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**RESEARCH ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING THERAPY SERVICE IN  
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN CHINA**

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**ABSTRACT**

The theory of reading therapy provides a new perspective and direction for the service innovation of university library. This paper analyzes the necessity and feasibility of carrying out reading therapy service in university libraries in China, and probes into the practical path of carrying out reading therapy service in university libraries.

**Key Words:** Reading Therapy; University Library; College Students' Mental Health.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**1. Overview of the theory of reading therapy**

Bibliotherapy, also known as book therapy and literature therapy, originated from Greek, is a combination of book and treatment. It's original meaning is reading books and other literature in a planned, guided and controlled way under the guidance of the doctors , so as to assist in the treatment of diseases, especially emotional disorders [1].

After the rise of reading therapy in the west, it has developed rapidly in many countries in the world, and entered the prosperous stage of research and practice from 1950s to 1970s. In the history of our country, there are many thoughts and examples about reading therapy in every dynasty. However, our special research on reading therapy started late, and it was not until the 1990s that foreign research began to be introduced. As a cross subject of medicine, library science, psychology, pedagogy and sociology, it attracts more and more people to participate in the research and application. With the deepening of the research, its application object has expanded from the mentally ill to all the people who need help, and gradually formed a relatively complete theoretical system.

Scholars at home and abroad have put forward a variety of views on the definition of the concept of reading therapy, with different emphasis and common ground. Wang Bo, one of the leading figures in the study of reading therapy in China, put forward after learning, discussing and comprehending the contents of the literature that reading therapy is a method to protect or restore physical and mental health by using the literature as a medium, taking reading as a means of health care, health preservation and auxiliary treatment of diseases [2] 15-16. It can be said that the essence of reading therapy is to promote readers' physical and mental health through literature reading. Scholars such as ZhanYouxiang made a more detailed explanation of the

function of reading therapy. He believed that for patients with mental disorders, reading was used as a prescription to treat mental disorders; for those suffering from physiological diseases, reading was used as an auxiliary treatment to improve their mentality and enhance their confidence in overcoming the disease, which was conducive to the cure of physical diseases; for the general population, proper reading could enhance their individual lattice development and self realization and maintain their mental health [3] 51. Therefore, reading therapy can be applied to a wide range of people. It can not only help people with physical and mental illness, but also greatly benefit the development of the general population.

## **2.THE NECESSITY AND FEASIBILITY OF READING THERAPY SERVICE IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY**

The mental health of college students has attracted more and more attention from all walks of life. Introducing reading therapy into the service category of university library and using university library's rich collection of literature resources and elegant and comfortable reading environment to provide suitable reading therapy counseling service for college students, can not only improve the mental health quality of college students, but also make the library's educational and service functions to be extended and developed. It is not only necessary but also feasible to advocate and develop reading therapy service in university library.

### **2.1 The necessity of reading therapy service in university library**

First of all, it is an urgent need for university library to carry out service innovation. The rapid development of network information technology has brought unprecedented opportunities and challenges to the work of university library. On the one hand, the application of new technology and new means has greatly expanded the service time and space of the library; on the other hand, the diversity of college students' methods and access to information has greatly reduced their dependence on the library. In recent years, it has become an indisputable fact that the reading rate of books and the rate of readers' coming to the library have declined. Therefore, the university library needs to take some positive and effective measures to integrate and make rational use of the existing resources, innovate in the service content and service form, so as to attract the attention of college students again and ensure the sustainable, healthy and steady development of the library. In view of this, it is a good strategy to develop characteristic reading therapy service to meet the needs.

Secondly, it is the practical need of the current college students' mental health and mental quality education. College students are the backbone of the future of society. The healthy psychology and personality are the primary condition for them to take on the important task. However, many survey results show that the current mental health status of college students in China is not optimistic. Problems such as self-identity, academic success or failure, career planning, expansion of social contacts, and the relationship with the opposite sex have brought them different degrees of psychological distress. And some severe problems even developed into psychological barriers and mental and physical diseases, which has damaged their physical and mental health. Correspondingly, there are still many problems in the mental health education of college students, and the service provided by the psychological consultation institutions in

universities can not fully meet the practical needs. In this context, as an important place for knowledge acquisition and personality cultivation of college students, libraries should make positive contributions in combination with their own advantages.

## **2.2 The feasibility of developing reading therapy service in University Library**

The development of reading therapy service itself does not have very strict conditions. It only needs four elements: patients (people in need of help), therapists (professional guidance), literature and reading. As the center of information and culture in universities, university libraries have many advantages in carrying out reading therapy service. These advantages are mainly reflected in literature resources, reading environment, human services, service objects and so on, which provides an important guarantee for the smooth development of reading therapy.

From the perspective of literature resources, university libraries generally have a rich collection of literature resources with a full range of disciplines, which can provide a variety of bibliography required for reading therapy, and the resource acquisition is economic, simple, and timely; from the perspective of reading environment, university libraries are usually used as landmark buildings on campus. They are spacious, bright, quiet and tidy. The external design and internal layout are aesthetically pleasing, which can create a quiet and elegant, warm and comfortable reading environment for readers and can help them alleviate depression and other bad emotions; from the perspective of human services, librarians have accumulated a lot of first-hand information in the long-term reader service work, which can grasp readers' reading tendency and psychological characteristics well, and can be fully competent for the relevant work of reading therapy therapists after training and further study. This service provided by the library is free of charge and is more easily accepted by college students; from the perspective of the service target, the college students as the main service target of the university library are also the applicable target of reading therapy, and reading therapy is based on the literature as the medium. It belongs to the implicit, protective and induced mental health education method, which conforms to the psychological development characteristics of college students' relatively closed, independent thinking[4].

## **3. THE PRACTICAL PATH OF DEVELOPING READING THERAPY SERVICE IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY**

### **3.1 carrying out readers' investigation to deeply understand the psychological status and reading tendency of college Students**

In the process of treating the disease and saving the people, it is very important to distinguish the situation and prescribe the right medicine. Similarly, to carry out reading therapy, we must start from the actual situation of college students, and investigate and analyze the existing problems in order to achieve a targeted goal. We can fully understand the current mental health status of college students through questionnaire, interview, discussion, and interconnection with the school's mental health education and consultation center to find out the main psychological confusion, inducement factors and commonly adopted relief methods in each stage. By analyzing

and summarizing their reading tendency and demand characteristics, we can formulate a reading therapy service plan based on them to carry out targeted reading guidance for college students.

### **3.2 Striving for multiparty support, vigorously promoting the concept and service of reading therapy**

The development of reading therapy service can not be separated from the input and payment of university library, and it also needs the support and assistance of other departments in the University. Therefore, in addition to the guarantee of human, material and financial resources, the library should also actively contact with the student office, academic affairs office, publicity office and other departments, and integrate all resources to jointly promote this work. As a new service project, reading therapy needs a process to be known and accepted by the majority of students. To this end, the library should adopt various ways to promote reading therapy, such as: holding academic lectures, making and distributing brochures, setting up special publicity windows, opening columns on the website, organizing reading activities, holding book exhibitions and pushing e-mails, etc. The library can attract college students' attention and make them understand the reading therapy, and then use reading therapy service to solve their psychological problems.

### **3.3 Establishing a working group to cultivate a professional team of librarians for the reading therapy service**

Setting up a reading therapy service working group composed of librarians, psychological consultants and college students volunteers. They can work together in reader survey, publicity and promotion, bibliography preparation, consultation and guidance, summary and feedback, and regularly carrying out research activities to improve the comprehensive business ability of the working group. In the working group, the construction of the librarian team of reading therapy service is particularly important. Their quality and service quality determine the quality of the treatment effect to a large extent. The qualified librarians of reading therapy service should not only have the professional quality of library and information, be familiar with the theory and application of reading therapy, but also have some knowledge of psychology and psychological guidance. Meanwhile, they should have a sound personality and good communication ability, and be able to give effective guidance according to the specific situation of students.

### **3.4 Compiling the bibliography of reading therapy and advocating self-help and interactive reading therapy simultaneously**

In the process of reading therapy, it is very important to choose the right reading materials. According to the survey results of readers in the early stage, the bibliography of reading therapy can be compiled in different levels and categories, and different bibliographies are recommended according to different psychological characteristics and reading needs. When compiling bibliography, we should pay attention to typicality and applicability in a wide range, and follow the three principles of pertinence, feasibility and timeliness [3] 182. According to the different ways of implementation, reading therapy can be divided into two types: self-help and interactive.

For the readers whose main purpose is to prevent and develop, the self-help reading therapy is generally advocated. That is, the readers should read independently according to the specific categories of books listed in the library and solve the problems themselves; For the readers with more serious psychological diseases or special needs, interactive reading therapy should be carried out. The service librarian intervenes and manages the readers' reading. In addition to making personalized book lists and guiding reading in the whole process, interactive communication and timely adjustment of reading therapy programs are also carried out in the process.

### **3.5 Paying attention to effect evaluation and summarizing and reflecting in time to improve service level**

The routine service process and evaluation feedback mechanism of reading therapy should be formulated, and the reading therapy service should be standardized and improved. During the implementation of the reading therapy service, a file should be established for each reader participating in the reading therapy to record in detail the basic situation, existing main problems, current problems to be solved, treatment plan of the service librarian, listed bibliographic name and reading situation, conversation and exchange records, stage summary and efficacy evaluation, etc. At the same time, a wide range of channels should be widened to collect opinions, suggestions and feedback from relevant experts, teachers, and students in the university, which can facilitate the reading therapy service team to summarize and accumulate experience in practice, and to improve work and service level continuously.

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