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Increasing Awareness amongst Injured Student-Athletes

Daniel Lomeli

A Capstone Project for the Bachelor of Arts in Human Development and Family Studies

### **Introduction**

Injured college athletes often suffer from mental health and no one bats an eye. Also, many injured college athletes may lack knowledge of resources available to them. According to the National Athletic Trainers' Association (2020), ninety percent of college athletes will have a sports-related injury some time in their career. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2018) claims that well being includes physical health, emotional health, psychological health, social fulfillment, and life satisfaction. Therefore, to address the lack of understanding, I created a one-day lesson for college student athletes from the Men's Soccer team at California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB), providing them guidance, information, and resources to overcome those challenges found from injuries.

### **Needs Statement**

The NCAA states that there are around half a million college student athletes in America, and according to the National Athletic Trainers' Association (2020) ninety percent of them will have a sports related injury some time in their career. Student-athletes compared to non-athletes are less likely to utilize resources and professional assistance (Moulton, Molstad, & Turner 1997). Due to fear of seeming weak, losing training time, judgement from peers or coaches and the appearance of needing any psychological assistance, many athletes are less likely to seek help (Brooks & Bull, 1999). Student Athletes seem to worsen their academic performance as well as their athletic performance once they come back from an injury. Also, poor mental health has been correlated with engaging in risky behaviors including suicide, depression, and many other risk factors (Anchuri, Davoren, Shanahan, Torres, Wilcox, 2020). Accepting that an injury is always possible is key for the health of a team and an individual.

Apart from student athletes suffering just from an injury, they also seem to suffer from social interaction. Since most of the time injured student athletes seem to be in the training room, trying to rehabilitate, they tend to not interact with their teammates, classmates, and even peers. This can lead to sadness, loneliness, and even depression (Wason, Sonali, 2018). Some coaches mandate the injured student athletes to attend practice and after practice do their rehabilitation exercises. Due to this injured student athletes seem to have less time to study for a course, socialize with friends, sleep, and in some instances even eat (Wason, Sonali, 2018).

Reporting injuries seems to be a huge factor in how a student-athlete performs and behaves. There are four types of injury groups: Minor injuries(a person functions), Moderate injury(experience an injury), Serious injury(can't function), Serious injury(ignoring) (Druckman, Rothschild, 2018). Student-athletes injuries are categorized in four groups; those who report, those who don't report and believe it'll go away, those who believe pain is part of the sport, and those who don't want to miss any time (Druckman, Rothschild, 2018). As levels of pain increase, the level of a student-athlete performance decreases. In addition, coaches, parents, and teammates determine a decision on whether to report or not. This is because at a young age they were influenced to work hard, play their sport, etc.. (Druckman, Rothschild, 2018). Injuries seem to be a part of the sport, at the same time identity plays a role in whether a student-athlete reports an injury.

It is not the NCAA's responsibility to educate their athletes when it comes to them reaching out for resources regarding mental health. Yet, every individual has the right to educate themselves about the resources that are viable for them. Although we have some traits that can help with our mental health and well being, we also need to understand that student-athletes have

resources. A school counselor or a team psychologist (for most schools) is always available. Coaches, trainers, professors, teammates, and peers are all viable options for help.

Student athletes' mental health is affected by stress and can be relieved with support from programs. Support from coaches, teammates, and higher ranked officials can help an injured student athlete rough time. Given that the stressors and mental health of injured student athletes is an area of concern about my topic, I have created a Student Athlete Wellness Workshop for the California State University, Monterey Bay Men's soccer team (injured or not). This program will be a one day interactive lesson on the importance that injuries play on the health of student-athletes. The program's goal is to ensure the mental health of injured student athletes, by informing them about resources available to them, the behaviors that can be found, as well as informing them why they may behave a certain way.

### **Theory and Development Application**

Erikson's identity theory can be applied to my project. The theory focuses on the importance of the adolescent finding their own self through independence, as they begin to age their identity begins to be found. Identity development is a "continuous process" throughout all of adulthood (Erikson, 1968, as cited in Stets & Burke, P, 2000). Ego identity is found to be confused, scared, and insecure in how they fit in society. As a student-athlete seems to come across an injury, their ego identity takes a toll. During their adolescent years, they seek ways to establish their sense of self; yet an injury can affect negatively their ego identity. According to Erikson, he believes that during this time period adolescents become more independent, look into the future in terms of, career, relationship, and other things. In the time that a student-athlete is injured, his social group, friends, teammates, coaches, parents, and professors really play a role

in forming and shaping his identity and come-back to the sport. During a college athlete's time in school many student-athletes can become unstable and fragmented, they lose their beliefs, lifestyle, and understanding (Robinson, Demetre, Litman, 2017). Therefore, the social group that the injured student-athlete is with is important for the rehabilitation and mental process of a sports come-back. Aside from this, if an injured student-athlete cannot figure out who they are and want to be, they begin circulation role confusion. Role confusion is an individual not knowing who they are or what they like. As the trainers are helping the injured student-athlete raise their fitness, the injured student-athlete will experience psychosocial moratorium. According to Erikson's theory, Psychosocial moratorium is a way in which an individual tries different roles and different groups in order to finally stick to an identity in which they feel comfortable.

Identity provides a deep sense of ideological commitment and allows the individual to know his or her place in the world (Hoare, Windle, Woods, Huisman, 2002). It provides one with a sense of well-being, a sense of being at home in one's body, a sense of direction in one's life, and a sense of mattering to those who count (Erikson, 1968, as cited in Stets, J., & Burke, P, 2000). Since injured student-athletes may experience role confusion when experiencing an injury, it may be useful for student-athletes to know about the effects that an injury provides to one's life. Many student-athletes are uneducated about the effects found in injuries, leading them to believe that they are unable to control their life. Therefore, I am creating a workshop to educate and better prepare student-athletes in case they ever come across an injury.

### **Consideration of Diversity**

My project was conducted via 'Zoom'. My audience will be the California State University, Monterey Bay Men's soccer team. My participants do differ from the overall population found in the University as they are only men. According to Enrollment Facts (EFF; 2020), CSU Monterey Bay students are 4% African American, 9% Asian American, 45% Latino, 29% White, and 23% other. There's also a 37% men to 63% women ratio on campus (EFF; 2020). According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), 90% of student-athletes will suffer an injury throughout their career. In a study involving 43 student-athletes in The University of Michigan, it was found that 63% of student-athletes reported that emotional or mental health issues affected their athletics performance in the last 4 weeks. (Athletes Connected research). According to the NCAA, if a coach sees that a student-athlete is in need of assistance for depression or mood disorder he should do a referral protocol. The referral protocol is best understood as R.E.F.E.R.. Refer is an acronym for, Recognizing the situation, Extend your knowledge of what's going on, Facilitate a conversation, Evaluate the experience, and Revise and Revisit. The student-athletes who did not receive early intervention, tells me that the student-athletes who participated in my workshop gained crucial information about the services available to them. As a result, the group of student-athletes that were not present during my workshop are less educated regarding the matter. Aside from workshops, culture, beliefs, and other factors play a role in whether a student-athlete decides to get help.

I designed the project, knowing that I might have a culturally diverse group of participants, given the Universities demographics. The ethnic composition of student-athletes attending the workshop will not reflect California State University, Monterey Bay. The Men's soccer team is 53% Hispanic or Latino, 37% White, 5% Black, and 5% Asian. My participants reflected the diversity characteristics. I will be working to impart positive views of reaching out for help when student-athletes are injured, during my workshop.

### **Learning Outcomes**

I provided one, 50-minute workshop with California State University, Monterey Bay Men's soccer team. Student-athletes can have a smoother journey whenever they experience injuries if they are provided with enough information about the resources that are available to them.

By the end of the workshop participants will be able to do the following:

1. List the interventions or resources that they may find suited for someone struggling with mental health.
2. List examples of how injuries affect the daily life of a student-athlete.
3. Identify behaviors determining someone going through a mental health struggle/battle.



### **Method**

My capstone workshop took place on April 15th, via Zoom. Below is the information on the participants, procedures, and materials that were used.

### **Participants**

A total of 22 student-athletes from the California State University of Monterey Bay Men's soccer team attended my workshop. Recruitment was not hard at all, as I was part of the soccer team. I spoke to the coach, Graeme Jaap. I also reached out to some players to make sure they clear the schedule for my workshop. My age group ranges from 17-24 year olds. The group was culturally diverse: Eleven were hispanic or Latino, Eight were White, One was Asian, and One was Black. All student-athletes who attended my workshop spoke and read proficient English.

### **Procedures and Materials**

First, I introduced myself to the soccer team and thanked them for taking their time to attend. Then, I had each athlete fill out a pre survey which was accessed through my powerpoint presentation. The Pre-Survey focused on understanding each participants' race, focused on the Learning outcomes, as well as tested their knowledge regarding the topic of this presentation. See appendix A. Once all members completed the survey I gave the audience a recap of all the subjects that we're covering. I then began the presentation by giving an example of how injuries

affected a past student-athlete that was on the soccer team. When the example that I provided to them ended, I asked them questions referring to the learning outcomes in order to see where they stand while presenting. The introduction, presurvey, example, and questions asked took around 15 minutes.

I then went on to present the powerpoint presentation that focused on my three learning outcomes. See appendix C . I began the presentation by stating the effects that injuries cause on student-athletes. Next, I began with the topic of reporting injuries and why student-athletes don't and do report their injuries, as well as the type of injuries that are found. Afterwards, I gave them understanding of the statistics found of student-athletes in different programs showing the lack of knowledge and help regarding this topic. In the same slide I also showed them a Ted Talk that talked about examples, statistics of other schools, and ways to reach out for help. See appendix C. The powerpoint presentation took a total of 27 minutes to complete.

Lastly, I concluded my workshop with a slide regarding the resources that are found on campus, off campus, as well as online. I then gave a post assessment survey to the student-athletes that addressed the learning outcomes. See appendix B made sure that every question covered all of my learning outcomes in order to make sure the learning outcome could be met. When the participants completed the survey I ended the presentation with a few questions that they asked. The post assessment survey and resources mentioned took a total of six minutes to complete. The total time of my workshop was approximately 50 minutes.

## **Results**

Learning outcome 1 was that participants would be able to list interventions or resources they may find suited for someone struggling with mental health. I believe this learning outcome was fully met. Before the presentation began I made sure that they completed a pre-survey to make sure where their knowledge regarding resources and interventions stands. The most common answers were “talk to someone on campus”. Most of the participants were able to answer with, “coaches”. A list of responses can be found in Appendix A, Question #2. In the powerpoint presentation, I focused on describing the importance of reporting injuries, effects of injuries, and resources available to student-athletes. The results of this survey provides further evidence that my learning outcome was met. In the post survey assessment I asked the same question. This was done in order for me to compare both answers and determine whether or not my learning outcome was met. The average amount of responses were a little over 2. Results can be found in appendix B, Question #2.

Learning outcome 2 was listing examples of how injuries affect the daily life of a student-athlete. The pre survey indicates the answers were all over the place, we saw “lots of rehab”, “Miss trainings”, “Feeling Excluded”. The pre survey indicated that for the most part, the participants knew how injuries can affect them. See Appendix A, Question #3. During the Powerpoint, I introduced and explained some emotional thoughts as well as live scenarios regarding the learning outcome. After the presentation, each participant filled out the post survey. See appendix B, Question #2 The post survey question happened to be the same as the pre survey. This was done in order to collect data regarding if the learning outcome was met. Most of the answers revolved around mental health, while others revolved around missing playing and

practice time. I believe that this learning outcome was met, as most participants were able to provide examples on how injuries can affect the daily life of a student-athlete.

Learning outcome 3 was to identify behaviors of someone going through a mental health struggle/battle. The pre survey indicates that most participants were able to identify some behaviors, “depression” and “sad”, were amongst the most popular. See appendix A, Question #4. After the pre survey, I conducted my presentation and mentioned the behaviors that are brought on to a student-athlete after suffering an injury. In the post survey, the same question was asked. The results were very similar to the behaviors that I mentioned on the powerpoint. On average, the responses were close to 2 answers from the participants. See appendix B, Question #3. I believe this learning outcome was fully met because all of the participants were able to list a behavior regarding injuries on student-athletes.

### **Discussion**

The focus of this project was to increase awareness of the mental struggles caused to student-athletes by injuries. When student-athletes experience injuries, they often think of injuries as a minimal problem and not a long-term problem. This workshop gives student-athletes an understanding of the mental effects caused by injuries. I believe this workshop was successful. The student-athletes as well as the coach were engaged in the information shared. All of my learning outcomes were met. However, for some of the responses that I received, I only received one answer instead of two. The participants were all able to answer the questions

correctly, even if they didn't give multiple answers. The results were consistent with the information that I provided.

In terms of diversity, I think my project was inclusive for student-athletes who have and will experience an injury. I believed that the Monterey Bay Men's soccer team student-athletes would have more knowledge about the problems faced and help needed when battling an injury. Also, when discussing the problems faced and help needed some cultures may have a stigma on reaching out for help.

My capstone project had a few limitations. A limitation that I believe that I had was that this was a 1 time 50 minute workshop, as well as the workshop being online. I believe that having another workshop and splitting the times of the presentation in half would have been a lot better. I believe that I could have gone through more information if I had more time. Lastly, I would love to advertise my workshop as it can be applied to all sports. I'd like to receive various results from every sport at California State University, Monterey Bay. Overall, this project expanded my knowledge as well as my participants' knowledge of behaviors, resources, and identifying mental struggles caused by injuries.

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Appendix A

Question #1

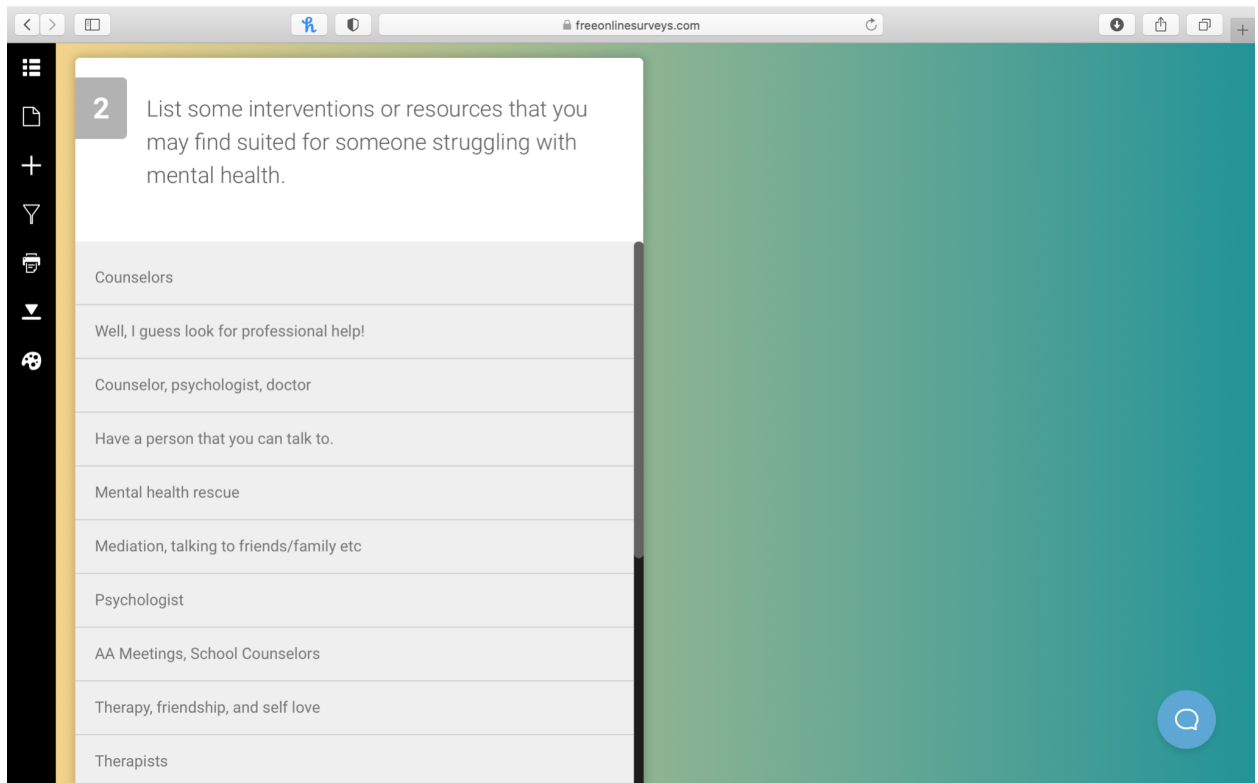
The image shows a screenshot of a web browser displaying a survey question. The browser's address bar shows 'freeonlinesurveys.com'. The question is '1 What is your Race?'. Below the question is a list of race options: Hispanic, Latino, White, Hispanic, Mexican, White, Latino, Caucasian, White, African-American, and White. A vertical scrollbar is visible on the right side of the list. The background of the survey interface is a teal color. A blue speech bubble icon is located in the bottom right corner of the survey area.

Question	Options
1 What is your Race?	Hispanic, Latino, White, Hispanic, Mexican, White, Latino, Caucasian, White, African-American, White



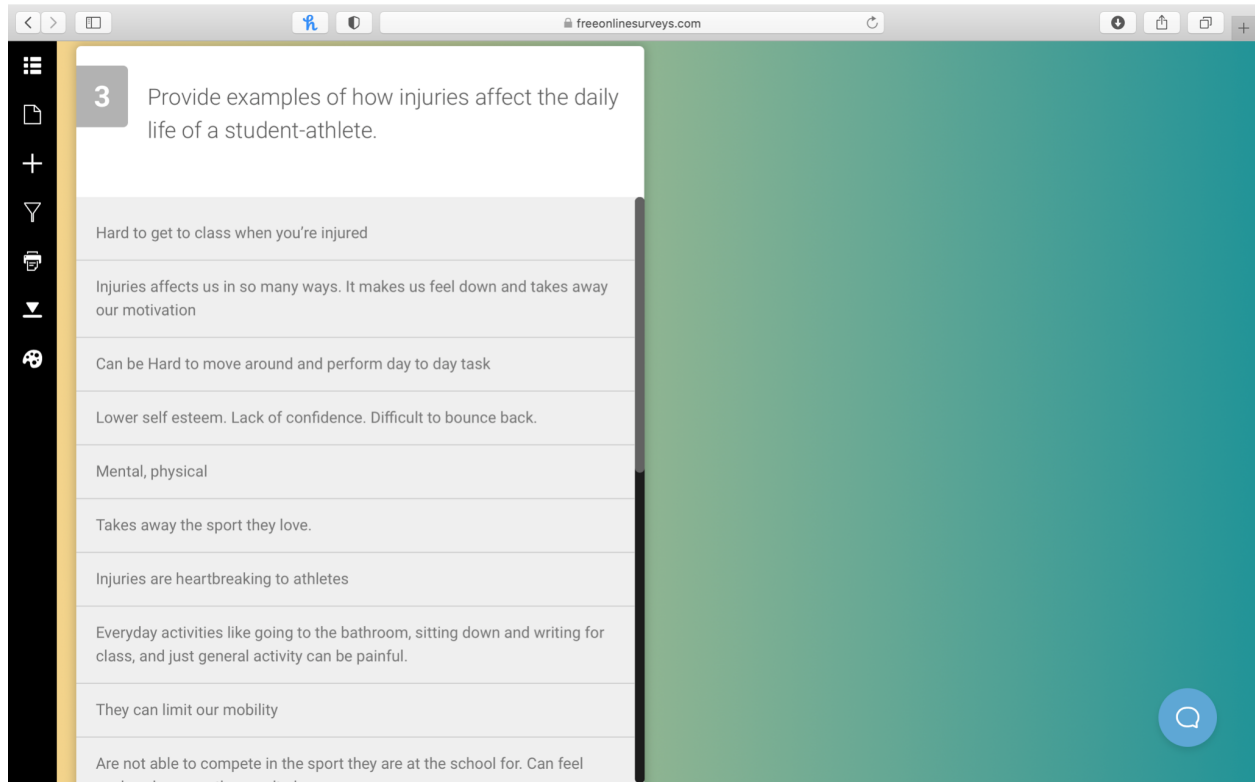
Appendix A

Question #2



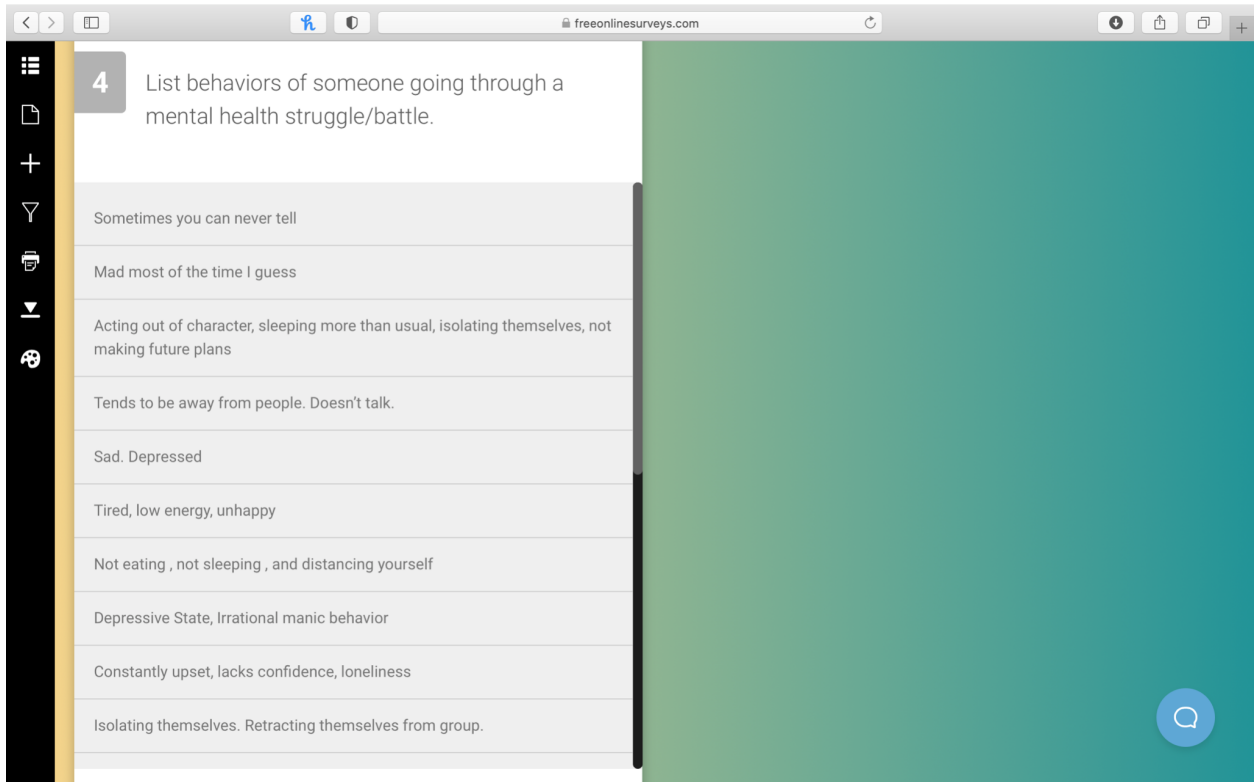
Appendix A

Question #3



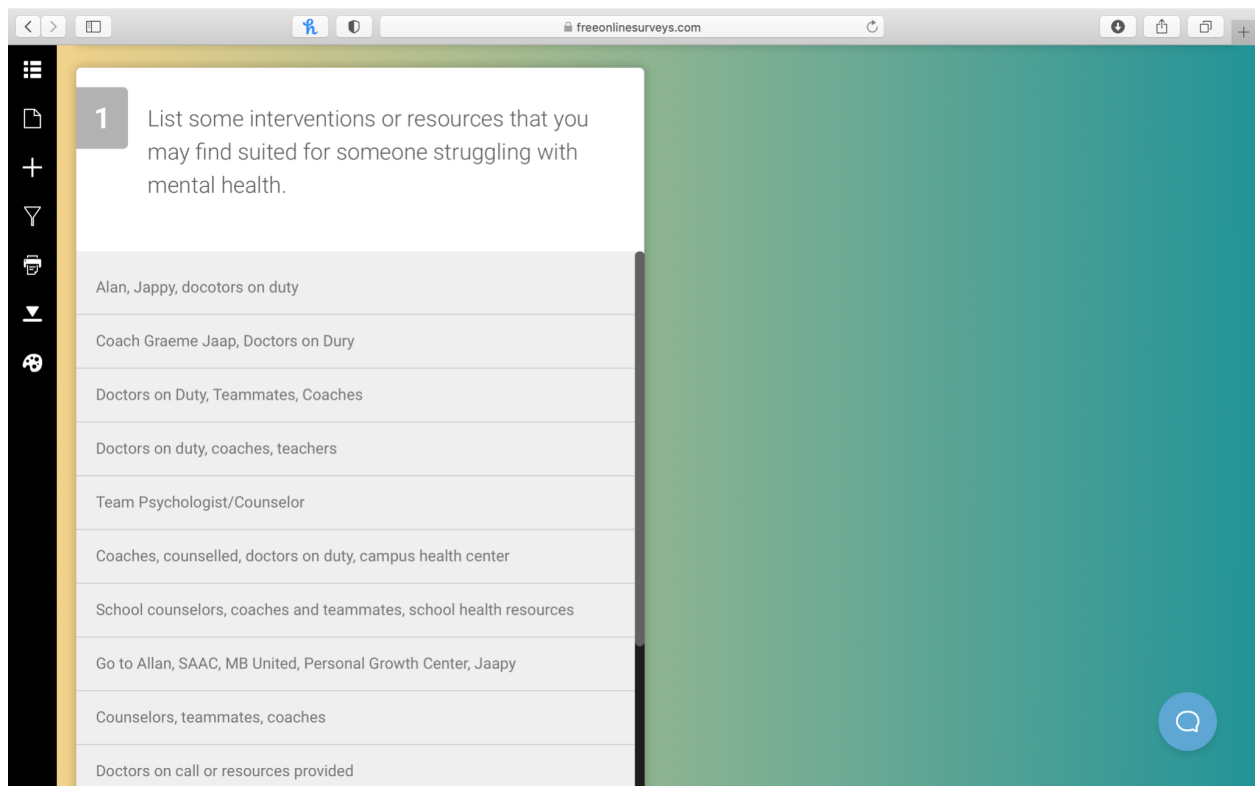
Appendix A

Question #4



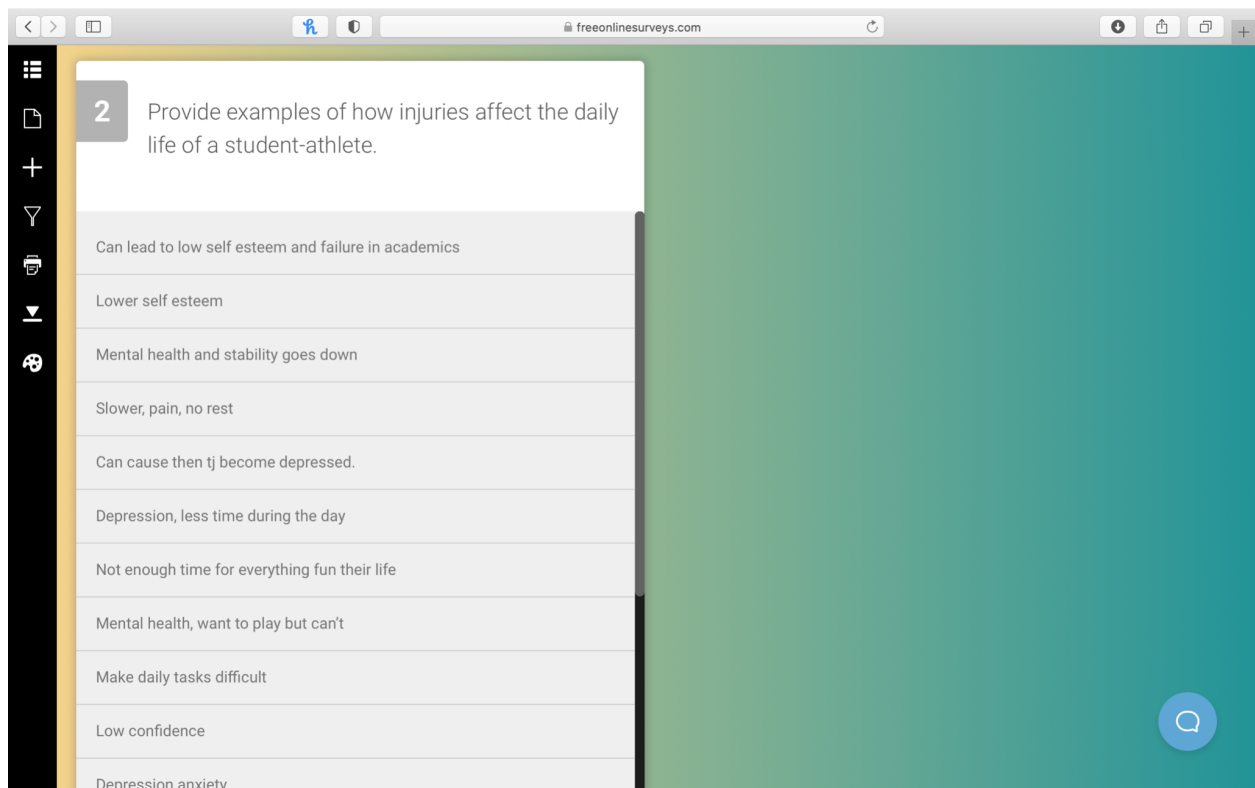
Appendix B

Question #1



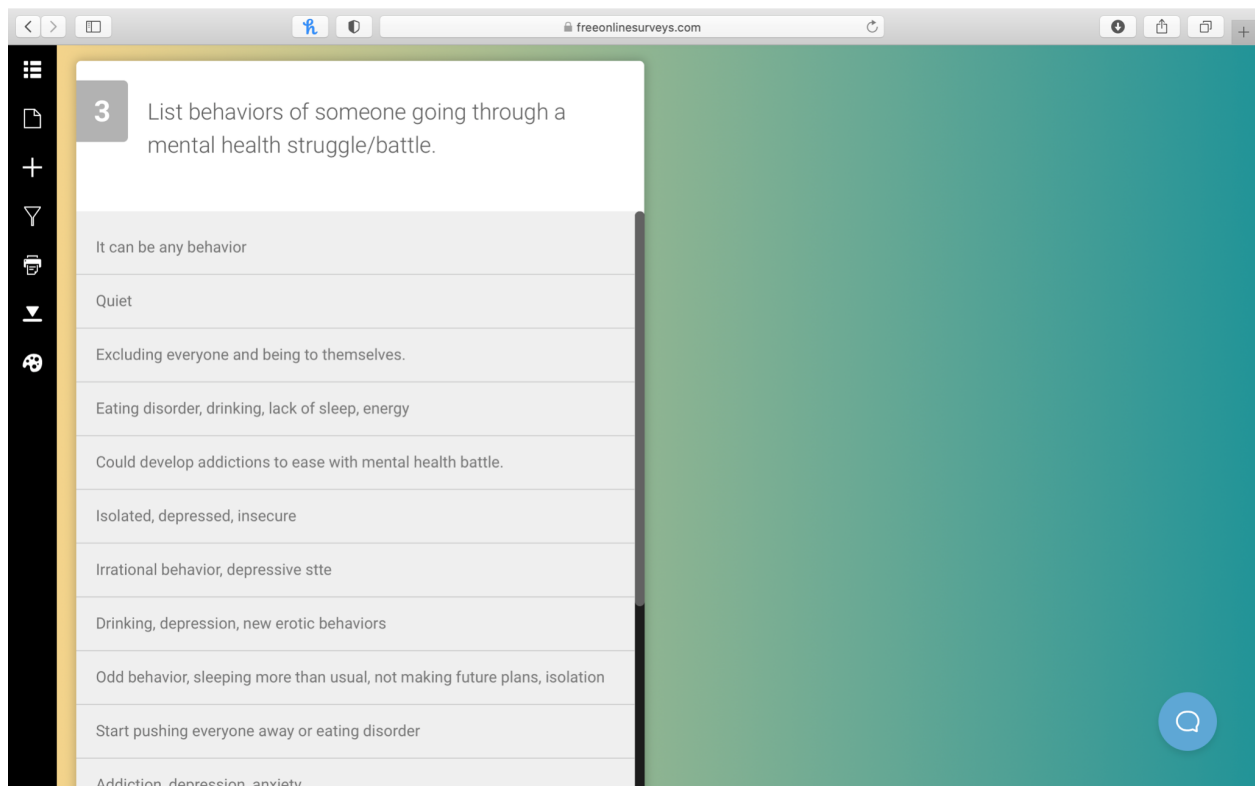
Appendix B

Question #2



Appendix B

Question #3

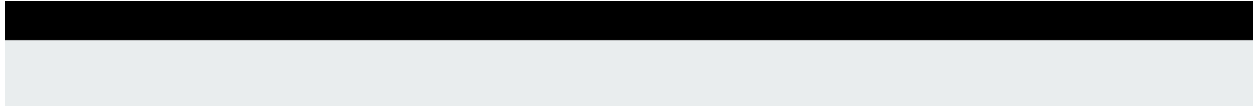


Appendix C



# **Increasing Awareness amongst injured Student-Athletes**

Daniel Lomeli



  
**About me**

My name is Daniel Lomeli

I'm a senior at CSUMB with a major in Human Development

I was a student-athlete at CSUMB

Currently an assistant coach for El Camino Real FC

Future Superintendent in a youth detention center





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## Today's Agenda

Why this topic?

Pre Survey

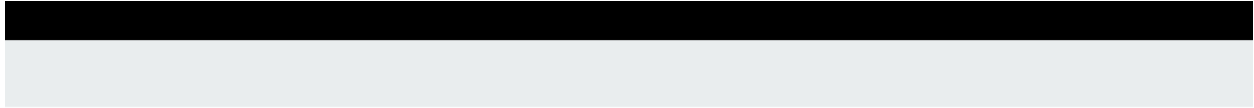
Share each other's responses in a group

Powerpoint presentation

Post Survey

Questions





## Why this topic?

Confident

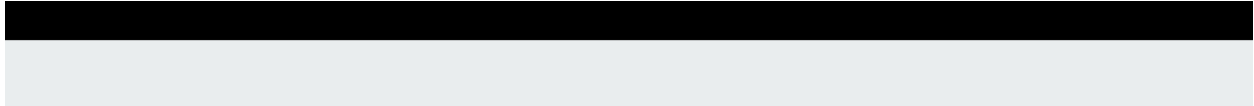
Doubt

Drinking

Self-esteem

Who to talk to?





## Pre Survey

Click below for Pre Survey Link

<https://freeonlinesurveys.com/s/uINnbGpX>



## Activity

Identify some negative effects from injuries on student-athletes.

Why don't student-athletes report injuries?

Mention some resources available to student-athletes.



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## Effects that injuries cause on student-athletes

Many student-athletes don't report and worsen their injuries.

Less time to socialize, eat, do homework, sleep, and go to class.

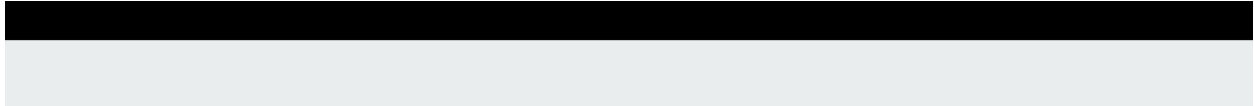
Poor mental health can lead to risky behaviors, disorders, etc...

Creates role confusion/ losing sense of identity.



*"I expect you all to be independent, innovative, critical thinkers who will do exactly as I say!"*

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**Reporting injuries**

- Minor injuries
- Moderate injury
- Serious injury
- Serious injury



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## Knowledge is Key

90% of student-athletes will experience some sort of injury

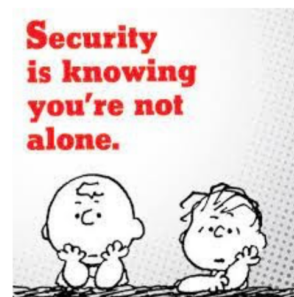
71% overwhelming anxiety

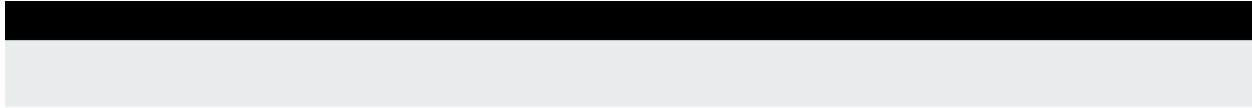
47% depressed

28% seek out professional help

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sdk7pLpblls>

(Start at 18:15)





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## Resources

School counselor/Team Psychologist

Coaches, trainers, professors, teammates, and peers are all viable options for help

R.E.F.E.R/Coach Jaap is a MB United member

Student Athlete Advisory Committee(S.A.A.C)

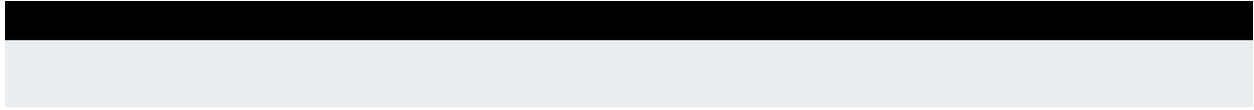
Personal Growth and Counseling Center

Campus Health Center

Doctor's on Duty







  
**Any Questions?**















