

OutAthlete

A queer athlete mental health community



About OutAthlete



OutAthlete is an 8-week group aimed at reducing suicide risk and mental health challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ student-athletes (age 14+)*. The group centers on community building and psychoeducation and focuses on factors unique to the mental well-being of LGBTQIA+ student-athletes.

*There will be two separate groups: one for high school students, ages 14-18 and another for young adults, ages 18-24.

Problems

Understanding what creates vulnerability to the well-being of LGBTQIA athletes.

Did you know that sports settings are where many LGBTQIA+ youth experience the most discrimination?

Or that the mental and physical health complications associated with discrimination increases drastically for queer athletes?

How about that athletes don't access mental health care as much as their peers because of the stigma of not having "mental toughness"?

Solutions

How does OutAthlete address these vulnerabilities?



Use of an optimization model specific to athletes.

Addresses the fact that athletes underutilize mental health services due to stigma (Cethea et al. 2018).

LGBTQIA+ specific sports group .

Addresses the increased risk that discrimination due to participation in sport setting causes.

Optimization Model



The focus is on a **non-pathologizing, strength-based perspective.**

Views mental health skills and behaviors as being on a **continuum** from "crisis, struggling, surviving, to thriving."

The continuum is ideal for working with groups as it allows interventions to benefit the majority of group members because the interventions don't target only members who would qualify for a mental health diagnosis.

Decreases the stigma of mental health services many athletes fear because it **normalizes using mental health interventions** to move toward "thriving," as there is no assumption that athletes utilizing the group are at a level of "crisis."



LGBTQIA+ Specific Sports Group

OutAthlete uses the shared identity of being an athlete to engage LGBTQIA youth with unique vulnerabilities of suicidality due to their discrimination and ostracization.

OUTCOMES

Participation in an LGBTQIA-specific sports group was associated with the following:

- Increased sense of belonging
- Increased sense of connection
- Feeling the group provided safety
- Decreased minority stress

OutAthlete Objectives

Reduce the unique vulnerability of depression, suicide, and self-harm LGBTQ athletes face due to discrimination by:

Objective 1

Decreasing LGBTQ athletes' sense of isolation by creating a community of individuals with similar experiences allows for meaningful connections to be built.

Objective 2

Increasing emotional intelligence through psychoeducation and experiential activities.

Objective 3

Serving as a resource hub for group members needing additional referrals to LGBTQIA+ affirming mental health therapists, physical therapists, dietitians, etc.

Meet the Facilitators



Hannah Frazee, B.S.

MSW Intern & Lead
Facilitator



Rafaella Smith-Fiallo, LCSW

Healing Exchange Director, Intern
Supervisor

About Healing Exchange

Healing Exchange is a bi-state, education and mental health private practice. Our specialty areas include relationships, sexuality, and trauma and we are committed to providing sex-positive, trauma-informed, pleasure-centered, and inclusive education, therapy, and professional training.

Healing Exchange was proudly created on the principle of destigmatizing mental and sexual health while understanding that it requires open, non-bias, sex-positive, pro-mental health communication to do so. Hence the tagline, “Where dialogue leads to healing and discovery”.



Ways to Support & Spread the Word



[Click here to go to our website and download/print a shareable flyer.](#)

Share it with:

- Your own kids, clients, and students who are queer high school or undergraduate athletes, or young adults in the community with this experience.

Where to share it:

- In your local Facebook groups, on community bulletin boards, forward in an email, tell a friend to tell a friend!

Scan the QR code for the interest list.

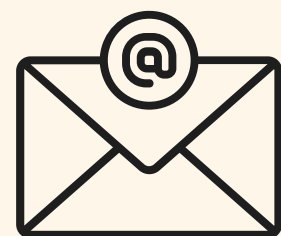


<https://tinyurl.com/OutAthlete>

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Reach out with questions and outreach suggestions/leads:



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<https://www.healingxchg.com/outathlete>