Response Protocol

In response to the recommendations by the NCAA, the NAIA and the ACSM, the APU Athletic Department has developed the following guidelines to assist athletes who are identified as at risk for eating disorders. The central component is the formulation of an eating disorder assistance team that utilizes formally established procedures. The goal of the program is to support the health and athletic performance of all athletes, with special attention to those identified with or suspected of eating disorders. Members of the Team include a Physician, the Head and Supervising Certified Athletic Trainers (ATC), a Dietitian, and a Mental Health Professional (MHP).[4]

It is important to establish the responsibilities of the members of the eating disorder response team. The general responsibilities are as follows:

- **Team Physician**: Assesses and monitors the medical status of the student-athlete, diagnoses eating disorders and refers athlete to Team members, and makes decisions regarding participation.[4]
- **ATC**: Acts as a liaison between the Team members and administrative personnel, and as a liaison between the student-athlete and administrative personnel. Coordinates eating disorder response Team procedures and acts as a liaison between Team members, and between the student-athlete and Team members. Monitors daily status of student-athlete and ensures compliance with Team recommendations. Maintains appropriate documentation. [4]
- **Dietitian**: Monitors nutritional status and eating patterns of the student-athlete, and educates the student-athlete regarding energy and nutrient adequacy to support health and performance. Identifies problems in eating patterns and helps develop strategies to normalize eating patterns. [4]
- **MHP**: Conducts an initial assessment and develops treatment recommendations. Addresses related underlying issues related to weight and body that are driving the disordered eating behavior. [4]

The protocol is set into motion once a student-athlete is identified by a coach, athletic trainer, fellow student-athlete, another student, or the student-athlete themselves as having symptoms of an eating disorder. The response procedures are as follows:

1. The Head ATC should be notified of the potential eating disorder.
2. The Head ATC will then notify the Eating Disorder Response Team (EDRT).
3. At this point an ATC will confront the student-athlete. Which ATC confronts the student-athlete will be determined by the Head ATC and the Supervising ATC and will be based upon gender and existing relationships built with the student-athlete.
4. Once the student-athlete is confronted with the information that was brought to the attention of the athletic training staff, they shall be sent to the proper medical specialists for evaluation.
5. The student-athlete shall be referred to a Dietician to determine the student-athlete's approximate intake and what their intake should be based upon their daily activities.

6. The student-athlete shall also be sent to a Physician to determine physical health status.
7. The student-athlete shall also be sent to a MHP to assess and diagnose mental status and underlying issues related to the possible eating disorder.

These evaluations are mandatory and must be completed as soon as the ATC secures the appointments. The ATC will be responsible to ensure that initial appointment are set and attended.

Following evaluation by all three medical specialists, the EDRT will meet. The medical specialists will present their findings and make recommendations for the student-athlete. The Team will then discuss possible treatment options and determine a plan of action. The Team will then draft the plan on a contract to be signed by all members of the team as well as the student-athlete.

The Head or Supervising ATC will then meet with the student-athlete to present the EDRT findings and plan of action. If the student-athlete wishes to continue athletic participation they must agree to and sign the contract. The coordinating ATC will then monitor the activities of the student-athlete to ensure that they are abiding by the contract. The ATC will also maintain proper documentation of the activities and progress of the student-athlete. If the student-athlete complies with the contract they will be allowed to continue athletic participation. If the student-athlete fails to comply with the contract, they will be pulled from athletic participation upon further review by the EDRT and the Athletic Director. This policy may not be waived by any student athlete. It is important for all professionals involved in athletics to recognize that any student suffering from an eating disorder needs help, may be reluctant to face their condition or admit to the need for treatment, and must not be allowed to dissuade the evaluating professionals from taking action based on independent professional judgment.

Eating Disorder Flow Chart

