Cards on the Table: A Practicum Experience Aiming to Bridge the Gap Between Otterbein's Athletes and Mental Health Services

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### Site Information

**Objective:**
To help bridge the gap between Otterbein's athletic department and Counseling Center

**Location:**
Freeman Athletic Training Complex—Otterbein University

**Site Supervisor:**
Danielle Kilboy, MSAH, MS, ATC, LAT—Head Athletic Trainer

**Co-Supervisor:**
Dr. Kathy Ryan, PhD—Director, Clinical Psychologist

### Starting Goals

1. Determine the mental health needs of Otterbein athletes by conducting a survey which will target athletes and coaches.
2. Develop programming strategies to engage student athletes and increase coaches' knowledge on the importance of mental health and self-care.
3. Introduce Otterbein's Licensed psychologists to the athletic department to create a level of comfortability and familiarity between the counseling center and the athletic department.
4. Utilize a combination of advocacy strategies to engage student athletes such as storytelling, personalization, and social media.
5. Research and utilize best practices for enhancing mental health resources for the athletic population.
6. Combine Otterbein’s mental health professional’s expertise with the needs of its athletic population in order to bridge the gap and help break the stigma to receiving mental health assistance.

### Survey Results

**Have you ever utilized mental health services anywhere, including counseling, testing, and/or medication evaluation?**
- Yes (43)
- No (121)
- 76% said their visit(s) helpful

**Top reasons why counseling services have not been utilized:***
- “I have no need for it” (79)
- I have no time (21)
- I’m not sure what they will ask or how it will help (19)
- I don’t feel comfortable speaking with someone I don’t know (10)

**Please check the resources you would be interested in pursuing:**
- Nutritional Counseling (43%)
- Mental Health related performance enhancement group (26%)
- Mental Health Social Media Page (19%)
- Group Meetings (12%)

### Activities

- Develop and distribute survey to Coaches and Student Athletes
- Analyze results with Danielle and Dr. Ryan
- Create Calendar
- Create PowerPoints
- Create Brochure
- Social media pages and post ideas
- Email speakers
- Plan for Black Student Athlete Union (BSAU)
- Present all information to Coaches and Student Athletes

### Goals Achieved

1. Determine the mental health needs of Otterbein athletes by conducting a survey which will target athletes and coaches.
2. Introduce Otterbein’s Licensed psychologists to the athletic department to create a level of comfortability and familiarity between the counseling center and the athletic department.
3. Utilize a combination of advocacy strategies to engage student athletes such as storytelling, personalization, and social media.
4. Develop educational materials to familiarize athletes with mental health services and how each are utilized.
5. Research and utilize best practices for enhancing mental health resources for the athletic population.
6. Combine mental health professionals’ expertise with the needs of Otterbein’s athletic population in order to help break the stigma to receiving mental health assistance.