

Mental Health Trends in Youth Sports

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The Sports Medicine Center at Children's Mercy



The official health care provider
of Sporting Kansas City



Introduction

- **Becky Wiseman, LSCSW, LCSW**
- **Clinical Licensed Social Worker**
- **Mental Health Therapist**
- **Soccer/Baseball Mom**



Objectives

- Participants will learn what research shows are the current trends in youth sports.
- The mental health impact on young athletes.
- How health care providers can help support young athletes.
- A look forward: Will mental wellness play a larger role in youth sports in the future?

Single Sport Specialization

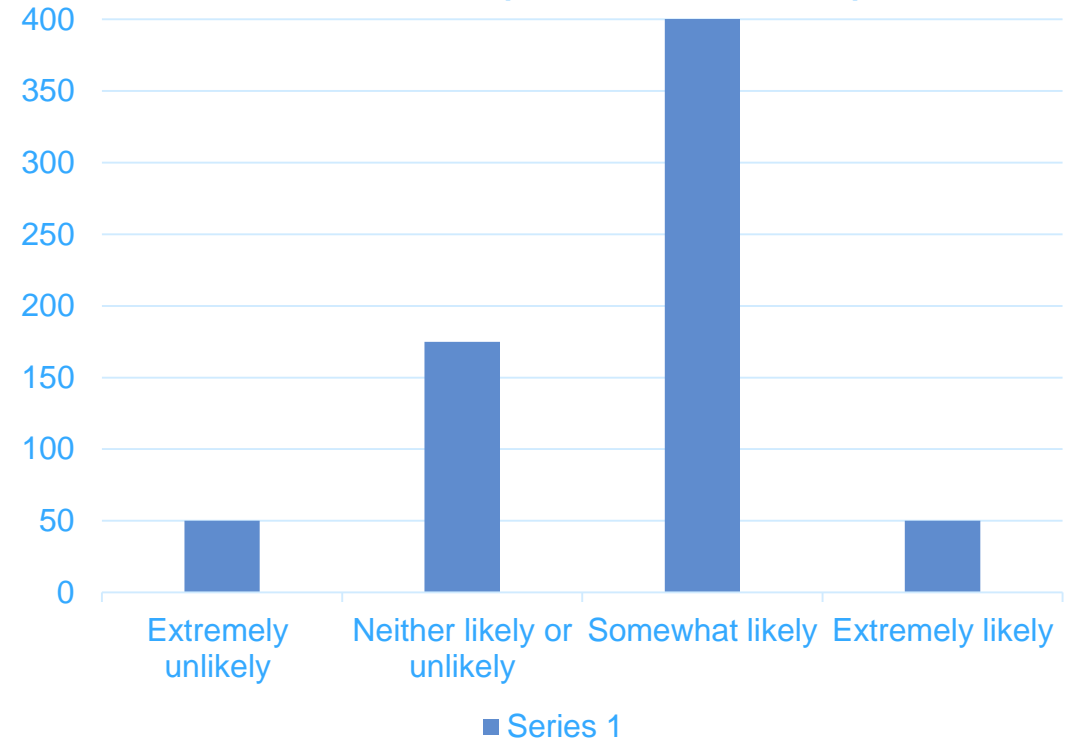
- Prior to the age of 12
- Playing one sport 8–10 months out of the year
- Youth is practicing 3-4 times a week
- A family's financial allocation is toward one sport

- Padaki, A.S. MD, Ahmad, C.S. MD, Hodgins, J.L. MD, Kovacevic, D. MD, Lynch, T.S. MD, Popkin, C.A. MD, (2017), Quantifying Parental Influence on Youth Athlete Specialization, *The Orthopaedic Journal of Sports Medicine*, 5(9). DOI: [10.1177/2325967117729147](https://doi.org/10.1177/2325967117729147)

Belief Systems

- Scholarships
- Professional career
- Risk of injury

How likely do you believe you will receive a sports scholarship



More Practice Time = More Future Opportunities

- **10,000 Hour Rule**
- The hours of deliberate practice required in order for elite abilities to be gained.
- Belief systems go beyond statistics and reports.



- Brooks, A.M. MD, Post, E.G. MS,ATC, Trigsted, S.M. PhD, ACT, Schaefer, D.A. MS, CSCS, Wichman, D.M., Watson, A.M. MD,MS, McGuine, T.A. PhD, ATC, Bell, D.R. Phd, ATC. (2018). Knowledge, Attitudes, and Beliefs of Youth Club Athletes Toward Sport Specialization and Sport Participation. The Orthopaedic Journal of Sports Medicine, 5(6). DOI: [10.1177/2325967118769836](https://doi.org/10.1177/2325967118769836)

The Teen Brain

- *The fact that we can recall adolescence better than other periods and that this is a time of change in many brain regions are two pieces of evidence that the brain is likely to be especially plastic at this time. Another indication comes from statistics on the average age of onset of serious psychological disorders. The adolescent brain is extraordinarily sensitive to stress. – Laurence Steinberg*



Where are we at...

- **Anxiety and depression are on the rise.**

- A Pew survey found that of the nearly 1,000 teens ages 13 to 17 that were questioned, 70 percent say anxiety and depression are critical issues among their peers

- [Ryan W. Miller](#), USA TODAY Published 7:45 p.m. ET Feb. 21, 2019 | Updated 7:48 a.m. ET Feb. 22, 2019

- High school students today have more anxiety symptoms and are twice as likely to see a mental health professional as teens in the 1980s.

- Mojtabai, R., Olfson, M., & Han, B. (2016). National Trends in the Prevalence and Treatment of Depression in Adolescents and Young Adults. *PEDIATRICS*, 138(6), e20161878-e20161878. doi:10.1542/peds.2016-1878
- Twenge, J.M., (2015). Time Period and Birth Cohort Differences in Depressive Symptoms in the U.S., 1982–2013. *Social Indicators Research* 121(2), 437.



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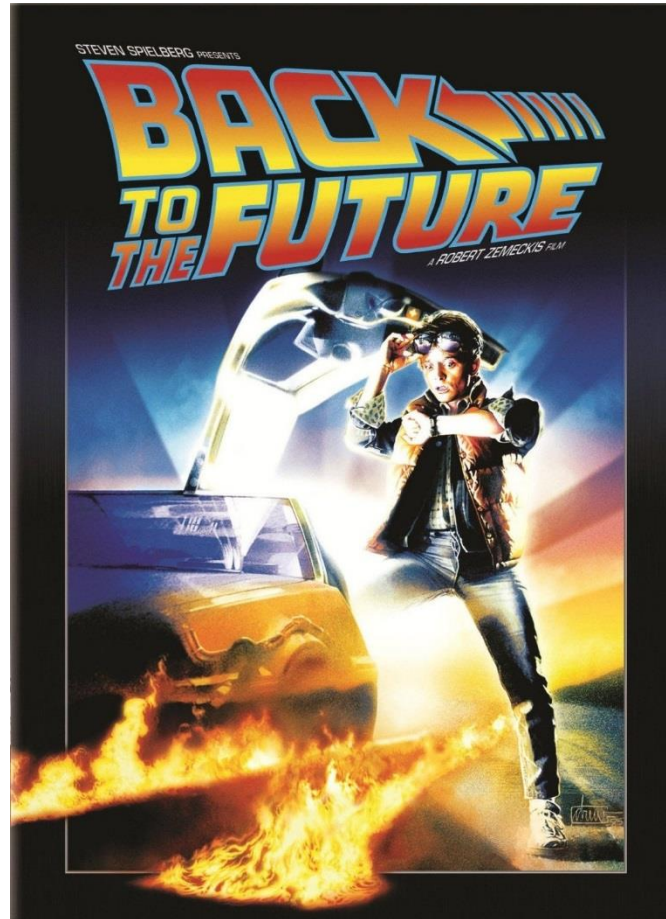
How did we get here?

- Introduction of social media
- Everything they do and don't do is seen by all
- Environmental/Community events
- Teens as consumers
 - Marketing
 - Video games
 - Television/Youtube channels
 - Sports Teams

Student Athletes are not immune: Impact on Young Athletes

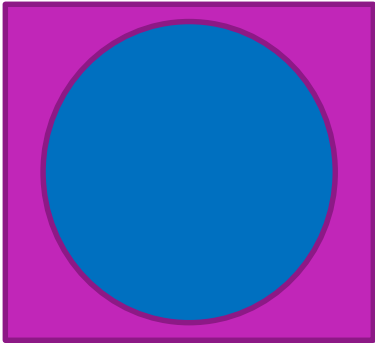
- Not only do student athletes have all the pressures of typical teens their age, but they also have unique stressors
 - Time demands
 - Relationships with teammates
 - Relationships with coaches
 - Missed free time with friends
 - Injury
 - Stress of competition
- Davoren, A.K., Hwang, S. Mind, Body, and Sport: Depression and Anxiety Prevalence in Student-Athletes: An excerpt from the Sports Science Institute's Guide to Understanding and Supporting Student-Athlete Mental Wellness. (Oct. 8th, 2014). Retrieved from: <http://www.ncaa.org>

Can We Go Back to Simpler Times?

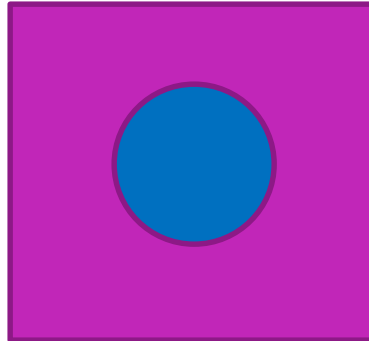


Acceptance and Commitment Theory

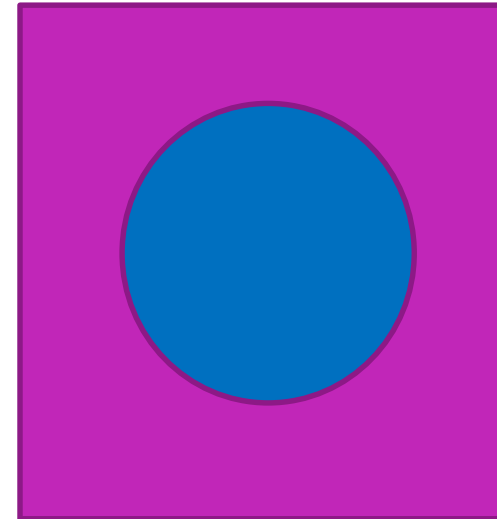
- **Baseline**



Traditional



ACT



ACT

- **Helping the athlete bring awareness to what they are experiencing.**
- **Acceptance of the thoughts, feeling, emotions they are experiencing.**
- **Commitment to move forward with what is most important.**

How providers can help

- Remembering that most teen athletes are dealing with these circumstances for the first time.
- Our approach can help the athlete develop the skills they can utilize during adjustment as well as later in life during times of struggle.

Language providers can use

- **Help athletes identify what might be going on...**
 - I wonder if...
 - I have a theory, help me out....
 - Are you shutting down in PT, because you are worried that none of this is going to help?

Language providers can use

- **Help athlete accept what is going on...**
 - Yes, makes sense that you are feeling nervous. Your mind is telling you to be cautious after an injury. You might experience that feeling for awhile.
 - I can imagine that you are frustrated with your progress. We often experience frustration when nothing turns out how we have planned. Frustration will probably be around for awhile, so let's use that energy.

Language providers can use

- **Commitment to next steps**

- What is most important to you?
- Is your thinking helping you move towards what is most important?
- What actions move you away from what is most important?

Future of Mental Wellness in Sports

- Give student-athletes the tools needed to navigate the ever evolving world of organized sports.
- Develop programming that teaches coaches and parents ways to integrate mental strategies with their players.
- Have mental health programming become standard in youth sports.

Questions???

Additional Resources

- Padaki, A.S. MD, Ahmad, C.S. MD, Hodgins, J.L. MD, Kovacevic, D. MD, Lynch, T.S. MD, Popkin, C.A. MD, (2017), Quantifying Parental Influence on Youth Athlete Specialization, *The Orthopaedic Journal of Sports Medicine*, 5(9). DOI: 10.1177/2325967117729147
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