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Case Study: A Team-Building Mental Skills Training Program with an Intercollegiate Equestrian Team

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ABSTRACT

Relatively few mental skills training programs have solely focused on team-building issues. The purpose of this article is to briefly describe the design, implementation, and evaluation of a team building mental skills training program for an intercollegiate equestrian team. In particular, theoretical and methodological rationales for the team-building intervention are provided. The data are analyzed and future recommendations are offered for using team-building intervention programs.

Introduction

Practitioners have adopted a strategy known as team-building to promote consistent and effective teamwork. Team-building is the deliberate process of facilitating the development of an effective (task) and close (social) group (Beer, 1980). Beckhard (1972) and Woodcock and Francis (1994) suggested the following purposes of any team building intervention: a) to set clear team goals; b) to clarify role behavior; c) to examine team functioning (e.g., communication patterns, norms); d) to examine relationships between members; e) to ensure meetings and practices are efficient; f) to diagnose potential weaknesses and minimize their influences and; g) to ensure coherent and visionary leadership. Beckhard further argued that the primary focus of any team-building strategy should be task related as interpersonal problems often result from problems with team functioning.