

The background is a dark blue field filled with various abstract shapes and patterns. On the left, there's a large purple shape with a white dashed pattern. To its right is a large green shape with a white dotted pattern. Further right is a large yellow shape with a white dotted pattern. On the far right, there's a large green shape with a white wavy line pattern. The background also features several small, scattered yellow wavy lines and a grid of small white plus signs in the lower right quadrant.

Athletic Identity

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Henry Ford Health

Overview



What is AI?



AI Development



Benefits of AI



Risks of
Overidentification



Healthy AI
Balance

What is Athletic Identity?

- “Degree to which an individual identifies with the athlete role” (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993)
- **Self-Schema**: Cognitive structure for how an individual perceives themselves, provides a framework for interpreting information
- **Social Role**: Can inspire behavior consistent with the individual’s perception of an athlete

Factors Influencing AI Development & Maintenance



Time spent participating in athletics



Team culture



Performance



Athletic appearance



Athlete lifestyle (e.g., travel, financial incentives)



Recognition from others

Benefits of Strong Athletic Identity

- Emotional connection to sport
- Involvement in physical activity
- Improved performance
- Commitment to training
- Orientation toward goals
- Higher levels of enjoyment of sport



Potential Risks of High AI: Overconformity

- Overconformity to sport ethic (Hughes & Coakley, 1991)
 - Sacrificing for the game
 - Striving for distinction
 - Accepting risks & playing through pain
 - Refusing to accept limits



Performance enhancing substance use

Disordered eating

Overtraining

Playing while injured

Additional Risks of High AI

Identity
foreclosure

Less likely to
seek help

Higher tendency
for gender role
conflicts

Self-worth
associated with
performance

Struggles coping
with injury

Difficulty
transitioning out
of sport

Creating a Healthy Balance

- Allow for child-led sport participation
- Encourage identity exploration outside of athletics
- Focus discussions on effort and improvement (vs. performance)
- Talk with your child about what they value about sports
 - Being active? Competition? Recognition? Spending time with friends?
 - What are other ways we can meet those needs?
- Use resources! (Sport psychologist/athletic counselor)



Identity Activity



Thank You!

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