

THE OPTIMAL ATHLETE HEALTH COURSE

A WELLNESS GUIDE FOR GYMNASTS,
COACHES AND PARENTS



USA GYMNASTICS®

WEBINARS



FOCUS OF THE COURSE

Nutrition and Healthy Body Image

- Shannon Bowles Doleac
- Christina Crowder

Healthy Training and Injury Prevention

- Dr. Bree Simmons

Mental Skills and Healthy Minds

- Dr. Alison Arnold

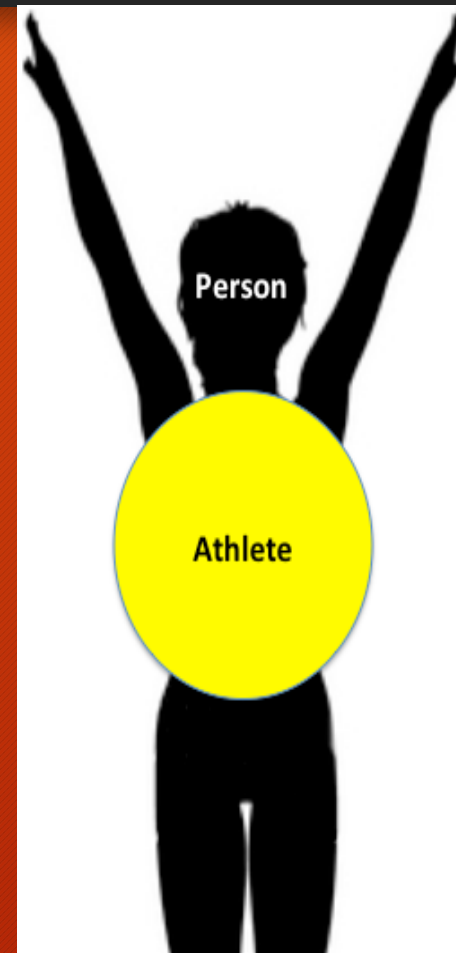
Interpersonal Skills and Healthy Communication

- Traci Sommer Stanard



The problem with focusing only on the athlete...

- If the primary focus is athletic accomplishment without implementing the necessary support to maintain the individual's health, the individual will likely become overwhelmed. This can lead to malnourishment, overtraining, injury and poor self-worth.



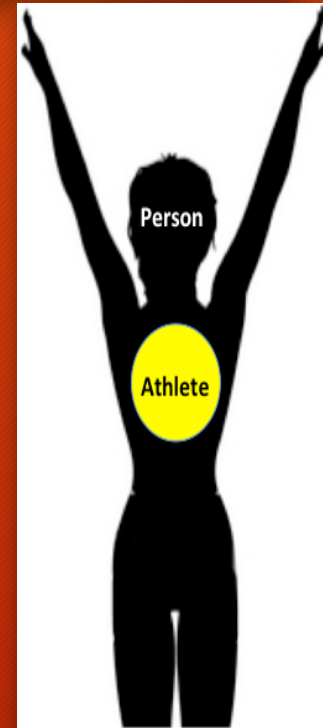
Healthy Individual = Healthy and Strong Athlete

Nutrition and Healthy Body Image

Healthy Training and Injury Prevention

Mental Skills and Healthy Minds

Interpersonal Skills and Healthy
Communication



Nutrition & Healthy Body Image

Shannon Doleac and Christina Crowder

Why is Nutrition Important for an Athlete?

- Nutrient-rich foods NOURISH the body, mind and spirit of an athlete.
- A focus on real, whole foods (from the earth) provide such nutrients, as well as the medium to encourage healthful choices.
- Food can taste good AND support the demands of an athlete.

What if you could have...

Health benefits:

- Increased energy
- Better sleep
- Better focus
- Healthy body composition
- Better nutrient absorption
- Improved immunity

Performance Benefits:

- Decreased inflammation
- Faster recovery
- Improved mobility
- Strength gains
- Decreased soreness

YOU CAN!

Foods can make a significant difference in health and performance.

What Makes up Our Food?

Protein: An essential nutrient

- Building, maintaining and repairing tissues
- Immune health
- Enzyme and hormone function

Fat: An essential nutrient

- Slow burning energy
- Cell structure
- Absorption of vitamins and minerals
- Hormone function
- Organ protection and temperature regulation
- Satiety

Carbohydrate: (sugars, starch, fiber)

- Important for fueling muscles and organs (energy)

Create A Winning Plate

- **STEP 1:** Pick your protein.
 - ~ 1 palm size portion.
- **STEP 2:** Fill your plate with vegetables.
 - Color and variety!
- **STEP 3:** Top with natural fat.
 - ~ 1 thumb size for oil/butter.
 - ~ 1 cupped hand for solid foods.
- **STEP 4:** Add a source of complex carbohydrate
- **STEP 5:** Super foods

Body Image

- Historical progression of gymnastics bodies and demands of the sport
- Physical performance vs Aesthetics
- Judge subjectivity and body shape/size

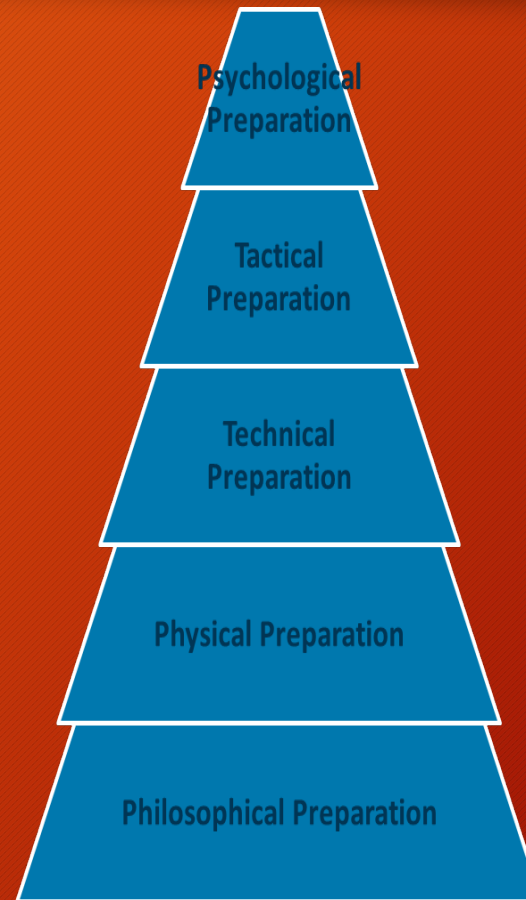
Healthy Training

- Dr. Bree Simmons

Healthy Training

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- Injury Prevention
- What is an injury?
 - Acute
 - Chronic/overuse



Healthy Training: Overtraining Prevention

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- Periodization
 - Microcycles
 - Mesocycles
 - Macrocycles
- Load Monitoring

MENTAL SKILLS
AND HEALTHY MINDS



MENTAL SKILLS AND HEALTHY MINDS

The Importance of Mental Skills Training.
What can training the mind do for your
athletes?

- Increase confidence
- Teach emotional control
- Discipline thinking
- Increase coping skills
- Facilitate interpersonal relationships/communication
- Cultivate life skills
- Embed positive neural pathways and prune negative pathways

Neuroplasticity:



Pathways are always embedding or pruning. Use mental tools to embed the ones you want and prune the ones you don't!

MENTAL SKILLS AND HEALTHY MINDS

Types of mental skills training for your athletes

Fixed vs. Growth Mindset

Fixed Mindset: In a **fixed mindset**, people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply **fixed** traits. They spend their time documenting their intelligence or talent instead of developing them. They also believe that talent alone creates success—without effort. They're wrong.

Growth Mindset: In a **growth mindset**, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment. Virtually all great people have had these qualities.

MENTAL SKILLS AND HEALTHY MINDS

Types of mental skills training for your athletes

Process/purpose of the sports journey

Remember the big picture. Here are some possible purpose driven reasons.

1. Increase self-esteem in athletes.
2. Teach resilience and pushing through obstacles.
3. Leadership development
4. Gracious winning and losing.

Why do YOU coach?

MENTAL SKILLS AND HEALTHY MINDS

The “Deeper” issues

Transition from sport

Interventions:

- Help them recognize transferable skills.
- Help them see their value as a person.
- Help them explore outside interests.
- Help normalize grief and confusion.
- Continue to give them a role in the gym if it appears helpful.

MENTAL SKILLS AND HEALTHY MINDS

Warning signs for when to seek outside help

Eating Disorders

- Intense perfectionism, or self criticism.
- Intense fear of weight gain, obsession with weight and persistent behavior to prevent weight gain.
- Self-esteem overly related to body image.
- Inability to appreciate the severity of the situation.
- **Binge-Eating/Purging Type** involves binge eating and/or purging behaviors during the last three months.
- **Restricting Type** does not involve binge eating or purging.
- Withdrawal from friends or teammates.
- Changes in mood.

**Never forget:
Train the mind just as you train the
body.**

Day in, day out.

**It will pay off not just in terms of who
they are as athletes, but who they are
as people.**

And that's what's most important!

Interpersonal Relationships and Communication in Sport

Traci Sommer Stanard

Interpersonal Relationships

Social Support Systems

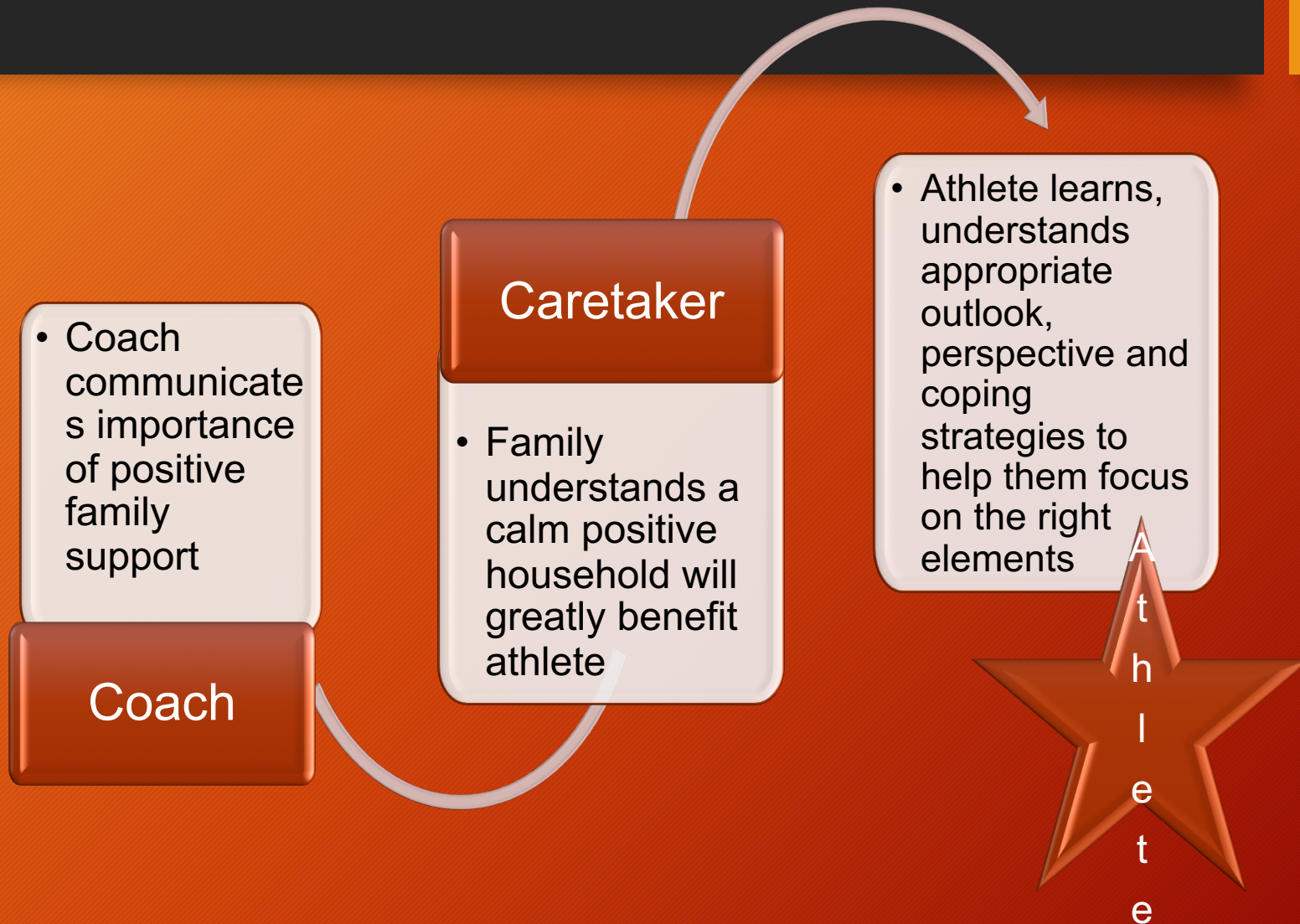
Primary social support systems in sport

- Family/caretaker
- Coach
- Teammates/friends

“Aim to build a person, while training an athlete.”

Interpersonal Relationships

Coach Parent Roles and communication



Fostering a healthy training environment

Coach created gym support systems

T OGETHER

Generate a feeling of working together daily; mentally physically and morally

E VERYONE

Create a system for everyone to feel part of the group

A CHIEVES

Have athletes create and commit to group goals they want to achieve

M ORE

Reward specific tasks to encourage setting new team group commitments

“Make sure that team members know they are working with you, not for you.”

– John Wooden

Coach-athlete communication S.T.O.P. and visualize

S_{top}

Take a breath

Observe the skill/correction

Proceed with simple & clear instruction



Recognizing abuse and seeking help



“Speak up and speak out for safety.”

Key Points

- The tools from this course serve BOTH athletic development and personal development
- Remember that each athlete is a unique individual
- Keep the big picture in mind
- Enjoyment and gratitude are important!

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