



Introducing: Julia Drattell, MEd, ATC, CES, Senior Program Coordinator - Athletic Trainer at NYU Langone Health's Concussion Center

Julia Drattell is a MEd, ATC, CES and the senior program coordinator - athletic trainer at NYU Langone Health's Concussion Center in New York, New York. In addition, Julia previously was the NATA Young Professionals Committee representative for New York State and is a current member of the NYSED Committee for Athletic Trainers. Her duties at the concussion center are atypical for an athletic trainer as she doesn't have any direct clinical responsibilities. She does, however, support clinical services by providing an athletic trainer's perspective on exercise therapy and sports-specific rehabilitation. Primarily, her focus is on developing and fostering community partnerships, coordinating educational opportunities for the community and healthcare professionals, and supporting research. Her current research projects include a rapid picture-naming task, called the MULES, that aims to objectively identify a concussion and monitor recovery. She also oversees athletic trainers who are contracted to area high schools.

The Committee for Athletic Trainers is within the Medicine Board, and its members advise on licensing requirements and practice issues, including participation in licensure disciplinary procedures after infractions to professional regulations. One other example of a recent Committee project was the creation of a guidance document for secondary school athletic trainers in New York State about the laws and regulations that affect our professional practice.

Drattell has been a certified athletic trainer for more than 11 years. She passed the BOC Certification Exam during her senior year at the University of Delaware and attended the CAATE-approved post-professional master's program at the University of Virginia. Though she chose athletic training as her undergraduate major, it wasn't her initial intention to become an athletic trainer.

"Honestly, I chose athletic training as my undergraduate major because I intended to become a physician and thought that the curriculum would prove helpful in my medical school application and education. My high school had an athletic trainer and it seemed like a fun job," said Julia Drattell. "I decided not to pursue medical school after realizing that I truly enjoyed immediate and acute injury care and watching the athlete return to sport, which is unique to the role of an athletic trainer. I felt that the sideline was where I could have the most impact on an athlete's health, rather than in the clinic or operating room."

When asked for advice for aspiring athletic trainers, Drattell said, "Trust your instincts and speak up. From the perspective of the traditional clinical setting, your training and relationship with the athletes provide invaluable insights unavailable to others. Whether you have suspicions about a concussion, an issue with mental health, or unsafe circumstances in an athlete's personal life, I recommend applying the common saying of 'better safe than sorry.' I learned and applied sensitive approaches to these potentially difficult conversations and asked open-ended questions to draw out information. These conversations often need a disclaimer that the information they disclose cannot always remain



confidential, but sometimes the athletes just need someone to take the first step to engage in private conversation.”

Overall, Drattell thoroughly enjoys being an athletic trainer. Especially in her current role, she finds satisfaction in watching presentation attendees grasp the importance of reporting concussions in a timely manner and managing concussions properly. She enjoys being able to change the outcomes of athletes and students on a larger scale. Concussion research advances so frequently that it is hard to stay abreast of the changes, so she believes it is important to reach everyone including parents, coaches, athletes, and health care professionals.

Prior to her current role at NYU Langone Health’s Concussion Center, Drattell was an athletic trainer for Columbia University and New York University. It was during her years as an athletic trainer at university she had her most memorable moment with an athlete who had torn their ACL and meniscus during a competition that was early in the season. “The surgery and recovery were challenging and riddled with setbacks. I would get incredibly frustrated with my inability to prevent the near-constant complications,” said Drattell. “Throughout it all, though, they were one of the friendliest and kindest athletes I’ve ever worked with. Watching that athlete return to competition at the end of the following season was so rewarding that I still get goosebumps when I think about it. Their positive attitude coupled with determination and perseverance were an inspiration to the teammates and me.”