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Application of Counseling Psychology Methods for the Emotional Education of University Students

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Abstract

This paper seeks to provide a model case for introducing counseling psychological education to university students as an initiative for practical training and empowerment opportunities that are slightly more progressive than what institutions have traditionally offered undergraduates. The project seeks to develop counseling concepts such as self-acceptance, empathy, communication skills, and rapport in academia. The ultimate goal is to enhance professional skills, such as the synthesizing and creative mind, and to support the development of emotional intelligence and competence. Counseling education is expected to enhance informational literacy and assertive communication skills in the long run and to provide students with a strong sense identity. This paper argues that student-directed counseling education may improve social and educational conditions, leading to student empathy, enhancing social and intercultural skills, and helping students to acquire the competence that they need to thrive as innovators in today's multicultural symbiotic society.

Key words: counseling education, student empowerment, self-acceptance, emotional competence, emotional intelligence, emotional education

Introduction

Emotional education can be defined as the process of acquiring the emotional skills and knowledge to enable people to live happily, interact with others

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effectively, and achieve his/her full potential. The importance of emotional education in the post-industrial societies of developed countries is increasing, as the major proportion of the labor force is shifting from the manufacturing sector to the service sector, in which emotional control, proper handling of interpersonal relations, interpersonal communication skills, leadership, and management skills are more strongly required. For example, the factory worker need not put on a forced smile or talk with anyone except his co-workers, while a sales representative must interact with an indiscriminate number of customers, to whom he/she must give a favorable impression of the store and its staff. On a global basis, the latter type of professions are on the rise. Research on emotional intelligence suggests that emotion plays a significant role in leadership and management effectiveness, and that competency in this area distinguishes average performers from masters (Goleman, 1996). Unfortunately, the role of emotions in actions is greatly underestimated and misunderstood (Bond, 1998). Japanese counseling psychologist Kokubu(1998) defines emotional education as a process to learn as many ways as possible to respond. This is based on the logic that a larger number of response patterns will increase flexibility, and increase the chance of success in a given situation. In counseling education, the ultimate goal is to feel that "I am okay, you are okay." This feeling of acceptance is a necessary step to reach emotional maturity.

Our inwardly focused society has become a topic of interest in various disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, and business. As interpersonal relations have become increasingly egalitarian, Japanese people must deal with new issues relating to social status that were nonexistent in a traditionally hierarchical society. Interpersonal skills are taking on new dimensions and flexibility, and fundamental social skills are required. People in inwardly focused societies tend to accept counseling more readily than people in more open societies, with more people desiring counseling and pursuing counseling as a profession.

Overview of Research on Youth in Japan

Peer support among students, along with the implementation of the program for promoting high-quality university education, called Good Practice (GP) programs, have been discussed throughout Japan since 2007.

In recent years, universities have implemented additional support programs for students. Both clinical and counseling psychological research indicate that there are pressing issues concerning Japanese youth. Clinical psychologists have pointed out that university students' maturity is approximately equivalent to their physiological age minus ten (Doi, 2008). Needless to say, introductory study skills courses are offered in first-year academic support programs. High schools have implemented

seminars to prevent bullying, making students come up with prescriptions for prevention. However, considering the needs of the majority of the youth population in Japan today, we can clearly state that there are huge gaps in emotional education and student empowerment efforts. The majority of students believe that emotional education and the nurturing of counseling minds, defined by Rogers (1951) as unconditional regard, empathic understanding, and self congruence, are very important to them, but that this has not been a part of their education. This is further explained in the needs assessment portion of this paper.

Another concern of Japanese youth is their tendency towards an inward focus, which has been indicated by several studies. Inwardly focused societies and people have a tendency to become counselors, seek out counseling, and express a need to help others (Nobuta, 2010). They hesitate to take risks (Yamagishi & Brinton, 2010), are passive (Kotani, 2004), and do not embrace big dreams. Research on college students indicates a strong tendency to be classified as internally weak, to have difficulty in maintaining appropriate interpersonal distance, and to express strong feelings of futility and emptiness (Mori, 2001). Japanese youth hesitate to make deep commitments in interpersonal relationships (Tsuchiya, 2001) and prefer broad and shallow, so-called “gentle relations” in order to avoid mutual hurt feelings (Doi, 2008). Both students and teachers suffer from psychological illnesses (Mori, 2001).

On the other hand, research on Japanese youth indicates a strong interest in social activities and skills among 20-year-olds. In one study, the interest of youth in social activities exceeded that of the elderly, represented by a sample of 70-year-olds. Self-interest, in comparison, was not so important to the youths. However, participation in social and volunteer activities remains low. This indicates that, although there is interest in contributing socially, actual contribution to society remains low (Furuichi, 2012). This may be related to a lack of opportunities for participation.

Student initiative and proactive learning are currently topics of great interest in university education, and Japanese society is requesting that universities provide more opportunities for discussion, internships, and real-world experience. However, the Ministry of Education’s efforts to make volunteer activities compulsory has been regarded with mixed opinions. In an effort to revitalize the youth population, Kotani (2004) recommended that adults abandon the idea of guiding and educating young people. This may be an extreme stance, but there is validity in the concept of exploring ways in which educators and youth can take on new roles. The nation’s efforts to make graduate training mandatory for school teachers indicates that educators need more practical training that cannot be acquired by on-the-job training.

Domestic research on adult children(AC), codependence, and existential anxiety has indicated dire concerns regarding Japanese youth. Some studies claim that an estimated 90% of Japanese are considered, according to a loose definition of AC (Saito, 1996). The term adult children originated in research on families with alcoholic dependent members, also referred to as dysfunctional families. Saito (1996) loosely defines AC as people who grew up with some distress or mental trauma. Given Japanese culture, what is considered “dysfunctional” by outsiders may be culturally normative among Japanese families.

AC tend to suffer from codependent relationships and existential anxiety, which makes it difficult for them to feel free to live their own lives. Unfortunately, these psychological conditions often progress unnoticed and unaddressed, and attempts to deal with them are put off until mid-life. A distorted self-image can lead to excessive accommodation of others in interpersonal relations, and extremely low self-regard (Saito, 1996). These issues, as well as many others, could be addressed in early counseling education.

Recent studies on fundamental human skills, known in Japan as *ningenryoku*, indicate a lack of leadership, critical thinking skills, and creative skills in the top-tier universities (Benesse, 2007). University professors are expected to fulfill a wide range of roles: lecturer, trainer, advisor, consultant, researcher, manager, and director. Roles that incorporate many of the aforementioned roles include counselor, coordinator, organizer, promoter, analyst, reflector, and facilitator (Kiyokuni, 2011).

Research on peer support by students indicate that it not only enhances active learning, but also contributes to independent, responsible, active, and proactive student development as students make a transition from being supported by faculty and staff to supporting other students and reaching out to their local communities. The educational model at Kagawa University seeks to offer a certification program called Certificate for Peer Support (CPS). This system will assess the communication and facilitation skills of student leaders and recognize their development. In the long run, Kagawa University plans to implement a CPS to recognize the efforts and contributions of faculty and staff in the training of students (Kano & Kuzuki, 2011).

Research on maternal style suggests that democratic parenting is strongly correlated with an independent adulthood personality. Dominance, excessive interference, and an autocratic style lead to codependent adulthood personalities (Takuma & Yoda, 1994). Insufficient or unhealthy personality development leads to inappropriate coping skills and emotional management, as well as distortions in self-image, identity, thinking, desires, and interpersonal relations. This in turn leads to delusions of grandeur or extremely low self-esteem and self-image (Neuharth, 2009).

Cross-Cultural Psychological Research

Psychological research on Japanese youth, from a global perspective, has also alerted the Japanese population to the issues concerning their youth. In a comparative study on intercultural competence, Japanese youth performed poorly on all four constructs that were being evaluated: tolerance of ambiguity, self-esteem/self-acceptance, flexibility/openness, and critical thinking/creativity. The Japanese also ranked 50th in emotional regulation among 52 countries (Matsumoto, 1999). Kashiwagi (1988) classified much of Japanese family culture as self-restraining in nature. The traditional teaching style also puts students in a subordinate position, and little room is left for developing a healthy self-concept, independence, and self-reliance (Kashiwagi, 1988).

Research on intercultural adaptation shows that the Japanese tend to be introverted, autistic, passive, codependent, fixated, and self-righteous (Hoshino, 2010). A longitudinal cross-cultural comparison of high school students in four countries (Turkey, USA, China, and Japan) found that Japanese youth scored extremely low on measures of altruistic behavior and consideration for others, known as *omoiyari*. High school students did not demonstrate respect for adult role models, and their moral consciousness, empathic skills, interpersonal skills, and parental relationships were low in quality. Likewise, their tolerance of misdemeanor and individualism, and their sense of isolation and loneliness were high (Nakasato, 1989, 1994). Another study of Japanese youth in six major cities (Tokyo; Seoul; Peking; Helsinki; London; Washington, D.C.) found that 30% of Japanese children thought studying was important for success, compared to 60% in Seoul and 68% in Washington D.C. This was interpreted as evidence of low aspiration and less drive, with a relaxed attitude and peace of mind seen as important requirements for a happy life. The low aspiration among Japanese children was uniquely Japanese among these six cities (Benesse, 2007).

In sum, an overview of research on Japanese youth and cross-cultural comparisons suggest a strong need for emotional education in Japan in the years to come.

Theoretical Overview of Key Concepts of Counseling Education

The theoretical design for a program of first-year emotional education is based on humanistic Rogerian principles: self-acceptance, non-judgment, and self-congruence (Rogers, 1951). The Rogerian client-centered approach, which has been further enriched for classroom education by Curran, is used in a teaching methodology called counseling learning, whereby the role of the educator is that of a facilitator. A whole-person learning model that supports constructive and self-invested learning contains six interrelated elements essential to enriched learning:

security, attention and learner aggression, retention and reflection, and discrimination (Curran, 1976).

Another key theoretical underpinning is Adlerian individual psychology (Adler, 1978). The basic Adlerian model is premised on creativity leading to autonomy and independence. Adler advocated that the two factors that determine all psychological processes are social interest and striving for significance. Social interest is not inborn, but is an innate potentiality that can be consciously developed. Adlerian self-help groups use encouragement to overcome life tasks. Positive feedback or praise is related to developing autonomous conduct and initiative, and is therefore preferred over negative feedback or scolding.

Adler placed a high importance on parental education. He emphasized the importance of democratic character development in childhood; a child should be an equal part of his or her family. He believed that the two biggest evils of parenting were pampering and neglect, causing both inferiority and superiority complexes and leading to undesirable compensation strategies that heightened the risk of psychopathological disorders, criminal tendencies, and the breakdown of social relations. Adler stressed the importance of having professionals in society to complement parents in the upbringing of their families and to support the development of democratic character. Adlerian lifestyle analysis can be a tool to manage four essential life tasks: work, friendship, love, and family, and to allow individuals to develop nurturing environments in order to overcome inferiority complexes, improve social skills, and enhance overall social embeddedness.

Adler had a tremendous influence on a number of important psychological theorists who followed him: Frankl, Maslow, and Ellis, neo-Freudians such as Horney and Fromm, and many others. Many of these theorists, especially Erikson, provided additional groundwork for the implementation of a peer-counseling educational model.

Frankl invented existential analysis and Logotherapy (Frankl, 2006). Existential anxiety is a common fear that is often left unaddressed; the purpose of existential therapy is to facilitate clients' reflection on life, to encourage them to recognize the range of alternatives available, and to help them to decide between these options. Instead of passive acceptance and surrender of control, clients are encouraged to consciously shape their own lives by exploring options and creating a meaningful existence. The first step in this style of counseling is to assist clients in recognizing how they allow others to manage their lives and to take active steps towards autonomy.

Maslow articulated a hierarchy of needs that helps people to reach self-actualization (Maslow, 1954). In counseling education, the focus is on self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect for others, and respect from others. By providing

safety and meeting needs for esteem, counselors can educate more self-actualized and therefore more creative people who are capable of moral problem solving. Erikson appreciated the importance of trust in early childhood in order to lead to more functional adult behavior (Erikson, 1980). According to Erikson, university students need support in order to recognize their identity independent of adults. A stable identity provides a safe space from which one can enhance relational skills.

Ellis was one of the founders of cognitive behavioral therapy, and was named the second most influential psychotherapist in history, after Rogers (Ellis, 1994). Ellis was greatly influenced by Horney, Adler, and Fromm. Counseling aims to help clients adjust their thinking and behavior in order to treat emotional and behavioral problems. Through Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy, Ellis showed the connection between cognition, emotion, and behavior, believing that all three must be addressed in order to achieve effective psychotherapy and to change problematic behavior.

Horney's theory of ten needs is based on three basic coping strategies, and offers a framework for designing counseling education programs (Paris, 1994). The coping strategies are as follows: moving towards people (stemming from the need for affection and approval and the need for a partner), moving against people (stemming from the need for power, the need to exploit people, the need for social recognition, the need for personal admiration, and the need for personal achievement), and moving away from people (stemming from the need for self-sufficiency, and the need for perfection). Horney further condensed these coping strategies into three broad categories of need: compliance, aggression, and detachment (Paris, 1994).

Fromm collaborated with Rogers to create the Person Relatedness Test (Fromm, 1957). Fromm's theory helps to explore the eight basic needs: relatedness, transcendence, rootedness, sense of identity, frame of orientation, excitation and stimulation, unity, and effectiveness. Fromm further explains six character orientations, five of which are malignant and one of which is positive. Malignant character orientations include receptive, exploitative, hoarding, necrophilous, and marketing. A positive character is one that is productive.

Recent Background Research on Counseling Education

Self-care must come before relating effectively to others in order to prevent burn out. Therefore, the counseling education program is twofold, teaching both self-care and caring for others. Counselors often try to help others in order to meet their needs; in many cases, this results in overlooking self-care or putting off addressing personal issues that they are afraid to confront. Research on burnout suggests that self-care is a bigger priority than many counselors realize. Effective

self-care helps counselors to address problems of co-dependence and to maintain healthy distances in interpersonal relationships (Mizusawa, 2008).

Emotional literacy and social skills are learned and acquired, to a large extent, through one's family, peers, school, media, and societal scripts regarding emotion (Saarni, 1999). Studies on emotional intelligence indicate that happy students are more communicative than their unhappy peers. They also communicate more effectively and disclose more about themselves compared to sad students. Affect infuses more than just people's thoughts and judgments-it also influences real-life social interactions. One's emotional state can affect the way they behave and appear to others. Most mood states occur without conscious realization, and some degree of conscious effort is necessary for any person to improve his or her emotional intelligence (Forgas & Gunawardene, 2000). It is no exaggeration to say that programs supporting social emotional intelligence through infusing emotional literacy into the curriculum can improve academic success as well as offer proactive rather than reactive care to students (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004).

Preliminary Needs Assessment for Counseling Education

Method

First-year university students at a private university in Japan were surveyed on how they evaluated their emotional education (*kokoro no kyoiku*). The narrative questionnaire asked students (1) whether they felt that they received appropriate care and emotional education from early childhood through college, (2) who is responsible for the emotional education of young people, (3) whether they thought emotional education is necessary in school education, and (4) to comment on what they expected in school education concerning emotional education in the future. Responses were collected from 311 first-year students, of whom most were of age 18, although the students' age was not asked in the survey. Of the respondents, 134 were men and 177 were women; 295 were Japanese, eight were Korean, and eight were Chinese. The most frequently occurring themes were extracted from the narratives and are described in the results.

Overview of Results

An estimated 95% of the respondents reported that they had not received appropriate care and education on interpersonal relations from early childhood through college. The remainder (5%) was satisfied with how they had been taught to relate to others. Most students (97% of men and 95% of women) stated that emotional education is very important. Furthermore, a majority claimed that the quality of their emotional education had gotten worse as they got older, and was

insufficient or nonexistent in adolescence when they needed it most. The emotional education received during elementary school was rated as the best while that during junior high, high school, and college were poorly rated. Over 90% of the respondents considered schools to be responsible for offering emotional education. The most frequently cited problems were judgmental remarks by teachers, a feeling of sensitivity towards how others perceived them, nonexistent communications with their teachers, emotional numbness, and an inability to express how they felt.

Respondent narratives were classified into two groups based on the frequency of themes. The first group included personal (trust, self-acceptance, and disclosure) and educational (system coordination, continuing education, and cross-cultural training) concerns.

Personal Themes

Trust

In counseling theory, trust is closely associated with *rapport*. Students reported that, in school, they were sensitive of hierarchical relationships, tended to avoid sharing personal matters, and felt that teachers disclosed very little about themselves. Students had very little exposure to psychology and counseling and most frequently equated counseling to ethical or moral education. In Japanese high schools, moral education often focuses on distinguishing between right and wrong, good and bad. Many participant narratives suggested that students preferred a style of education that incorporated the suspension of judgment through counseling education. Students expressed a strong desire to be known, loved, and accepted by their teachers. As one reported, “Japanese self-restraint and consideration is coming to be praised, it is a chance to explore a new sense of trust in education.” Another wrote, “I was able to express my opinion freely in elementary school; I served in student leadership, and was content. In junior high I started to worry about how others saw me and lost my creativity.” Many students reported that they acquired characteristics of AC during their education. These comments suggest that developmental psychological theory is required in order to implement measures in schools to prevent students from becoming AC.

Students wanted adults to communicate with them and reach out with trust. In their experience, too few adults were deserving of trust. Students wanted to feel closer to their teachers and earn their trust; problems relating to false accusations, negativism, and desire for control were most frequently raised. Students came to feel anxious, pessimistic, and paranoid, which made them take on the roles of a good and quiet child under severe pressure. Trust was of foremost importance to these students; it is clear that teachers with better communication and counseling skills are needed.

Self-Acceptance

Students claimed that Japanese education was mass-producing AC and maladaptive behavior; AC were raising the next generation of AC. Some students disagreed with the idea that emotional education should be taught in schools. These students felt that schools took control over their emotions and forced good behavior on them. However, the majority of respondents supported the idea that schools should nurture students' abilities to manage their own lives. Teachers should then serve as role models, starting with their own self-acceptance. As one student reported:

Problematic communication or superficial kindness was considered most annoying. There is a lot of pressure to serve preconceived social roles and very little support for exploring one's personal meaning and identity. The mind and spirit become weakened through Japanese education.

Many reported a need to be talked to (*kotobakake*), for open and truthful teachers, and for a favorable environment for nurturing trust. Many students expressed a strong desire for a more egalitarian relationship with their teachers. These requests speak to the needs of young people, with deep-seated needs to be cool, funny, and strong in the eyes of others. Coming to terms with reality versus fiction is something that young people need to do for self-acceptance. Students wanted empathic communication with authority figures rather than moralizing talk. Requests for attentive listening skills, nonjudgmental regard, and a humble disposition were made with regard to teachers.

Measures of attitudes showed severe self-denial among the majority of students, suggesting a problem in developing self-acceptance. Many respondents claimed that Japanese education had forced them to give up their individuality and to be so-called good students. Their dependence on outside approval and praise made them feel estranged from their true selves. By the time of this survey, they were excessively passive, as they could not act without given instructions, and had developed emotional dependencies strong enough to hinder their capacity to reflect on themselves. These reports suggest serious barriers that stand in the way to self-acceptance.

Disclosure

Many students felt that they had difficulty in maintaining appropriate distance in their personal relationships. Mori (2001) reported excessive familiarity and excessive distance as two extremes in youth relationships. Disclosure requires readiness and is not an absolute requirement in educational settings. However, if

schools can reduce anxiety and increase trust, students would have better chances of finding a comfortable social distance based on their emotional readiness and interpersonal preferences. The problems relating to disclosure suggests that students feel constrained from being honest and truthful with themselves and feel great pressure to mask or deny their true feelings. Consequently, they experience problems relating to heightened anxiety and a need for control.

There is very little opportunity to improve one's self-understanding in the current educational setting. Many students who felt lost and helpless expressed a desire to become counselors in the future. Students wanted adults to read between the lines and notice their true feelings, even if they did not directly or openly express them. They also expressed deep concern over superficial relationships. The majority of students considered counseling to be a positive thing, and expected that if they were feeling distressed their counselor would reach out to them with warm words. This suggests a need for research on appropriate empathic verbal communication.

Educational System Themes

Systems Coordination

Many students expressed a desire for improved coordination of counseling education. Concerns were expressed relating to the invasion of privacy, the location of the counseling room, the infrequency or irregularity of counselor availability, and a lack of coordination between the school and the counselor. The most frequently mentioned problem was the competition between teachers and counselors to be the one to counsel the student. This may be a result of teachers' possessive attitudes towards their students, stemming from their self-appointed role as the students' only mentor or instructor. This may lead to feelings of jealousy toward the counselor, who is not regularly in touch with the students.

A great deal of research suggests that classroom teachers should not take on the twin roles of evaluator and counselor. Furthermore, coordination is necessary between schools and families. Students considered autonomy and independence to be necessary skills for young children, and schools need to coordinate with families to allow for better support. The present condition raises children who are robotic, with mechanical and detached emotions. Peer support, community learning, and external support are just some of the suggestions made by students to improve this. Professionally trained counselors need to be brought in and more efficient appointment procedures need to be implemented in order to avoid conflict between teachers and students. Teachers who feel that counselors are a threat to their relationship with students need to be attended to.

Continuing education

Communicative competence is something that students expect of teachers. The process of learning should take place through dialogue; both students and teachers need to not just achieve results, but to also value the process of learning. This will enhance empathic communication and mutual understanding in schools. Better emotional education and continuing education programs need to support teachers to keep them up-to-date on new demands. Contact with counselors and interpersonal communication professionals may give teachers the opportunity to explore beyond their classrooms and to develop outside connections, allowing them to receive valuable external feedback. Many students wrote that their teachers lacked skills in interpersonal relationships, balancing independence and interdependence, and self-esteem.

First-Year Counseling Psychology Education & Empowerment Model

The Model

The proposed model consists of four basic and four professional-level training opportunities for undergraduates. This model is expected to go beyond many of those in countries around the world where student leadership training is available at the undergraduate level. To touch on just a few of the unique training features of this model, undergraduates do not typically have the opportunity to plan and put on seminars, to offer seminar-style consultation hours, or to experience group counseling workshops.

The basic level training is based on Peer Counseling Education (PCE), and consist of four opportunities: student-directed discussion seminars, student-directed academic and social consultation hours, student-leader workshops, and outreach volunteer programs in partnership with a cohabitation home for senior citizens and young children. PCE includes the basic entry-level activities necessary to achieve literacy in proactive student development. The student-directed seminar focuses on psychological and sociological themes chosen by a student leader, providing him/her with the opportunity to experience the position of educator while being a learner at the same time.

The professional-level training is called Mentor Counseling Education (MCE), and consist of four opportunities: peer counseling training, counseling psychology and emotional education seminar, workshop on learning material production, and workshop on experiential learning. MCE includes more professional training for students with more experience. Participation in the mentor education program requires a stronger commitment and higher competence, and requires time for peer meetings and submitting plans for an original seminar. This model offers

opportunities for undergraduate student leaders to serve as role models for students, much like some shadowing programs that are offered by alumni.

In addition, the student-directed counseling education seminar for children, which can be part of either PCE or MCE, offers an opportunity to plan and execute an original seminar discussing child psychology for pre-school and elementary school students, accompanied by their parents. This family approach to counseling education is expected to help parents feel well informed about the counseling education that their children are receiving. It also creates an encounter group of people from various backgrounds and social strata; the experiential learning model is open to all who want to participate.

Experiential learning workshops can provide opportunities to explore emotions that are difficult to recognize or confront. School curricula tend to emphasize the importance of maintaining good behavior and keeping one's emotions under control. There is very little opportunity to face up to negative drives or even to admit that they exist. One helpful experiential learning method is psychodrama, in which participants act out assigned roles. The important feature of this method is that participants are completely equal regardless of their external social roles. In psychodrama, teachers participate on equal terms with students. It also encourages participants to draw on their raw emotions and act out feelings they have repressed. Psychodrama can help overcome defense mechanisms that prevent people from confronting their true feelings. By playing assigned roles, this style of learning enables people to feel less defensive or threatened. Participants can take on the role of a person they dislike and try to verbalize emotion from a different perspective. By understanding the mechanisms of negative drives, malignant characters, and needs summarized in the theoretical overview section of this paper, psychodrama can help participants to accept emotions that are typically avoided in school education.

Psychodrama can help to draw out creative thinking and nurture empathic understanding and a non-judgmental perspective. It may even be an effective way to prevent conflict and promote better understanding by confronting and coming to terms with negative emotions. In other words, this is an opportunity for all participants to feel free to address the undesirable emotions that exist in each of us.

Target Skills

The proposed program seeks to train the basic skills indicated in Table 1. These skills can be organized into four categories: humanistic, emotional, relational, and communicative. The counseling objective, method, and expected outcome are also shown. This table represents a first attempt in designing a program to support educational opportunities with the goal of enhancing emotional competence and

Table 1 Counseling Psychology Theory and Target Skills

Target Skills*	Treatment	Life-Skill Outcome
Self-Esteem (E)	Peer Counseling Education	Autonomy
Emotional Regulation (E)	Peer Counseling Education	Self-acceptance
Self-Acceptance (H)	Peer Counseling Education	Emotional Competence
Real Self/Realization (E)	Peer Counseling Education	Emotional Competence
Positive Regard (H)	Peer Counseling Education	Autonomy
Security/Safety/Trust (R)	Peer Counseling Education	Emotional Competence/Rapport
Assertion (C)	Mentor Counseling Education	Reframing
Active Listening (R)	Mentor Counseling Education	Pace Matching
Empathy (H)	Mentor Counseling Education	Pace Matching
Creativity (H)	Mentor Counseling Education	Emotional Competence
Non-judgment (H)	Mentor Counseling Education	Emotional Competence/Rapport

* (H) = Humanistic, (E) = Emotional, (R) = Relational, (C) = Communicative.

^b The table is a preliminary design to connect important skills, treatment, and objectives.

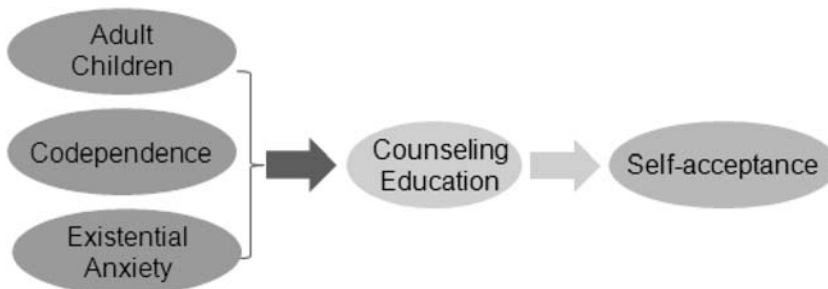


Figure 1. Counseling Education Model for university education.

fundamental social skills. The treatment category refers to the self-care portion of the program as counseling, and the practical training in the emotional education portion is referred to as leadership.

The basic strategy of the counseling education model is shown in Figure 1. The principal issues that were made apparent in the preliminary needs assessment were adult children, codependence, and existential anxiety. The model seeks to utilize counseling education to overcome these issues in order to attain self-acceptance, which is a prerequisite for developing fundamental human skills, as well as the intercultural competence that is necessary for multicultural and interconnected societies.

The university students surveyed reported low self-confidence and self-esteem, as well as poor self-image and self-regard. This model is designed to support

students to accept themselves as they are, thereby reducing the risk of them becoming depressed or becoming a bully, the two likely outcomes of poor self-image.

This model is designed to assist students in recovering their inborn ability to grow emotionally, which many unlearned or gave up in the course of their socialization and psychological development. Generating a positive feedback loop in human relations is the ultimate goal; by healing one person in a group, that person can return to his or her group and generate further positive changes.

Data indicate that 700,000 people in Japan have lost connection with society, either through mental or physical sickness, lack of will, refusal, and/or fear to work or interact with others. In addition, an increasing number of teachers and children have begun to suffer from mental health issues in recent years. Much of this is explained by co-dependent relationships. Kogo (2010) classified people who have lost connection with society as good, indecisive, overworked, or hiding, and suggested that a large proportion have the character of being easily manipulated and influenced by others. Many Japanese youths are only capable of shallow and superficial relationships; however, they also hope to be connected with others at a more personal level. Many of the existing programs have the tendency to make adjustments to treat the symptoms of the problem rather than to address the social factors as possible causes of the problem.

Evidence suggests that student empowerment incentives can help Japanese youth to take the next step in achieving their goals. They need a chance to practice and test their learning in an atmosphere where failure is acceptable, in order to explore alternatives and test new approaches to problem solving. This emotional education empowerment program seeks to provide opportunities that take the strengths of the students involved into consideration. It is a personalized approach to counseling education, drawing out peak performance by trusting students regardless of their backgrounds.

Feedback From the First Student-Directed Seminar

Thirty-eight students participated in the first semester of student-directed seminars, and course evaluations at the end of the term indicated universally positive experiences with no negative feedback. Below are some excerpts from students (F1: female first year student, M1: male first year student, M4: male fourth year student):

This seminar was better than the courses in which I enrolled for credit. It was my healing space that I looked forward to each week. I hope to continue if offered next semester (F1).

In the seminar, the professor and student leader shared personal experiences that made me feel comfortable disclosing my personal issues. It was nice to know that even the teacher had issues similar to mine. I felt I was not alone (F1).

In university classes, there are very few chances for students to speak up. This seminar was very meaningful to me and a good chance to process my learning (M1).

I thought I was the only one who had problems relating to others and was afraid of how other people regarded me. Through this seminar, I found that these concerns were not uncommon and I came to feel that I am okay (F1).

I was afraid to speak up but as the semester progressed, I felt more secure and was able to participate actively in the discussion. By the end of the semester I felt better about just being me (F1).

I realized how much I avoided looking at my weakness. We all have psychological stress but limited opportunity to speak about them. I learned to accept my weakness and realized the value of striving for honesty (M4).

Implications for Counseling Education

This paper represents an attempt to introduce a model case for educational training of student empowerment at the undergraduate level, based on counseling psychology methods. From the first term of implementation, it has already attracted highly motivated students. These students will, in the long run, serve as leaders for the program and will eventually help to reduce student apathy and enhance creativity. They will serve as role models for seeking out and creating their own opportunities for practical applications of classroom knowledge, in preparation for active participation in society after graduation. Even within the first semester of implementation, students gradually took on more initiative; towards the end of the term they were sharing information and realizations that they found in the seminars and the group evolved into a truly cooperative learning environment.

Another long-term goal is to develop trust and affirmation in faculty-student relationships, which will pave the way for implementing educational opportunities in undergraduate education based on the Honor Code. Trust between faculty and students, and trust between students will give students the confidence to seek out knowledge for its own sake and will likely increase their sense of self and their sense of control over their life and learning environment, and will hopefully enhance

their motivation and creativity in academic pursuits. A system similar to the honor code offered in a few American undergraduate institutions would offer students the freedom based on trust that they deserve.

Many students who have had problems in school hope to become counselors so that they can help others through similar experiences. By offering experiential education at an early stage in their professional development, this program may help many of these students through their own self-discovery and acceptance to become better professionals in the future. Without educational support programs, many of these young people are unable to resolve personal issues that may prevent them from developing key skills that enable them to help others. Without appropriate self-care, counseling can unconsciously turn towards meeting the unmet personal needs of the counselor, and may harm clients or at least become less beneficial. Sadly, many adults have unresolved issues from their past that prevent them from becoming efficient counselors. Both theoretical knowledge and methodology as well as self-knowledge and practical applications need to be included in counselor training.

Conclusion

This paper proposes a model for emotional education at the undergraduate level, which is intended to provide the necessary support to build relationships based on mutual trust and to improve student performance and personal effectiveness. This model will help students understand their emotions and those of others, learn how to process this information intelligently, and mitigate future interpersonal problems arising from improper handling of emotions.

Counseling education at the undergraduate level could, in the long run, include university lectures by professionals in human psychology, counseling, interpersonal communication, mental health, as well as roundtable discussions moderated by students. Students have expressed the need for opportunities to come in contact with more people, to communicate more and more effectively, and to develop better interpersonal skills. There is a real need for educators who can disclose weaknesses and take risks, and who see building *rapport* as a process worthy of the large amount of time and commitment that it requires.

Off-campus extension educational opportunities are also an important part of this project design. The first time that it was offered, the project invited a former hospice caregiver and counselor to hold a seminar for university students on a regular basis. This seminar supported the self-care and counseling portion of the project. Such an opportunity allows students to increase their knowledge of and take care of their personal issues while envisioning how they can reach out to others.

Research from western cultures suggests that positive psychology alone cannot explain the positive characters and social skills of its citizens. This paper puts forth an action plan for youth empowerment that will hopefully serve as a new approach for Japan, which has traditionally been interdependent, group conscious, and less oriented towards positive psychology. Present Japan faces a problem of a large number of citizens who have lost connection to society. Given proper counseling and emotional education, these citizens have the potential to become professional counselors or mediators, because of the additional advantage of their personal experience.

There exist university students who experience emotional difficulty and may drop out of school without proper care. This emotional education model seeks to aid and support these potential dropouts, and to make them effective professionals through proper instruction and training.

In sum, researchers, educators, counselors, and students must work together to create an environment that encourages emotional education based on mutual trust. There is no clear-cut model or procedure to put counseling psychology methods into practice, as each individual has different needs and emotions, and allowances must be made for different levels of psychological readiness. Putting theory into practice requires a great deal of flexibility, creativity, and collaboration between people from all walks of life.

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