

PROMOTING LEADERSHIP THROUGH SPORT FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS

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INTRODUCTION

Grambling State University, in Grambling, Louisiana (USA) hosted a sport leader's mini-conference for adolescent girls (10-13) that promoted leadership through sport as a positive outlet. The conference included the president of the National Association for Girls and Women in Sport (NAGWS) and a former Women's National Basketball Association player (WNBA).

The event was designed to build character, leadership, motivation and educate on health related issues. Previous research has emphasized the importance of sport and physical activity for young adults (Taylor, Evers, & McKenna, 2005). The state of Louisiana has one of the highest obesity rates in all 50 states (Louisiana Council on Obesity Prevention and Management 2003-2004). In addition, research has suggested that kids who participate in sport or less likely to fall under peer pressure (Darling, Caldwell, & Smith, 2005).

METHODS

Thirty- five girls from a neighboring middle school participated in a mini conference which promoted sport and leadership. The conference was divided into four workshops which included: Sport as a positive outlet, Health/Nutrition, Education, and Title IX. Title IX is a law in the United States that promotes gender equity for programs that receive federal funding. After the workshop, the participants participated in a round table discussion with a former WBNA player and the President of NAGWS.

RESULTS OR EXPECTED RESULTS

After the conference, the participants were asked to complete an evaluation form which requested their perception of the relevance of the mini-conference, improved leadership abilities and what they learned. All of the girls (n=35) stated that they believed they were better prepared to be leaders after the conference. When asked about their perspective on the importance of physical activity since the conference, 97 % of the girls believed that the conference changed their perspective about sport and physical activity. In fact, overwhelmingly, the majority of the girls were now interested in participating in a sport.

DISCUSSION

In conclusion, participation in the sport and leadership conference proved to have a significant impact on female adolescent's future participation in sport. Many of the girls were inquiring about future conference dates. Participants also felt better prepared to be leaders after participating in the conference. Future recommendations include research on sport and leadership regarding males and a longitudinal study.

REFERENCES

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