

The Psychology Behind Athletic Training

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Background & Objective

There is an increased stigma for mental health in the 18-24 age group, especially in student athletes, and there has been an increasing emphasis on treating the person, not just the injury. The National Athletic Trainers Association has set guidelines in educating athletic trainers in behavioral sciences and psychosocial support. The literature review was done to determine whether or not athletic trainers are able to meet the guidelines set up by NATA

Question: What role do athletic trainers play in the psychological well-being in their athletes



References upon request

AT's Ability to Meet Guidelines

The ability of studied athletic trainers to meet the NATA suggestions for was assessed on their reported ability to recognizing potential psychological distress, addressing these issues with each student athlete, use and knowledge of screening practices, implementation of sports psychology techniques into practice, and ability to work with clinical and sports psychologists. Athletic trainers reported mixed feelings on their ability to implement those skills into their practices. Ability of athletic trainers to meet guidelines was also assessed based on how athletes viewed their athletic trainers meet their psychological needs during rehabilitation. Most athletes responded better to rehabilitation when their athletic trainer advocated for them, had them set goals, held them accountable for outside rehabilitation.

Psychological Stress in Athletes

Most of the psychological stress athletic trainers will see in athlete will be due to injury within athletes. An injury can have psychological effects on an athlete such as anxiety, depression, fear of reinjury or return to play, decreased confidence, loneliness due to isolation from teammates. They can also see transgender athletes suffer from distress as well as athletes, especially females, who have eating disorders.

Suggestions for Future

From NATA's journal

- Continuing to increase education in professional programs
- Help students make the initial move to get mental health treatment & ask about mental health concerns during physical examination
- Need to have routine plan for dealing with mental health issues

Personal

- Start with prerequisites in undergrad studies: various psychology courses (health psychology, sports psychology, etc.)
- Required course for psychosocial aspect in professional programs