

# Enhance the Affinity and Pertinence of Counselors' Heart-To-Heart Talk from the Perspective of Precise Ideological and Political Education

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## Abstract

Under the background of the new era, the ideological and political work in Colleges and universities has changed from the type of "flood irrigation" to "drip irrigation". One of the most effective ways for counselors to carry out precise ideological and political work is the heart-to-heart talk. From the perspective of precise ideological and political education combining with the growth background and personality characteristics of college students in the new era, that teachers and students should establish a "community" relationship to enhance the affinity and pertinence of "precision dropper" type heart-to-heart talk is proposed in this paper. In addition, a fair heart-to-heart conversation model is novelty developed. Through the professional listening and questioning of counselors, students can be guided to take positive actions in the future, so as to promote the overall development of students.

## Keywords

Precise ideological and political education; heart-to-heart talk; affinity; pertinence.

## 1. Introduction

The ideological and political work is fundamentally a work related to human being. Therefore, the key of ideological and political work lies in communication. According to the Regulations on the Construction of Counselors in General Higher Education Institutions issued by the Ministry of education, counselors should "carry out heart to heart talks regularly and help students in a targeted way" (Edited by the Department of Ideological and Political Work of the Ministry of Education. Selected articles on strengthening and improving the ideological and political education of college students: 1978-2008 [M] Beijing: China Renmin University Press, 2008: 491,492.) Heart-to-heart talk is the most straightforward and widely-used way of communication for counselors to carry out ideological and political work for students. General Secretary of China, Jinping Xi, pointed out at the National Conference on Ideological and political work in Colleges and Universities: we should avoid the unity and uniformity of thousands of books and thousands of people, and avoid the "empty words" and "big words" which are divorced from reality, and focus on analyzing the characteristics and actualities of different student. The overall "flood irrigation" is combined with the "drip irrigation" which varies from person to person (Xi Jinping. Putting ideological and political work through the whole process of education and teaching, and creating a new situation in the development of higher education in my country-an important speech at the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities [N]. Renming Daily, 2016-12-09.) The heart-to-heart talk of counselors is a "drip irrigation", and efforts should be made in the dimension of "precision".

## 2. Common Misunderstandings and Analysis of Counselors' Heart-to-Heart Talk

Heart-to-heart talk is the direct communication between the counselors and the students in a face-to-face manner. The positioning, relationship and skills of the two parties in the conversation directly affect the effectiveness of ideological and political education.

### 2.1. The Two Parties Form An Opposing Relationship

Heart-to-heart talk is a commonly used method in ideological and political education for counselors. Usually, the goal of talk is to solve students' problems. Because students have problems, as counselors, they need to point out the problem and then help the students to solve the problem. However, at the stage of problem identification, the two sides of the conversation can easily lead to conflicting relationships. From the perspective of psychology, it is not difficult to understand that when the problem of a student is pointed out by the counselor, the self-defense mechanism will naturally activate, and the student begins to deny and defend. The behavior of the students is not to try to escape the problem or punishment, but because of the psychological mechanism. The denial or explanation of the problem in the first time is a normal psychological phenomenon.

Because of the activation of the student's self-defense mechanism, the denial or justification of the problem may cause misunderstandings by the counselor and teacher, who believes that more education must be made to make the students aware of the problem, so they began to teach. Then heart-to-heart talks are carried out on the basis of antagonistic relationships. Students think that the counselor is my opposite and he/she attributes all problems to me; the counselor believes that the student does not recognize the problem and must be emphasized again and again.

It is not difficult to imagine that when the two parties in the conversation establish an antagonistic relationship, the only remaining conversation is the conversation, because neither party can be understood by the other party, and the counselor cannot speak to the students' hearts. The above problem will lead to the lack of affinity of the conversation, and the effectiveness of the conversation is poor.

### 2.2. The Two Parties Are Not in The Same "Language"

Ideological and political education should be carried out based on the actual situation of students. It is particularly important to understand the growth background and characteristics of the interviewees. Although there are not a few young counselors in the team of counselors, in this new era with rapid economic, technological, and political changes, the age gap between counselors and the students cannot be the barrier, which means they are in the same "language department" as the student. At present, young people born after 00 have been the role in the university campus. What they think, and love needs to be explored and grasped by counselors. In a heart-to-heart conversation, if what the counselor says is not what the student wants, then the two parties are not in the same "language department." Should the counselor use the professional language of ideological and political education or a language familiar to the students? In this regard, Jianjun Liu, professor in the School of Marxism at Renmin University of China believes: "The same problem can be expressed in academic language or in the language of the masses. Which expression should be used depends on the conversation background and its needs."(Liu Jianjun. Why does Marxism "act" [J]. Journal of Ideological and Theoretical Education, 2019, (10):9-13)

### **3. The Characteristics of the "Drip Irrigation" Precise Ideological and Political Education Mode**

The "drip irrigation" type of precise ideological and political work corresponds to the collective transportation and flood irrigation ideological and political work mode. It is characterized by precise analysis and precise quantification for different individual students and different stages of the same individual student, followed by "drip irrigation" to achieve the goal of ideological and political education. Accuracy is reflected in both process control and goal achievement.

The "precision" should be ensured firstly in ideological and political education, and what is needed is the professional knowledge of counselors. Only by applying the spirit of craftsmanship in educating people can we achieve accurate grasp, precise research and judgment, and there can be no mistakes; On the basis of accurate positioning the target, to achieve "precision", first, the work must be meticulous and in place, and second, it must be carefully designed and accurately expressed to achieve the precise education effect of "drip irrigation".

### **4. Ways to Enhance the Affinity and Pertinence of Conversation of Counselors**

To achieve the precise "drip irrigation", familiarity with the characteristics of the "drip irrigation" object is the first step. Just like cultivating plants, you must be familiar with the characteristics of each plant. Water-loving plants cannot be left without watering for a long time, and drought-loving plants which are watered too frequently will backfire. College students in the new era have their own unique growth background, so their characteristics need to be familiarized and mastered by counselors.

#### **4.1. The Growth Background and Characteristics of College Students in the New Era**

Young college students who have grown up with the achievements of reform and opening up policy were born in the economically prosperous and technologically advanced Internet era. As the post-00s enter college campuses, the young college students in the new era are eager for respect and self-realization. They are no longer the same as others, they have more self-judgment and thinking, and the media is their place to speak, looking forward to be recognized and praised. At the same time, due to the influence of the Internet, many trends of thought on the Internet and even splitters with ulterior motivations will also compete for young people. This requires ideological and political workers to accurately grasp the young people's thinking and accurately carry out "drip irrigation" so that young people can grow up healthily under the sunshine and rain of socialism.

#### **4.2. Heart-To-Heart Talks Must Be based on "Respect" and "Trust"**

Combining with the characteristics of college students' desire to be respected in the new era, counselors should take "respect" and "trust" as the prerequisite when conducting heart-to-heart talks. In the process of heart-to-heart talks, the counselor should fully respect and trust the conversation partner. Both sides of the conversation must set an appropriate position. The counselor is not a superior educator or helper. The teacher-student relationship should be a "community". The counselor and the student should face and solve the difficulties and problems encountered by the students together to achieve the goal of political education.

The "justification" should be avoided in conversation between counselors and students, that is, wait for students to talk to students when something goes wrong. The establishment of a community relationship should not be temporary. Students should usually be cared and concerned in daily life. For example, blessings can be sent to students in their birthdays,

holidays, and special anniversaries to establish a community relationship of mutual trust. In this self-media era, you can also follow students' thoughts from their WeChat Moments and QQ space, and discover what students' thoughts and concerns are in time. Only the counselor can give students full care, love, understanding and trust, then the affinity of heart-to-heart talk can be enhanced, and the counselor can go deep into the students' hearts to accurately find the root of the problem and help students grow better.

### **4.3. Application of the "3F" Listening Principle in Heart-To-Heart Conversation**

In a heart-to-heart conversation, is it talking or listening? Is the subject of the conversation a student or a teacher? Perhaps the traditional concept believes that the counselor is the main body of the heart-to-heart conversation, and it is mainly that the counselor guides the students through "talking" education. In fact, it is not the case. The important part of the heart-to-heart conversation for the counselor is "listening." Only through listening can the counselor understand students and discover what students want, and can ideological and political education work be targeted.

#### **4.3.1. Empathy in Listening**

Familiar use of 3F listening principle (Fact, Feel and Focus) in communication can effectively improve the pertinence of heart-to-heart talks. The counselor can lean forward their body to listen to the students, which also enhances the affinity. In the 3F listening principle, fact refers to hearing the facts, Feel refers to hearing feelings, and Focus refers to hearing the students' concerns. Listening requires professional training, including extracting students' current feelings from the problems or difficulties they narrate, understanding and accepting students' feelings, and achieving the effect of "empathy". Empathy is a concept in psychology. It refers to empathizing with students emotionally, fully expressing the affinity of the counselor can help to further stabilize the community relationship between the two parties.

In heart-to-heart conversation, students' narration often stays at the level of ideas, and they often use "I think...I feel..." to express them. From the students' ideas, if the hidden feelings can be accurately found and the students' feelings can be accurately extracted, the effect of heart to heart conversation will be twice as much as half the effort. Sometimes, it can achieve the educational effect by just a feeling of empathy and understanding.

#### **4.3.2. "Floating Attention" in Listening**

In heart-to-heart conversations, students are often troubled at the "problem level", revealing difficulties and grievances repeatedly, and some problems are facts that cannot be changed at the moment. However, the student's goal is to change the facts that happened in the past, rather than face the future and change the view of "Facts in the past". Therefore, as a counselor in a heart-to-heart conversation, you must especially grasp the "suspension attention", and focus on the problem described by the student, but not be immersed in the problem to deal with the pain with the student. From the students' narration, the counselor should accurately observe the students' feelings and empathy, but they should not fall into the trap of the problem. By floating on the problem, the counselors can find other side of the problem or guide the students to look at the problem from the perspective of the future. Due to that the facts cannot be changed, only the options of students can be changed. Therefore, the goal of heart-to-heart conversation is to guide students to actively and positively act towards the future and become a better self.

Students will inevitably encounter some "ups and downs" in the process of growing up. When students are troubled by current problems, the counselor needs to help them to find confidence. On the one hand, confidence comes from the trust of the counselor, and on the other hand, it comes from the student's past successful experience. Therefore, the "suspension attention" of the counselor in the heart-to-heart conversation can often jump out of the problem, and use the

“curiosity” method to ask questions, elicit the memory of the students’ past successful experiences to build up the confidence in solving the problem, and to make the students believe that the problem can be passed Solved by one’s own ability.

#### **4.3.3. "Frame Changing" in Listening**

When encountering problems, students often have some negative expressions. The counselors can transform the negative expressions of students into positive expressions through the "frame changing" technique, which is more conducive to achieve the goal of ideological and political education. For example, a student has a fear of difficulty because of a poor English foundation, and the expression is "My English foundation is not good". The counselor can change the expression "You want to improve your English level" to guide students to use positive thinking and to take more actions.

Counselors must often use the "frame changing" technique in their daily work to convert negative expressions in students into positive expressions to improve the pertinence of work. Students who are often in the context of positive expression will have a healthier mentality and stronger action power.

#### **4.4. "Ask Questions" in A Heart-To-Heart Conversation**

In a heart-to-heart conversation, students are the subject of the conversation, and the counselor is the subject of asking questions. On the basis of fully listening to the students, the counselor accurately discovers the problem and focuses on the target to ask questions. Counselors should avoid focusing on questions and asking questions, because the "why?" questioning method often contains a context of blame, which makes it difficult for students to find a way out of the problem. It also makes the counselor lose affinity and destroys the teacher-student community relationship.

##### **4.4.1. Focus on the Target and Ask Questions**

The “suspended attention” in listening will help the counselor to focus on the goal instead of the problem. The word “what?” is often used when asking questions from the perspective of focusing on the goal. For example, when a student talks about “my English is not very good, so I am worried that I cannot pass English Level 4”, the counselor can ask the student: "What makes you want to achieve better results in the Level 4 exam?" Therefor the negative question expressions can be transformed to future-oriented focused target to find the answer. The student’s answer was “because I want to find a good job, and many good companies have requirements for CET-4.” After focusing on the goal, the negative energy is transformed into the positive side, and the emotion is transformed from “worry” to “hope” "The energy value of the students has been significantly improved. The questioning method of focusing on the target makes the questions flow, no longer worrying about the state of insolvency, but to find the method of focusing on the target to solve the problem in the step-by-step questioning of the counselor.

Especially in the face of some unchangeable facts, the problem is unsolvable, and we can only change to a new goal to face the future. For example, a student cannot obtain a degree certificate due to punishment. If the problem is focused on, the fact that the student cannot obtain a degree certificate obviously cannot be changed. It is impossible to conduct heart-to-heart conversation in the dimension of the problem, because the counselor and teacher are unable to change the punishment of the student. The only way is to change the focus question to the focus target. For example, the counselor can ask the student's future lifestyle: "What kind of life do you want in 10 years?" Under the guidance of counselor, the student will start thinking about the future. The teacher will continue to focus on the student's vision and ask again, What abilities or qualities might you have if you want that kind of life?" The counselor can guide students step by step towards achievable goals and let them to make efforts to see more possibilities for

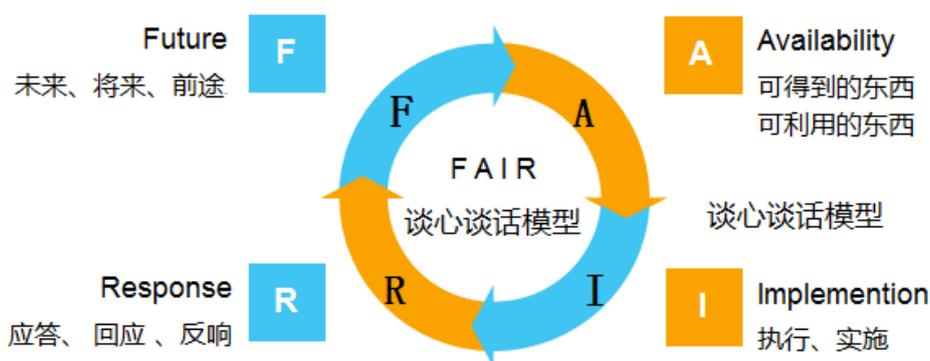
themselves, instead of entangled in the problems of *fait accompli*, because once the setbacks are devastated and even cause tragedies in life. The goal of ideological and political work is the all-round development of people. For counselors, learning to focus on goals and ask questions has a crucial impact on the effectiveness of ideological and political work.

#### 4.4.2. The Use of Metric Questions

To solve students' ideological problems through heart-to-heart talks, it is also necessary to solve students' practical problems. An important link between thinking and reality is "action." How to improve students' ability to act in a heart-to-heart conversation, and to see the actual effect of heart-to-heart conversation, the "quantification" procedure cannot be omitted. The so-called quantification is a measurement of problem. On the one hand, it can help students better clarify their current resources and status, and on the other hand, it can help the counselor accurately understand the actual situation of the student. For example, if students are behind in grades due to lack of motivation in learning, the counselor can use a metric question in the heart-to-heart conversation, "If the full score is 10 points, how many points should you give to your current study effort?" The given score of the students is a quantification in his mind. In response to this score, The counselor asked again "what is the reason that you gave yourself such a score. After the analysis of the student, the counselor can continue to carry out metric questions to lead the student positively towards the future: "Do you think your score can be increased in the next month? How much score you can increase? What you can do to increase the score? The counselor should ask questions repeatedly, so that students can focus on their achievable goals and clearly know what they should do to improve their ability to act. And thus the pertinence of heart-to-heart talks be fully reflected.

#### 4.5. FAIR Talking Model

Based on the above talk-to-heart techniques, the author developed a reproducible and easy-to-master talk-to-heart talk model based on a large number of work practices—FAIR talk-to-heart talk model. FAIR is the acronym for the four focus points of heart-to-heart conversation: F denotes the Future, A represents Availability, I stands for Implementation (execution), and R is Response. The heart-to-heart conversation in the FAIR mode is oriented to the Future, looking for goals in the future rather than facing the difficulties of the past or the present; looking for available resources in the present based on future goals; the next step is Implementation, which means taking actions according to the goal; After the action, feedback is made and the target is adjusted or the resources are enriched to further implement the new goals. Then, in this closed loop, the positive cycle will be continued until the goal is achieved.



Target design should not only be considered from the perspective of the education subject, but should put the growth and development needs of students in a more important position to meet

the needs and expectations of students' growth and development. (Feng Gang. Innovative development of socialist ideological and political education with Chinese characteristics in the new era [J]. China Higher Education, 2018, (Z1): 28-32.) Based on the sustainable and comprehensive development of people, different students have different goals and resources, and the same student has different goals and resources at different times. FAIR's heart-to-heart talk mode is a cyclical system, which is more targeted and timely, goals and resources are not static, but can be adjusted in time, which is more maneuverable and achievable. Of course, the counselor should obey achievable principles when guiding students to find goals and make plans. If the goal is too difficult, it cannot be achieved no matter how hard the students try, it can only weaken the students' self-efficacy. The goal must be controllable and can be achieved after hard work. If the students feel that the goal is out of reach when giving feedback on the goal set for the first time, the goal must be adjusted in time during the second FAIR mode conversation and match new resources and develop action plans.

The key point of FAIR's heart-to-heart conversation mode is to directly focus on the future and goals to start the conversation. The goals are set by the students themselves. In the conversation, the counselors first feel the students through listening, and focus on what the students care most about and what they want most. and then ask students to explore their own goals by asking questions. When the goal is determined, a further action plan should be developed. At this time, the counselors can use "measurement" questions to guide students to accurately make an action plan, and give feedback within a period of time, and once again use the FAIR mode of heart-to-heart talk cycle to help students to determine or adjust goals again. Regardless of whether the students have achieved the initial goals in the course of the action, counselors should discover the changes in the students, find the areas that are worthy of recognition, and empower them. It should be noted that the counselors should not judge or criticize the students who have not reached the goal. The reason for the failure to achieve the goal is either the goal is unreasonable, or the action is not enough. Once again, focus on the goal and analyze the reasons in a heart-to-heart conversation.

## 5. Summary

Ideological and political work in colleges and universities is actually a process of dispelling doubts, and heart-to-heart talk is the most direct way for counselors to answer students' doubts. The establishment of the teacher-student community has laid a good interpersonal foundation for ideological and political education. In the process of heart-to-heart talks, students are looking for future goals while counselors can join the education of socialist core values in a timely manner to guide students to "integrate the individual into the greater self", encourage students take on the mission and responsibility of young people in the new era, integrate personal development into the development of the motherland, integrate some seemingly empty ideological education into life, and use the affinity of counselors to influence and guide students subtly and achieve moisturizing. The silent effect can effectively improve the effectiveness of ideological and political work.

Counselors must establish precise ideological and political concepts in their work, accurately grasp the dynamics of students, accurately choose the timing of heart-to-heart talks, and make precise preparations for heart-to-heart talks. Education is a long-term companion. Don't expect too much from the effects of a heart-to-heart conversation. No matter what problems students encounter at the moment, the counselor should believe that every student has the opportunity to make changes, and that every student has the resources and ability to do it. The counselors should pay attention to the overall development of students continually.

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