Changing Minds, Changing Lives: 
Fostering Resilience Among Elite College Athletes

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Focus on Strengths
Drive to Thrive
Build the Resilience
Resources

• Internal

• External
From cradle to cubicle...

• We devote more time to shortcomings than strengths.
• We tend to believe overcoming deficits should be our focus.
• Parents spend 77% of their time on the lowest grade.
When we are able to put most of our energy into developing our natural talent there is extraordinary room for growth. So you cannot be anything you want to be, but you can be a lot more of who you already are.

(Rath, 2007).
Some things are within our control...

... and some things are not.
Every difficulty in life presents us with an opportunity
To turn inward and invoke our own inner resources.

The trials we endure can and should introduce us to our strengths.

Epictetus
My resilience story happens everyday. I am constantly bouncing back.

I don’t sleep at night, bounce back, have a 6 am lift, bounce back,

just got assigned so much homework I don’t even want to do it, bounce back.

wasn’t a good son today bounce back, wasn’t a good boyfriend, bounce back

doubt myself bounce back worry too much bounce back,

then the cycle repeats...
Adversity & Resilience

Effectively coping with stressful life events strengthens the action of brain systems involved in emotion regulation and behavioral control.

Maier & Watkins, 2010
I am from darkness
From shutter windows and police sirens

I am the definition of resilience.

I am full of life.
I am from where killings is normal.
**Health Defeating**
- Mistrust
- Fear
- Isolation
- Protectiveness

**Health Promoting**
- Trust
- Security
- Connecting
- Openness

**RESILIENCE**
Social-Ecological Model of Resilience

(Ungar, Ghazinour, & Richter, 2013)

• Responding to adversity
• Using physical and psychological capacities
• Navigating cultural and social resources.
Opportunity Structures

• Features of the environment that facilitate the expression, embodiment and realization of latent individual capacities

• Promote growth, development & thriving

(Ungar, et al, 2013)
Changing the odds stacked against the individual contributes far more to changes in outcome than the capacity of individuals themselves to change.

Ungar et al, 2013
Changing Minds, Changing Lives
(Chandler, 2009; Chandler, Roberts & Chiodo 2015)

• Resilience is teachable
• Builds on strengths
• Appreciative Inquiry
  (Watkins, Mohr, & Kelly, 2011)
• Experiential learning
• Skills-based
• Transformational
Building Blocks of Resilience: The ABCS

- Active coping
- Building on strengths
- Cognitive awareness
- Social support
Active Coping
Building Strength
Cognitive Awareness
Social Support
• Relaxation
• Research
• Writing
• Response
• Reflection
Mind Map

What I am good at...
Qualitative Data: Major Themes

- Opening up & recognizing
- emotions
- Counting on others & reaching out
- Starting with strengths builds a team
Individuals in the intervention group with ACE increased their emotional awareness scores by at least 25% compared to controls; 30% increase was seen in PCS scale scores. Although not significant, this amount of change is meaningful and warrants further investigation.
Emotional Awareness

• Recognize, use and make good decisions
• Sustained at follow-up despite higher distress
• Reduced conduct violations
Dig deeply…

• You possess strengths you might not realize you have.
• Find the right one.
• Use it.
Your take home action steps:

Use Strengths Language
Affirm the Drive to Thrive
Build the Environment

Get your AD to the NCAA Innovations website

http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/changing-minds-changing-lives-winning-transition-college
Affirmation...
Appreciation...
Appraisal...
When I first got there I didn’t like expressing myself.

Hearing everyone’s experiences helped me open up.

To really meet each other and open up and build a brotherhood based on sharing and expressing yourself has helped me to stay poised throughout the day.
Folks were talking about serious and personal things and everyone was open.

Everyone was like “We are all ok with this, we can do this and support each other.”
We are more than athletes.

We all have our strengths that we can use to help change the world.
I opened up more than usual as I found a mind clearing tool. This class has shown me that taking your time to slow down and look and reflect on your life is well worth while. My experience in this class has helped me cope with stress I go through daily. Being able to see these guys grow in writing, resiliency, and mindfulness is a thing of beauty. The stuff that we have learned in this class I have implemented it in my everyday life. I feel like I can go and lean on people... I can count on my team for anything now. I am proud to be a Minuteman.
Before I never looked forward to coming to class but this one I did. This class was a major help to get me out of my comfort zone and move to another.
Change the Game
De-stigmatize, de-pathologize, normalize!

• Coaches: Identify problems & fix things.
• Athletes: Identify weakness & work on them.
• Health providers: Diagnose disorders & refer for treatment.
• Educators: Assess deficits & provide remedial instruction.

Notice what’s right! Build on what works! Recognize resilience!