

The Role of Music Activities in Improving the Self-worth of the Elderly

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ABSTRACT

Under current circumstances, the elderly's demand for elderly care is increasing, and the demand for elderly care services is becoming more diversified and personalized. On the basis of "elderly care", they need "elderly income" and "elderly reliance". Participating in music activities can enable the elderly to change from passively accepting elderly care services to actively obtaining elderly care services. This paper mainly reviews the current research results based on the literature with elderly care and music as keywords, and explores the mechanism and effect of music activities on the self-worth of the elderly in terms of music therapy and social enhancement, and makes a prospect for active elderly care behavior based on participating in music activities.

KEYWORDS

Music; Elderly; Self-worth; Mental Health.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Since the 21st century, China has gradually entered an aging society, and in the 2020s it has become a very serious social problem. According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics, from 2021 to 2030, the proportion of China's working-age population will decline year by year, and the dependency ratio will also gradually increase. This phenomenon shows that China is gradually moving from a mildly aging society to a moderately aging society[1]. By 2030, the proportion of people aged 85 and above will reach 25%.

The trend of population aging brings more elderly people, and the demand for elderly care services also increases. With the increasing abundance of material resources today, most elderly people no longer need to worry about material elderly care conditions, and their elderly care needs come more from the psychological aspect. In other words, based on the premise of physical health, paying attention to the mental health of the elderly has become an important part of the current elderly care service concept. The mental health of the elderly requires the satisfaction of multiple psychological needs, and one of the important aspects is the self-worth of the elderly. Improving the self-worth of the elderly is one of the prerequisites for their inner satisfaction, which is also what many elderly people lack today.

Among the media that the elderly can access, music is the closest to their lives. Music activities centered on music and composed of social activities can help the elderly get spiritually nourished by music while meeting more peers with the same feelings and hobbies. This can not only further enrich

the daily lives of the elderly, but also the sense of accomplishment gained in music activities and the satisfaction gained from each other in the social process can promote the improvement of the elderly's sense of self-worth, thereby satisfying the emptiness of the soul and benefiting the mental health of the elderly. Therefore, it is of great significance to study the effect of music activities on the improvement of the elderly's sense of self-worth.

1.2. Research Objectives

This study aims to review the existing research results on the role of music activities (including but not limited to ballroom dancing and choirs) in improving the self-worth or mental health of the elderly, and further explore its impact and mechanism of action. It also explores how music activities can improve the self-worth of the elderly by promoting social interaction, enhancing physical health, regulating emotions, etc., so as to provide a comprehensive understanding. Based on the above research results, it provides suggestions for the community, family, government or relevant elderly care institutions to promote the participation of the elderly in music activities, change from passive elderly care to active elderly care, and improve the average mental health level of the elderly.

2. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

2.1. Definition of Self-worth in the Elderly

The sense of self-worth of the elderly is a positive quality and emotion when the elderly experience and discover their own value [2], or a feeling of self caused by the success or failure of something. The decline in the elderly's sense of self-worth mainly comes from the fact that the frail retired elderly in old age are idle at home and cannot adapt to the changes in social roles. They often suffer from psychological states such as loneliness and helplessness. At the same time, due to the weakening of body functions, they bear the burden of physical and psychological problems. The dual pressure caused severe negative emotions [3]. Research shows that the sense of self-worth of the elderly is significantly negatively correlated with the decline of physical functions, and is closely related to social capital, which is the sum of potential resources that an individual can obtain by joining an organization, group or network in the community [4] There is a significant positive correlation [5]. It can be seen that one of the sources of the elderly's sense of self-worth lies in the potential resources that can be obtained by participating in certain groups, and these potential resources are often the satisfaction that social resources can bring.

2.2. Definition of Music Activities

Music activities are a kind of group interaction accompanied by music. By participating in such activities, the elderly can promote individual emotional expression, social communication and self-growth through music collaboration, creation and performance. Music activities also have two attributes: one is the music therapy attribute. Music therapy uses music to stimulate people's emotions and memory with elements such as rhythm, melody, harmony, lyrics, etc., so as to reduce their own stress and promote recovery, thereby improving their mental health level [6].

3. REASONS FOR THE LOSS OF SELF-WORTH IN THE ELDERLY

There are many reasons for the lack of self-worth among the elderly, which can be roughly divided into internal and external factors. The internal factors mainly come from the natural changes in the elderly's own physiology and psychology, while the external factors mainly come from their relatives and the development trend of the entire society.

3.1. Internal Factors

Studies have shown that the frailty of the elderly is one of the important reasons for their lack of self-esteem. Frailty is a geriatric syndrome characterized by increased vulnerability to environmental factors, which is mainly manifested by decreased physical fitness, weakened stress resistance, impaired functions of various organs, systems, tissues and cells, and weakened ability of the body to maintain homeostasis [7]. From a physiological perspective, frailty of the elderly will reduce their ability to relieve mental stress, thereby prolonging the duration of negative emotions and negatively regulating their self-esteem [8]. From a psychological perspective, under the guidance of my country's family-based cultural background, the elderly will pay more attention to the overall interests of the family. When the elderly feel useless due to physical frailty and believe that they will be a burden to their children and people around them, their self-esteem will also decline [5].

3.2. External Factors

The time when the elderly's sense of self-worth begins to decline significantly is generally after retirement. Retirement is an extremely important turning point in the lives of most people. After retirement, the elderly's social circle shrinks, from the previous wide and diverse to narrow and single, and from the socially active group to the socially silent group. In addition, the elderly are retired and unemployed, and their children are busy, so they stay at home all day, alone, and loneliness gradually begins to arise. From the perspective of social value, the elderly are separated from the role of being able to realize social value and gain a sense of self-worth, and become idle social people with nothing to do, and their source of self-worth disappears. This double blow to life and spirit causes the elderly's sense of self-worth to gradually decline and cannot be supplemented. At the same time, the elderly also lack the understanding of self-worth, cannot control negative emotions well, and cannot clearly understand the impact of self-worth on mental health, which leads to further damage to mental health[9].

4. THE IMPACT OF MUSIC ACTIVITIES ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF SELF-WORTH OF THE ELDERLY

Music is a kind of sound art, auditory art, emotional art and time art. It has the following functions: cognitive function, aesthetic function, entertainment function and therapeutic function. When the elderly participate in music activities, they will inevitably have a deep feeling for the music. In the process of participating in music activities for a long time and feeling the music, the music will have a positive impact on the elderly in both physiological and psychological aspects.

4.1. Physiological Level

The positive impact of participating in music activities on the physiological level of the elderly is significant. Take the choir as an example. The main musical expression of the choir is singing. Multiple studies have shown that singing can improve breathing patterns and reduce respiratory-related diseases in the elderly [10]. At the same time, it also helps with speech motor abnormalities and swallowing control [11]. Music can also bring about other physiological changes, such as lowering blood pressure and increasing oxygen saturation levels [12]. In terms of physiology, music can improve various physical indicators, thereby effectively resisting frailty, allowing the elderly to gain a certain degree of physiological satisfaction and slow down the decline in their sense of self-worth.

4.2. Psychological Level

On a psychological level, one of the most important benefits that music activities can bring to the elderly is the gradual elimination of social isolation [13]. Music activity is a group activity, and one of the core requirements of group activities is social interaction. Active social interaction can bring more social support to the elderly and help them cope with changes in their roles and decline in physical functions. Social support for the elderly refers to the help and support that the elderly can obtain from surrounding groups and social environments when they encounter difficulties and pressure [14]. Social support is an important psychological resource that can effectively relieve personal psychological pressure, enhance adaptability and resistance to stress, thereby enhancing self-worth and subjective well-being [15]. Other studies have shown that music can relax and reduce the anxiety of the elderly by distracting themselves from unpleasant experiences and feelings [16], and activities composed of multiple people have a more significant effect than one-on-one activities. [17].

The level of self-worth of the elderly often reflects their spiritual satisfaction. Some studies have shown that the elderly's self-worth is positively correlated with their subjective well-being[2]. Subjective well-being is an important indicator for evaluating the mental health of the elderly and can reflect their quality of life and health maintenance[15]. Therefore, the elderly's self-worth is also positively correlated with their mental health indicators.

5. SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS

Music activities provide a social platform that allows older adults to interact with their peers, thereby reducing feelings of social isolation and providing necessary social support, which is crucial for their mental health. Furthermore, music activities can significantly improve the elderly's sense of self-worth, which is achieved by gaining a sense of accomplishment and social recognition through participation in music creation and performance. Additionally, this activity helps older adults regulate their emotions and relieve stress, further enhancing their mental health. Music activities also have direct benefits on the physical health of the elderly, such as improving cardiovascular function and respiratory health. These physiological benefits help improve the quality of life of the elderly and indirectly enhance their sense of self-worth.

Based on the above review, this study puts forward the following suggestions at the end:

- ① Establish more music activity centers: The government and community organizations can establish more music activity centers, especially in communities where the elderly live, so that they can conveniently participate in these activities.
- ② Regular concerts and performances: Organize regular concerts and public performances and encourage the elderly to participate in the performances, which can not only improve their social interaction but also enhance their self-confidence and sense of social participation.
- ③ Integration of music therapy: Introduce music therapy programs in nursing homes and community health centers, especially for the elderly with special physical or psychological needs, and design music therapy activities in a targeted manner.
- ④ Education and training: Provide music education and training courses so that the elderly can not only appreciate music but also learn to play musical instruments, enhancing their skills and sense of self-realization.
- ⑤ Research and follow-up: Encourage academic research and follow-up studies to evaluate the specific impact of music activities on the self-worth and mental health of the elderly, so as to continuously optimize and adjust activity plans.

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