

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT IN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC TRAINING

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe the prevalence and sources of interpersonal conflict (IC) as well as the challenges to managing IC, strategies for managing IC, and the confidence of athletic trainers in managing IC in high school athletic training. The Athletic Trainer Interpersonal Conflict Inventory was sent to 211 athletic trainers with a 36.5% return rate. Average age of the respondents was 39 years (sd = 10). Gender consisted of 51.9% males and 48.1% females with a mean of 14 years (sd = 8) of experience.

Prevalence of IC was reported by 96.1% of the respondents with nearly 25% of the respondents reporting to be “slightly confident” to “completely unconfident” in managing IC. Common causes of IC were workload, direct contact with others, disrespect for the role of an athletic trainer, and interference from athletes and coaches. Common challenges to managing IC were a lack of time, a lack of resources, lack of collaboration, the emotions of others and themselves, and their impatience. Common strategies to managing IC were utilizing organizational resources, using policies and procedures, collaboration, compromise, open communication, and attentive listening.

The results of this study begin to describe the nature of interpersonal conflict within high school athletic training. However, more research is needed to gain a better understanding of interpersonal conflict in athletic training.