



# MENTORING



When early professional (EP) ATs transition to practice, onboarding is important to provide support and help them understand their role.<sup>1</sup> However, onboarding should go beyond just initial orientation to help EP ATs further their understanding of their role and should occur through a variety of methods.<sup>1,2</sup> Mentoring can provide EP ATs with honest feedback, reassurance, and promote lifelong learning.<sup>2</sup> While EP ATs' transition to practice could be greatly benefitted through mentorship, mentorship is important throughout the lifespan of a career and is especially important for groups that report more barriers to transitioning to practice and career success such as black, indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC).<sup>3</sup> Ongoing mentoring plays a key role in successful transition for EP ATs, but is important to ATs of all tenures to participate in. Both employers and EP ATs should seek out and implement formal and informal mentoring opportunities.

## FREE COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM

**"Factors That Influence the Intent to Leave the Athletic Training Workplace"** (*Chew et al, 2024*) 5-19. Survey respondents indicated a long onboarding process, communication that was clear and recurring, and peer-to-peer mentoring encouraged remaining with the employer. Factors that contributed to their decision to remain included control over their work, feeling comfortable in the position and organization, and geographical location of the job.

**"Transition to Practice: Perceptions on Mentorship From Athletic Training Programs' Administrators"** (*Young et al, 2023*) 5-42. AT program administrators surveyed indicated mentorship is considered integral in transition to practice, but reported few, formalized mentor training opportunities aside from preceptor training. Integrating intentional mentee experiences for learners, in addition to preceptors and faculty mentoring, could aid in transition to practice.

## NATA FOUNDATION FUNDED

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Education Research Grant : 2016-2018

"An investigation into doctoral preparation and mentorship in the socialization of pre-tenured athletic training faculty members"

*Clinical Take Home Message:* To prepare high quality athletic trainers, faculty members need to be prepared and mentored in the areas of program administration and teaching in addition to research. Doctoral education and mentorship are important mechanisms in preparing and supporting faculty members.

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## RESOURCES

- [NATA Foundation Mentor Programs](#)
- [Transition to Practice Workgroup Report: Transition to Practice for the Collegiate/University Athletic Trainer](#)
- [AT Mentorship-Competency Considerations: AT Mentorship in Clinical Rehabilitation and Third Party Billing](#)
- [Mentoring Toolkit](#)
- [Mentor/Mentee Tools & Resources](#)
- [The State of Athletic Training: Employment and the Early Professional AT; a Town Hall](#)
- [NATA Timely Topics:](#)
  - [Employment Transition and the AT](#)
  - [The State of Athletic Training and the Early Professional](#)

## from RECENT ARTICLES

**"Newly Credentialed Athletic Trainers' Onboarding Process During the Transition to Practice"** *Thrasher et al, 2024*. Transition to practice for EP ATs can be grouped into an initial orientation and continued onboarding. Initial orientation was centered on an initial meeting that was facilitated at the organizational, departmental, and clinical site. This meeting provided a focused opportunity to review key policies, procedures, expectations, and logistics. Continued onboarding is more robust and occurs overtime to support the transition to practice for the EP AT. Continued onboarding may help professional ATs deepen their understanding of their role through mentorship with regular meetings and site visits, particularly regarding patient care.

**"Challenges Faced During Professional Preparation and Transition to Practice Among Diverse Early Professional Athletic Trainers"** *Smith et al, 2024*. EP ATs who identify as BIPOC reported stressful transitions to practice due to encountering microaggressions, a lack of support, and a lack of racially concordant mentors. Diversity, equity, and inclusion training in AT professional programs and workplaces coupled with intentional mentoring resources for early professional BIPOC ATs may assist in reducing stress during transition to practice.

**"Multistakeholder Perceptions of Young Professionals' Integration During Role Transition"** *Bowman et al, 2024*. EP ATs are typically integrated through role induction and mentoring which assist them with the transition to practice. However, EPs struggled to find balance while integrating to avoid burnout because many feel obligated to exceed coverage expectations. EPs could benefit from ongoing mentorship in an extended integration timeline of 1-3 years and reasonable integration expectations.

### References:

1. Thrasher AB, Walker SE, Cavallario JM. Newly credentialed athletic trainers' onboarding process during the transition to practice. *J Athl Train.* 2024. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4085/1062-6050-0073.24>
2. Walker SE, Mazerolle Singe S, Cavallario JM. The role mentoring plays in the transition to practice of newly credentialed athletic trainers. *J Athl Train.* 2021;56(3): 227-233. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4085/1062-6050-0242.20>
3. Smith AD, Moffit DM, Lacayo CP, Bowman TG. Challenges faced during professional preparation and transition to practice among diverse early professional athletic trainers. *J Athl Train.* 2024; 59 (5):536-545. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4085/1062-6050-0376.23>

