

Murray State University
Athletic Training Program
INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

Athletic training students (ATSs) are considered to be support personnel and an extension of the MSU Athletic Training Staff. As such, ATSs must conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. At no time should an ATS engage in conduct that would undermine patient confidence or cause a conflict of interest in patient care. The student-athletes at any clinical site are current or potential **patients**; they are not peers, not a social group, and not a dating pool. Inappropriate interpersonal relationships can compromise the respect patients have for their health care providers. ATSs shall actively maintain professional boundaries with their patients (past, present, and future) in all settings and at all times (including times when school is not in-session).

For the purposes of this policy, interpersonal relationships are defined as dating, romantic, sexual, or spousal relationships. While ATSs are **STRONGLY DISCOURAGED** not to initiate or accept offers of interpersonal relationships with *any* patient at *any* clinical site, ATSs are **PROHIBITED** from initiating or accepting offers of interpersonal relationships with *any* patient at *their* assigned clinical site. The ATS **MUST** inform the Clinical Education Coordinator of *any* interpersonal relationship with *any* patient or potential patient **IMMEDIATELY**. Upon admission to the professional phase of the Program, ATSs in a pre-existing interpersonal relationship with a potential patient shall disclose the relationship to the Clinical Education Coordinator before beginning clinical experiences.

If it is determined that an ATS has 1) concealed a current relationship, 2) allowed a current relationship to manifest itself at the clinical site, or 3) failed to self-disclose a pre-existing relationship that presents a conflict of interest, the ATS will immediately be removed from their clinical site and placed on disciplinary probation (see Disciplinary Action Policy) within the program. If it is determined that a student is having an inappropriate relationship/contact with a student in a high school clinical setting, the ATS is permanently suspended from the AT Program and may face further legal actions.

ATSs who have knowledge of relationships of other ATSs with patients are strongly encouraged to disclose any violations of this policy to the Clinical Education Coordinator, who will keep such disclosures anonymous.

FAQs

1. What if I dated a patient BEFORE I was admitted to the AT Program?
Answer: Once you are assigned to the clinical site, you should contact the CEC and prepare to be re-assigned if there is another site available.

2. What if I am at a party and a patient is there?
Answer: ATs shall never invite patients to join in personal social situations (i.e. parties). If an ATs and a patient are at the same event/venue, the ATs must use discretion when interacting with the patient.

3. What if I am asked out by a patient, and I don't accept?
Answer: If you don't accept the invitation, you are still in compliance with this policy. If the patient continues to pursue (harass) you and you feel uncomfortable with the situation, please contact your preceptor and/or the CEC immediately.

4. Does a "potential (or any) patient" include coaches?
Answer: Yes, coaches are considered potential patients. Again, we STRONGLY DISCOURAGE any interpersonal relationship with a coach.

5. Could an interpersonal relationship affect my matriculation through the AT program?
Answer: An ATs in an interpersonal relationship with a patient or potential patient at their assigned clinical site will be re-assigned to a different clinical site if possible. If another setting is not available, the ATs will be required to repeat the clinical experience during another semester, which will delay his/her progress in the program. Because of the large number of ATs and clinical sites impacted, the Clinical Education Coordinator reserves the right to NOT accommodate a re-assignment of clinical experiences due to an interpersonal relationship. This may prevent the ATs from completing required program elements and graduating from the program.

By signing this statement, I have read the policy and agree to the AT Program's terms. Based on my clinical assignment for the current semester, I understand that I must disclose any past or present interpersonal relationship with potential patients at that clinical site (location of clinical rotation, not specifically the sport assignment). If I do not disclose this information, then I may be subject to disciplinary action.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Per this policy, I am currently in or have had an interpersonal relationship (as defined above) with a potential patient at my assigned clinical site.

Per this policy, I am NOT currently in or have NOT had an interpersonal relationship (as defined above) with a potential patient at my assigned clinical site.

Summary (for explanation purposes only):

1. We **STRONGLY DISCOURAGE** the development of interpersonal relationships with any patient or potential patient.
2. If you are currently in or develop a relationship with a patient or potential patient, you should contact the CEC immediately.
3. If you are found to have developed an interpersonal relationship with a patient and do not disclose the interpersonal relationship, you will be disciplined, which may include suspension from the program.
4. If you develop an interpersonal relationship with a high school student (even if they are 18 or older), you will be immediately dismissed from the AT Program and not allowed back into the Program.