatisfaction with teachers and impose pressure on them once their requests cannot be fulfilled. In addition, with the conflicting educational ideas between parents and teachers, parents may not understand or even object to teachers' educational method, which also increases the pressure on teachers. Therefore, infant teachers should learn to communicate with parents. On one hand, they can help them to establish the right view of education and guide them to love their children in a reasonable way and educate children in a scientific way; On the other hand, through their communication, parents will further understand the practice of kindergartens and teachers and improve their recognition of teachers' work. Thus, pressure will be converted into joint effort and their conflicts and contradictions will be reduced.

2.4 Improving Infant Teachers' Resistant Ability to Frustrations and Grasping Methods for Psychological Adjustment

In the modern times with quicker living tempo and increased life turbulence, not only infant teachers but every other person is burdened with great pressure. Since pressure exists everywhere, it is unwise to escape from pressure and lay their hope on the society or the department responsible for them to reduce their pressure. In order to maintain psychological health, infant teachers should attach importance to improving their own resistant ability to frustrations and grasping methods for psychological adjustment.

Emotional harassment is the commonest problem among infant teachers. They are expected to grasp the following common adjustment methods:

(1) Emotional purging

This is a method to utter unhappiness in heart in proper channels. When feeling annoyed, they should utter their emotion through crying, talking with others, shouting or doing sports instead of burying their pains in their heart.

(2) Shift of attention

When confronted with negative feelings, a person can consciously shift his attention to other things or activities to change the activity state of the brain and lessen psychological tension.

(3) Replacement

Negative emotions usually arise because some goals are hard to accomplish or some demands cannot be satisfied. In this case, one should adjust his life goal and reduce his expectation. In addition, he can replace the former goal with a realistic one in order to gain satisfaction by achieving the new one.

(4) Sublimation

People are certainly bothered by depressed and negative emotions sometimes. In this case, they should devote themselves to some activities beneficial for their working units, others and themselves, hence converting negative emotions to positive ones and subliming their behaviors and emotions.

(5) Learning to Relax

The following methods can be used to deal with negative emotions: imagining oneself lying in a comfortable environment enjoying breeze, the morning sun, warm beach and experiencing relaxed feelings; adjusting the tense state by having deep breaths; resisting to anxiety by straining and loosing the muscles in different parts of the body alternatively.

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