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Evaluation of expressive arts therapy on the resilience of university students in COVID-19

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As an alternative to traditional verbal counselling, expressive arts therapy has been shown to be an effective method of mental health care, particularly when dealing with stressful public interactions, such as those associated with COVID-19. Furthermore, since network analysis appears to be a popular approach in psychological research, it has not been used in recent intervention studies for resilience. As a result, the current study utilized a network analysis approach to determine the efficacy of expressive arts therapy on the resilience of university students during the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 263 students in a comprehensive university in China were selected for the therapy group between March and November 2021. In a pre-post design, students' resilience was assessed using the Resiliency Scale for University Students (RSUS). It was discovered that significant differences appeared between the paired networks before and after expressive arts therapy. Facets of self-efficacy, self-acceptance and problem-solving in resilience were notably improved after the therapy, with the variable of emotional stability sustained at the mean level. Meanwhile, the network analysis has highlighted the central variable of self-efficacy in the pre-intervention and support from friends in the post-intervention. The connectivity among the components of problem solving, support from friends, and support from family was enhanced, with support from friends playing the role of hub nod in the following network. By utilizing a network analytic approach, expressive arts therapy can be more targeted in intervening in resilience mechanisms. As a proxy for efficacious problem-solving, intervention should be calibrated to the cultivation of social support networks, especially in the support from friends.

Biography

Li Yue is a deputy director of Arts Therapy Centre in Faculty of Art, Shenzhen University. She is also a lecturer, psychological counsellor with arts therapy traineeship, doctor of education. And she is from the Faculty of Arts, Shenzhen University, Shenzhen, China.