

# *An Exploration of Music Therapy on Relieving Psychological Stress of Graduates*

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**Abstract:** Due to the large-scale expansion of higher education in China, the number of university graduates has increased, the situation has become more and more severe, and social competition has become increasingly fierce, which makes graduates face pressure and negative emotions continue to increase, resulting in a variety of psychological problems, which have a greater impact on both physical and mental development. Music therapy, as an emerging means of mental health regulation, is a product of the combination and mutual penetration of medicine, psychology and music. Studies have shown that music therapy plays an important role in relieving negative emotional stress and promoting mental health. Based on this, this paper starts from the source of psychological pressure of graduates, analyses the negative emotions of graduates facing various pressures after graduation, studies the role of music therapy on mental health promotion, and explores the effective strategies of music therapy for the management of negative emotions of graduates, so that music therapy can be effectively applied to the psychological regulation of graduates. The measures proposed in this paper to alleviate the psychological stress of graduates have a reference meaning for other people with psychological stress, and can also expand the research and application of music psychology, which also plays a very important and positive role in the construction of the current society.

**Keywords:** music therapy, graduates, stressors, stress relief

## 1. Introduction

As society continues to develop and competition intensifies, graduates face increasing psychological pressure. When faced with a series of challenges after graduation, such as finding a job, adapting to a new environment and establishing social relationships, they often feel anxious, lost or even depressed. To help relieve graduates' psychological pressure, various methods have been proposed and tried. Among them, music therapy, as a non-pharmacological intervention, has been widely used in the field of mental health. Through the sound and rhythm of music, music therapy adjusts the emotional state of individuals and promotes the balance and health of the body and mind. It can stimulate graduates' inner positive energy, enhance self-awareness and emotion management ability, and provide emotional support and expression pathways.

This paper explores the application of music therapy to alleviate graduates' psychological stress. First, the sources of graduates' psychological stress are analyzed and common psychological problems of graduates are discussed. Then, the basic principles of music therapy are introduced and

specific measures to relieve graduates' stress are proposed. Finally, the effect of music therapy on relieving graduates' psychological stress is summarized and suggestions for further research and practice are put forward. Through the research in this paper, it is hoped to provide graduates with an effective way to support their mental health and encourage them to pass the graduation stage smoothly and meet new challenges in the new environment. At the same time, it is also hoped to draw more attention and focus on the application of music therapy in the field of mental health.

## **2. Analysis of the Sources of Psychological Pressure of Graduates**

### **2.1. Study Pressure**

For graduates, completing university studies and graduating successfully is the most important task. However, in addition to completing the professional course of study assigned by the university, graduates should also continue to improve themselves, obtain relevant qualifications, enhance their knowledge level, and prepare themselves for future employment accordingly [1]. In today's "graduation is unemployment" or do not want to enter the community so early in the background, there are some graduates will consider whether to continue to further study, choose to go to graduate school or study abroad, in the face of the pressure of learning immediately after the stage of the mentality will also appear a big change, resulting in a relatively large psychological pressure and sense of tension. There is also pressure as they do not know whether what they learn can be put to use. Under the influence of exam-oriented education, most of the students' energy is invested in the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, forgetting the importance of practical application in learning, which leads to students' vision of learning to stay in the textbook for a long time, theoretical knowledge and practical application of the split, students can not master professional knowledge and skills, can not be good in a variety of problems in practice and application of knowledge, which will inevitably increase the pressure of learning [2].

### **2.2. Employment Pressure**

The contradiction between the number of jobs for college graduates and the demand and supply of college graduates has led to difficulties in the employment of college graduates, and the phenomenon of "graduating as unemployed" is common. Although the State has introduced a series of relevant policies to alleviate the severe employment situation of college graduates, the demand still exceeds the supply at present [3]. Many graduates are unable to cope with the gap between their ideals and the reality, thus creating a strong sense of frustration. Then there is the job market which includes job hunting, interviews and fierce competition. For those graduates who do not have a clear career plan or who cannot find an ideal job, such pressure may also lead to anxiety and self-doubt. The vast majority of graduates have grown up under the care of their parents. Their life and social circle are limited to school and they have no direct contact with society, making it difficult for them to cope with social relationships properly when they first enter society. At the same time, graduates are employed for the first time, facing a drastic change in their living environment and personal roles, many graduates are not fully prepared for the cognitive bias, unable to cope with a variety of problems that arise in the employment process [4]. The financial pressure may also add to the anxiety and stress of those who have only just left school who have little savings to begin with, and who usually have to bear their own living expenses, including rent, living expenses, repayment of student loans, and so on.

### **2.3. Pressure of “Family Expectations”**

Pressure from families is usually an expectation that graduates will find a stable job as soon as possible in order to achieve financial independence and self-worth. Families may put more pressure on graduates if they cannot find the job of their choice or have difficulties in finding employment. Families may also expect graduates to have a higher level of education or to pursue higher qualifications, which may further increase graduates' anxiety and pressure. Family expectations of graduates may conflict with their personal interests, aspirations or chosen career paths. In today's society, with its high social mobility, sharp divisions, and emphasis on diversity and individuality, parents' expectations and graduates' aspirations may diverge and contradict each other, resulting in a conflict between “what my parents want me to do” and “what I want to do”, as well as between “what my parents want me to do” and “what I can't do to satisfy my parents' aspirations”. The inability of many graduates to respond effectively to the opinions and expectations of their families can cause many tensions [5]. Some families believe that their children's graduation from college means that they are adults and it is time for them to get married and have children. As a result, parents call them to enquire about their daily lives on the one hand, and put pressure on them to rush into having a family on the other, which increases the pressure on them to work, pay rent and live in a way that is psychologically damaging to them.

### **2.4. Interpersonal Stress**

Beginning to enter the community, this time graduates are very entangled and thatched inside, on the life and work in line with the community they are often some of the heart of the fear of the unknown and the inner pressure on these fears, at the same time, they leave the companion of their teachers for a few years and the relationship between especially close roommates, as well as these friendships and relationships established in the university for a parting mood of the pacification period, and often this kind of separation of the complex mood coupled with the expectations of the community life and the unknown to form a two-way pressure leads to the whole spirit and breath are somewhat depressed. Often, the complexity of this parting mood, coupled with the previously mentioned anticipation of life in society and the unknown, creates a two-way pressure that causes the spirit and breath of the whole person to be somewhat depressed. Compared with that in the society, the interpersonal relationship in the campus is simple and pure, and the conflict of interest between each other is simplified. After graduation, graduates are faced with all kinds of people in the society. Different ages, different functions, different statuses, and so on, build up the diversity and complexity of the whole social group. Graduates need to build professional networks and connections in order to gain support and opportunities in their career development. However, proactively building and maintaining professional relationships can be challenging for some graduates. Society places certain social expectations and social pressures on graduates, such as finding a suitable partner, establishing stable friendships or seeking out valuable relationships. These expectations and pressures may make graduates feel overwhelmed and uneasy.

## **3. The Application of Music Therapy in Relieving Graduates' Psychological Stress and Related Suggestions**

### **3.1. Principles and Methods of Music Therapy**

Music is a kind of sound symbol, not only a carrier of ideas, but also an expression of emotions. People communicate their emotions and life experiences with each other through music, and also communicate with all things in heaven and earth through music to enhance their wisdom and evolve their body and mind. Music therapy began in the United States in the 1950s [6]. As an emerging

fringe cross-discipline, it is a product of the combination and mutual penetration of medicine, psychology and music. Modern science has proved that good music has benefits for people, such as conditioning the bodies and promoting brain development. Music therapists use music to help people who are struggling with physical and mental health issues. There are also professionals who use music to expand the study and application of music psychology.

Music therapy can play a positive role in relieving graduate stress. The following are possible ways in which music therapy can be applied: (1) Relaxation and meditation: By choosing soothing music, graduates can engage in relaxation and meditation exercises. This can help reduce anxiety and stress and improve mental health. (2) Emotional management: Music can trigger and direct emotional experiences. Graduates can choose music that suits their emotional state to better manage their emotions and reduce stress. (3) Creativity and expression: Music therapy can encourage graduates to participate in music composition or performance, from which they can express their emotions and ideas. Such creative expression helps release stress and promotes personal growth and self-identity. (4) Social support: Graduates can participate in group music activities such as music teams or choirs to share the joys and emotions of music with others. Such social support can reduce loneliness and provide emotional support. (5) Psychological rehabilitation: Music therapy can be used as part of graduates' psychological rehabilitation. By working with a professional music therapist, graduates can explore their emotions and challenges and find ways to resolve them through music.

Traditional psychological interventions sometimes present a didactic state, which may discourage students from taking the initiative, but music therapy is a form of relaxation, and for graduates with a high degree of psychological stress distress, comfortable environments and conditions are very rare, so music therapy is feasible and a very effective means of psychological intervention [7]. Therefore, for the special group of graduates, we should make good use of music therapy as a resource to relieve the pressure on graduates.

## **3.2. Suggestions**

### **3.2.1. Establishment of Specialized Agencies or Organizations to Alleviate Pressure on Graduates**

Establishment of a specialized agency or organization providing music therapy services, which may collaborate with educational institutions such as universities and vocational training centers to provide professional music therapy services to graduates. The organization will seek out and recruit music therapists with relevant professional training and experience to ensure that they have sufficient understanding and adaptability to the needs of graduates and provide personalized music therapy advice and counselling to graduates. Music therapists can help students identify and address their stress and emotional problems through face-to-face interaction with graduates, music performance and music composition, and provide support and guidance accordingly. Organize a range of music therapy events for graduates to provide them with opportunities to relieve stress and build social and emotional support systems through music. To make use of various channels such as university advertisements, social media and online platforms to widely publicize the services of music therapy-related institutions or organizations, so as to increase graduates' awareness and acceptance of music therapy.

### **3.2.2. Bringing Music Therapy into University Classrooms**

First of all, students' needs and interests are learned through questionnaires or group discussions to understand students' views and expectations of music therapy. According to the needs of students and the objectives of the program, develop music therapy contents suitable for the target group of the university. Offer specialized music therapy courses for students to learn and experience the methods

and techniques of music therapy and to understand the impact of music on mental health. Courses may include an introduction to theory, music appreciation, vocal training, instrumental performance, and composition. It may also include a variety of musical activities, such as choral competitions, group performances, etc., so that students can actively participate and experience the fun and therapeutic effects of music. Identify professional music therapists or teachers with relevant experience to teach music therapy programs to ensure that teachers have the appropriate professional training and experience to teach students effectively. Provide music equipment, instruments, recording studios and other resources necessary for music therapy programs to ensure that students have appropriate opportunities and experiences for practice. Incorporate hands-on activities into the curriculum to allow students to participate in and experience the impact of music therapy. Provide advice and support to students studying music therapy programs, encouraging active participation and timely resolution of any issues that arise during their studies. Conduct regular course evaluations to collect feedback from students and make appropriate adjustments and improvements as necessary to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the program.

#### 4. Conclusion

Graduates often face academic pressure, employment pressure and future uncertainty, etc. Music therapy can help them relax and reduce stress. Music has a strong ability to express emotions and can trigger emotional resonance. Through music therapy, graduates can express their feelings and emotions with the help of music, thus relieving stress and enhancing positive emotions. Music therapy can help graduates to know themselves better and understand their emotions and needs. Through musical expression, graduates can learn to self-manage their emotions and better handle stress and challenges. Music therapy can stimulate graduates' creativity and help them find new ways to solve problems. The process of music composition and performance requires flexible thinking and creativity. Through music therapy, graduates can develop creative thinking and problem-solving skills to better cope with various challenges. In conclusion, music therapy can have a positive impact on relieving graduates' stress by relaxing the body and mind, elevating mood, enhancing self-awareness and emotion management, improving social interaction, and improving creativity and problem-solving skills.

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