

NCAA Innovations in Research and Practice Grant Program 2020 Grant Recipients

Take a Timeout: A skills-based podcast program for coping with mental health challenges as a collegiate athlete

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Addressing mental health among student-athletes is a priority. The goal of 'Take a Timeout' is to develop 24 gender-specific podcasts that are scripted with scenarios unique to the student-athlete experience, while introducing psychotherapy strategies and skills-based approaches for coping with mental health challenges. The podcasts will be housed on an online resource structured with five modules (problem solving, mindfulness, emotion regulation, distress tolerance, and self-empowerment). Fifty student-athletes will be recruited to pilot the podcasts and complete pre- and post-surveys to examine the effectiveness and feasibility of the intervention. Podcast content will be adapted for dissemination across NCAA institutions.

Standing Up, Speaking Out: Reducing LGBTQ Prejudice in Sports

* Christi McGeorge, Ph.D., North Dakota State University
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Sexual and gender minority athletes continue to experience prejudice on the playing field despite national trends indicating greater acceptance. Prejudice has harmful effects on the well-being of both offenders and targets, and even witnessing these types of incidents is associated with poorer mental health outcomes. This pilot study seeks to test the effectiveness of a multi-level (i.e., athletes, coaches, and athletic staff) bystander intervention designed to reduce bias-based incidents related to sexual orientation and gender identity in sports by teaching participants how to engage in actions that create a more supportive and inclusive athletic department climate and team culture.

Development of Student Health Allies & Peer Educators Competencies and Its Effect on Student-Athletes' Well-Being

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Although peer education is widely utilized as a health promotion method on campuses, the appropriate competency training of peer educators remains inadequate. At Marquette University, peer support for student-athletes is offered through the Athletic department's Student Health Allies & Peer Educators (SHAPE) program. Our project aims to evaluate the effectiveness of SHAPE competency training by measuring peer support ability and how that support affects the well-being of student-athletes. This is a multidisciplinary collaboration between Athletics, Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology, and Computer Science to provide SHAPE competency training and to monitor the well-being of student-athletes through web applications.

Food for Thought for Student-Athletes: An Online Education Program to Fuel Athletes with Knowledge on Nutrition and Mental Health

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In order to optimize performance, recovery, and well-being in our student-athletes, we must take an integrated and intentional approach to supporting their daily nutritional habits and mental health practices. National and local trends present a need for this combination of instructional content for collegiate athletes. Incorporating 10 training modules and a rigorous evaluation component, the purpose of this program is to combine the topics of nutrition and mental wellness into an online class series called “Food For Thought (FFT) for Student-Athletes” that will teach student-athletes best practices in wellness and nutrition and offer a wide range of resources that will be accessible to other universities interested in adopting it.

“Return to Learn” Support for Concussed NCAA Student-Athletes: A Data-Driven Toolkit for Member Schools

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Academic performance for the collegiate student-athlete is a critical component of overall achievement. However, sport-related concussions, may pose a risk to success as they can cause alterations in cognitive ability that result in learning challenges. Consequently, recent guidelines encourage “return to learn” plans that include engagement with school staff to support learning needs. However, there is little data-driven guidance regarding how to best implement these plans. The purpose of this project is to design a “return to learn” toolkit using data that examines implementation at the campus level, instructional team involvement and the quality of the student-athlete experience.

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