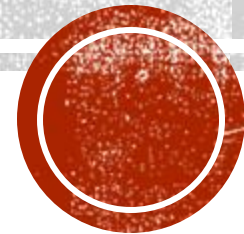
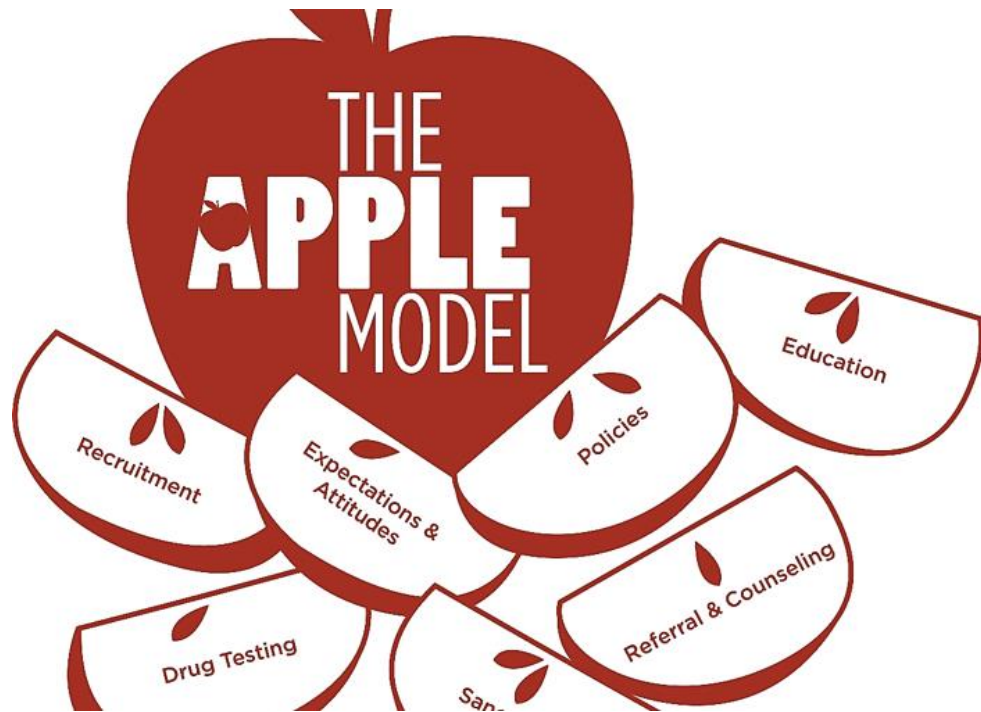


**STUDENT ATHLETE MENTAL
HEALTH: BUILDING SUPPORT,
BREAKING STIGMA**

Grinnell College NCAA Division III
Grinnell, IA



APPLE TEAM



- Education
- Expectations & Attitudes
- Referral & Counseling



NCAA MENTAL HEALTH BEST PRACTICES

- “Student-athlete mental well-being is best served through a **collaborative process** of engaging the full complement of available campus and community resources, which may **include athletics, campus health, counseling services, disability services and community agencies**. Identifying the resources that are available and integrating strong professional working relationships across these areas are critical to ensure that professionals are informed and respond quickly and effectively. Such integration links professionals in a collaborative model of care that can enhance the ability of individual service providers and maximize support of student-athlete wellness.”



#1 Clinical Licensure of Practitioners Providing Mental Health Care



#2 Procedures for Identification and Referral of Student-Athletes to Qualified Practitioners



#3 Standardized Mental Health Screening



#4 Health-Promoting Environments that Support Mental Well-Being and Resilience

**WHAT WE'RE
DOING**





CAMPUS COLLABORATORS

- Student Health and Counseling Services (SHACS)
- Director of wellness & prevention
- Director of athletics and recreation
- Athletic trainers available at all times
- Faculty Athletic Mentor (FAM) for each team
- **Student-athlete groups**
- **Student Athlete Mental Health Advisory Committee**



STUDENT-ATHLETE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAAC) & STUDENT ATHLETE MENTORS (SAMS)

- Student athlete leadership is essential in addressing mental health
- **SAAC**
 - "The mission of the NCAA Division III SAAC is to enhance the voice of the student-athlete to ensure the total student-athlete experience by promoting opportunity for all student-athletes; protecting student-athlete welfare; and fostering a positive student-athlete image"
- **SAMs**
 - **Believe that...** athletics can be a force for positive change on our campus and in the greater community. Athletics should be a safe and inclusive space for all. Team cultures can be adapted and improved.
 - **Commit to...** holding one another accountable. Advocating for our teammates and fellow student-athletes. Supporting all Grinnell College students.





Student health and counseling services (SHACS) licensed counselor available 1.5hrs/week in the training room



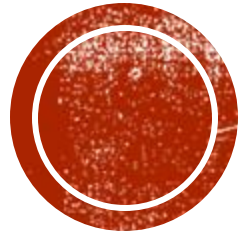
Meets with SAMS, teams, coaches to promote counseling for students and strengthen the relationship between the department and SHACS



Ran a psychology of injury session for student-athletes this fall and will be holding one for coaches in the spring, and other themed sessions in the future

ACCESSIBLE COUNSELING





S.W.O.T ANALYSIS

(STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS)



STRENGTHS

- Every year the culture becomes more accepting/open
 - Especially for men's teams, mental health is addressed much more
- Support and acceptance of Thomas has been huge
- Specific programming helps validate groups of athletes and educate their peers
 - Injury-specific talks the big first step, but food/overtraining talks are being planned
- Conversations have follow-through, ideas don't just end when the meetings do
 - Because many ideas are from representative student groups, admin is usually very receptive
- SAM program has been getting much stronger
 - Bigger mental presence when looking for resources



WEAKNESSES

- While some coaches have been very receptive, others are very resistant to the information
 - Interpersonal skills and approaches also vary drastically by coach
- Athletics culture promotes "mental toughness"
 - Lots of exclusionary language used in pep talks/coaching sessions to encourage mental toughness
- Student-athletes falling through the cracks
 - Team culture/stereotypes
 - Exclusivity, fall athletes have difficulty making friends outside team
- Lack of representation
 - No female-identified or nonwhite mental health staff in athletics room, only Thomas



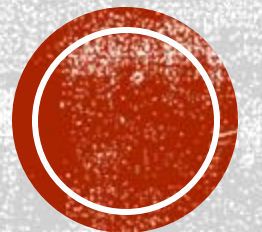
OPPORTUNITIES

- Implement optional team sessions to address mental health, athletic performance, nutrition and sleep
- Offer session on how to adjust from being in season to out of season including how to de-stress without relying on alcohol
- Include mental health considerations in work around team culture development.
- Identify and promote awareness of culturally-specific resources when available/appropriate
- Strengthen coach and staff training to provide a standardized skillset





WHAT ARE SOME OPPORTUNITIES YOU SEE ON YOUR CAMPUS?



THREATS

- Disconnect between what is being done in the department and the information student-athletes receive
 - Many things are being talked about and implemented, but most student athletes don't know about them
- Coaching/staff changes
 - No policy reinforcement of any initiatives, leaving it vulnerable to personnel changes
- Emotional labor, burnout
 - SAMs often take on more than they're supposed to out of a desire to help



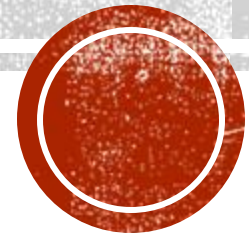
WHAT TO KNOW

- It is important to set realistic and specific short-term goals in order to see long term change
- If large student groups are on board, changes happen much more smoothly





THANK YOU!



NCAA Mental Health Best Practices:

https://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/HS_Mental-Health-Best-Practices_20160317.pdf