### Principles of Providing Psychologically-Informed Care as a Sports Practitioner

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• I have no financial disclosure or conflicts of interest with the presented material in this presentation.

### Pediatricians, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists, Children's Hospitals Declare National Emergency for Children's Mental Health

The AAP, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Children's Hospital Association in 2021 declared a national state of emergency for child and adolescent mental health.

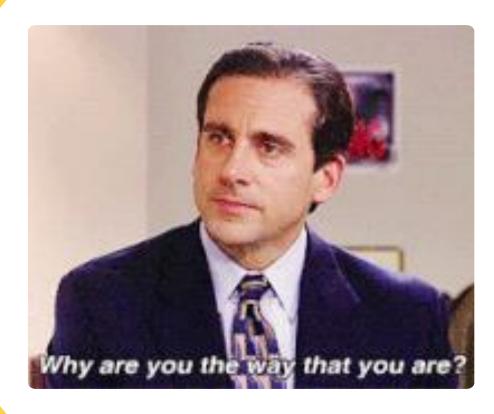


Home / News / Health News / Suicide Rates Have Doubled in...

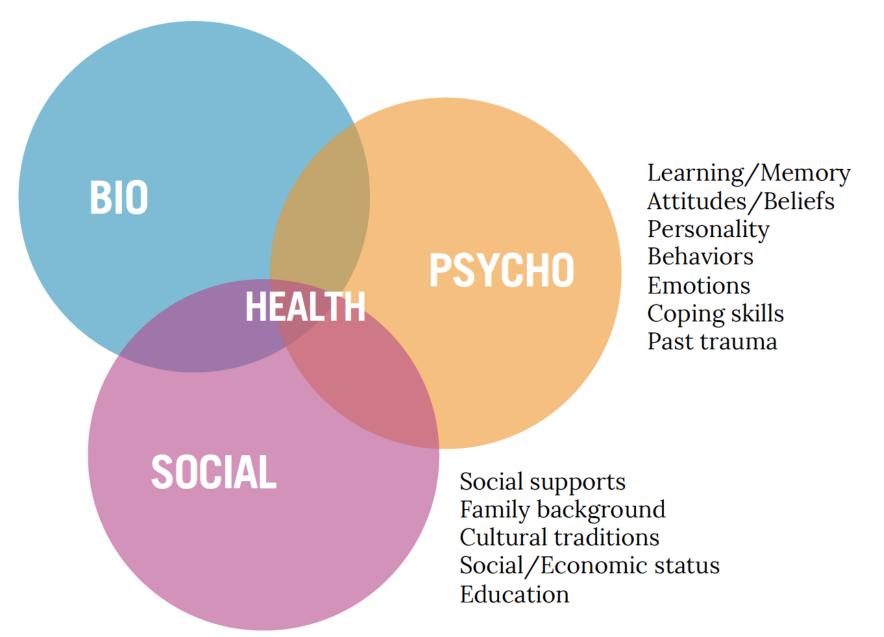
#### Suicide Rates Have Doubled in 20 Years Among U.S. College Athletes



# Psych 101 in 5 Minutes

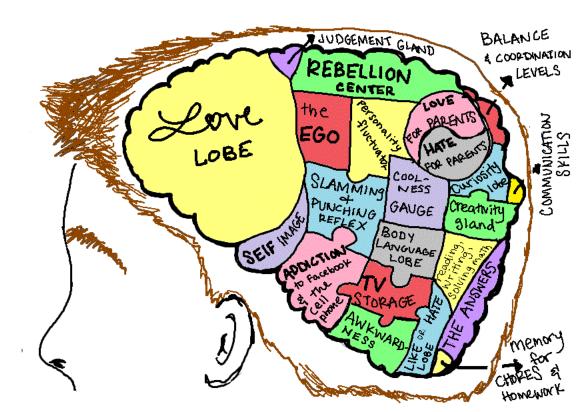


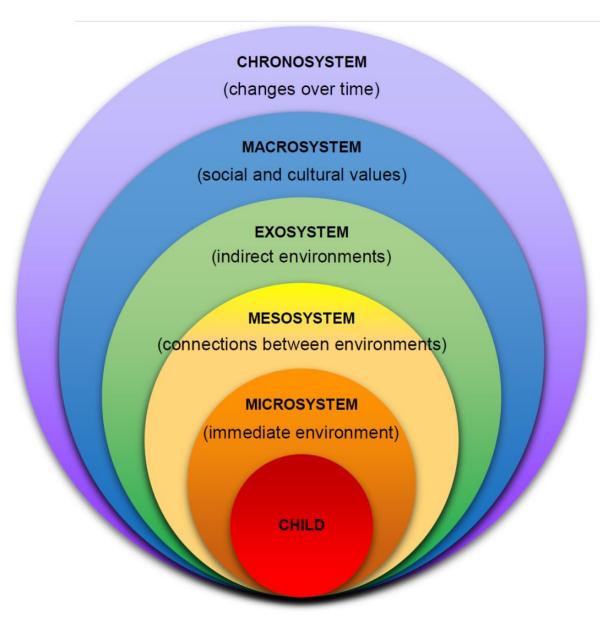
Gender
Physical illness
Disability
Genetic vulnerability
Immune function
Neurochemistry
Stress reactivity
Medication effects



- Biological changes:
  - Limbic system (emotion center) develops quickly
  - Reward system is hypersensitive
  - Frontal lobe lags behind
  - Circadian rhythm shifts later
  - Puberty
- Period of highest mental illness onset
- Psychosocial changes
  - Egocentrism
  - More abstract and complex thinking and feeling
  - Increased focus on social environment
  - Increasing autonomy
  - Identity development & values/morals formation
- More demands and stress
- Shifting sports landscape
- Note: First truly online and global (Cleveland Clinic, 2023)
  Generation







### **FACTORS THAT CAN SHAPE THE** MENTAL HEALTH OF YOUNG PEOPLE



Source: Adapted from WHO's Determinants of Adolescent Health Development: An Ecological Model, 2014 and Bronfenbrenner & Ceci (1994)



Social and economic inequalities, discrimination, racism, migration, media and technology, popular culture, government policies

Neighborhood safety, access to green spaces, healthy food, housing, health care, pollution, natural disasters, climate change

Relationships with peers, teachers, and mentors; faith community; school climate, academic pressure, community support

Relationships with parents, caregivers, and siblings; family mental health; financial stability; domestic violence; trauma

Age, genetics, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, coping skills

These are examples and not a comprehensive list of factors

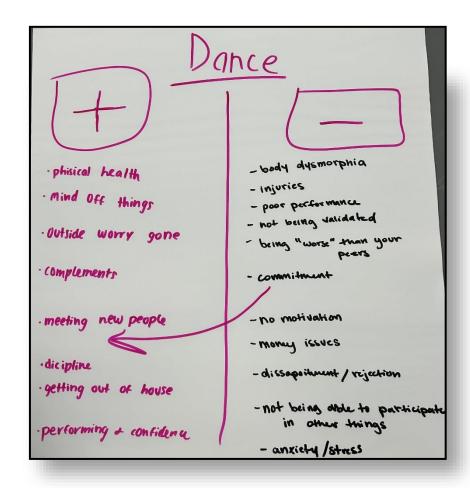
(Office of the Surgeon General, 2021)

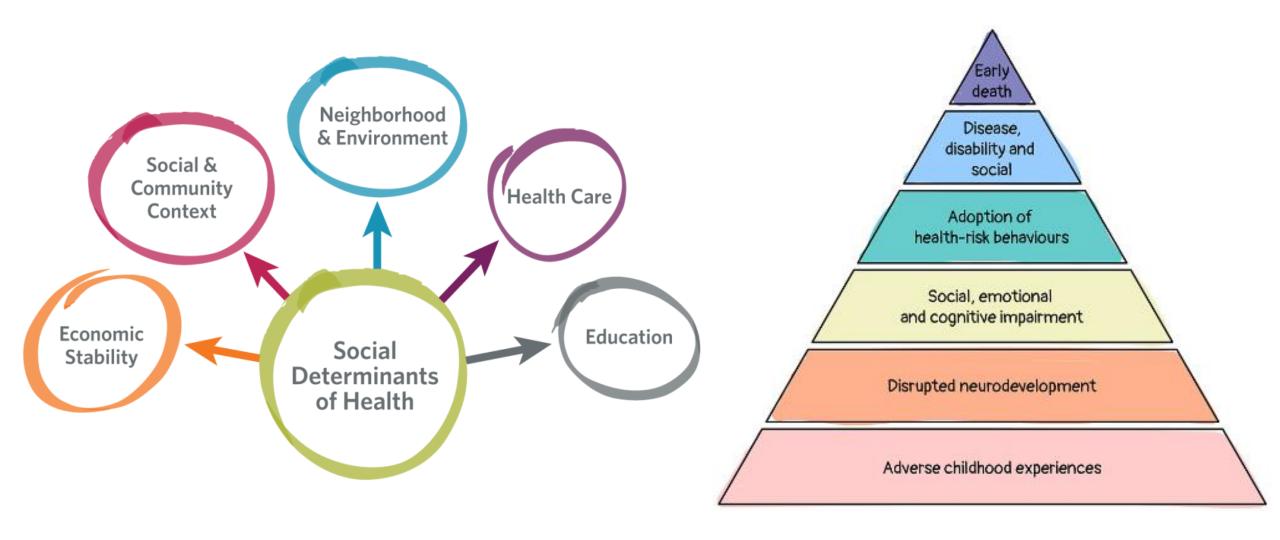
(Weissman & Hendrick, 2014)

# Sport-Related Influences on Mental Health

- Injuries
- Culture of risk
- Normalized pushing through pain,
- Overtraining
- Performance failure
- Selection pressure
- Retirement or transition
- Busy schedule
- Disrupted sleep

- Physical exhaustion
- Social comparisons
- Perfectionism
- Sport specialization
- Unrealistic expectations (e.g. about recovery)
- Restriction from other activities/relationships
- Work hard play hard mentality





(Goodrich, 2022) (Liverpool CAMHS, 2024)



Ability to talk

with family
about feelings



that shape mental health in adults

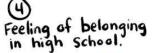


Fell Experience
that family is
supportive in
difficult times











having at least two non-parent adults who genuinely care.



### Feeling of being supported by friends



Teeling Safe and protected by an adult at home



LEAD RESEARCHER: CHRISTINA BETHELL @ JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY JOURNAL OF AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION ARTICLE 2749336 VISUALLY TRANSLATED BY @LINDSAYBRAMAN

### **Social Learning**









### Learning: Operant Conditioning

#### Antecedent

**Behavior** 

### Consequenc

**e** (Reinforcement

 $\uparrow$ , Punishment  $\downarrow$ )

- Mistake
- Injury
- Perceived threat
- Disappointment
- Embarrassment
- Getting cut
- Switching teams
- Trauma

- Success or failure
- Feedback
- Goal attainment
- Pain
- Escape
- Shame
- Disappointment
- Attention
- No perceived outcome



### **Anxiety**

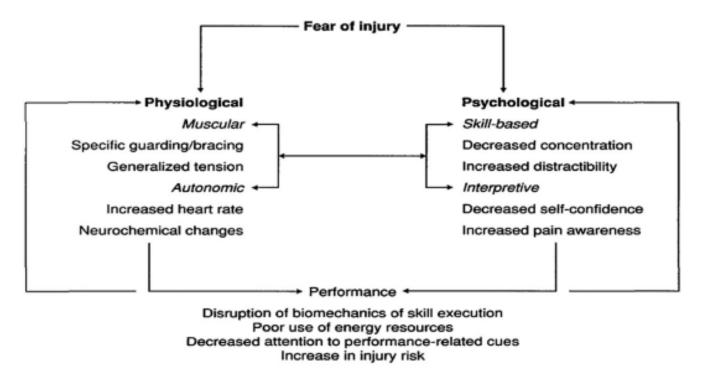


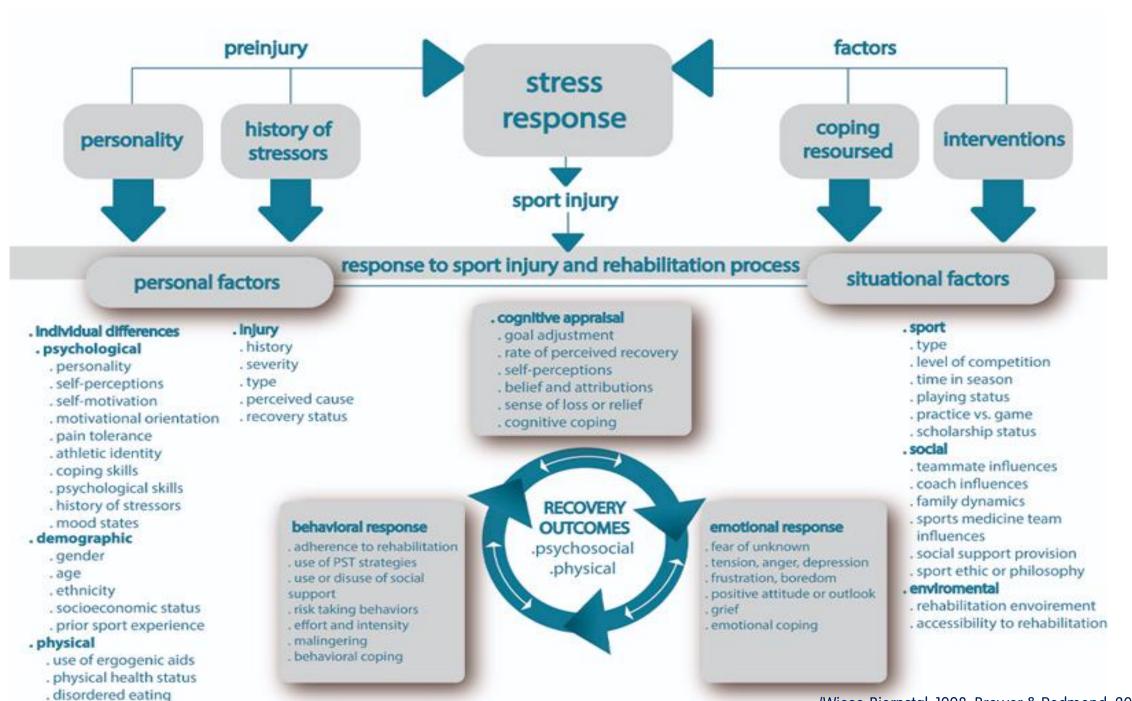
Fig. 4. Fear of injury: a psychophysiologic model of risk.

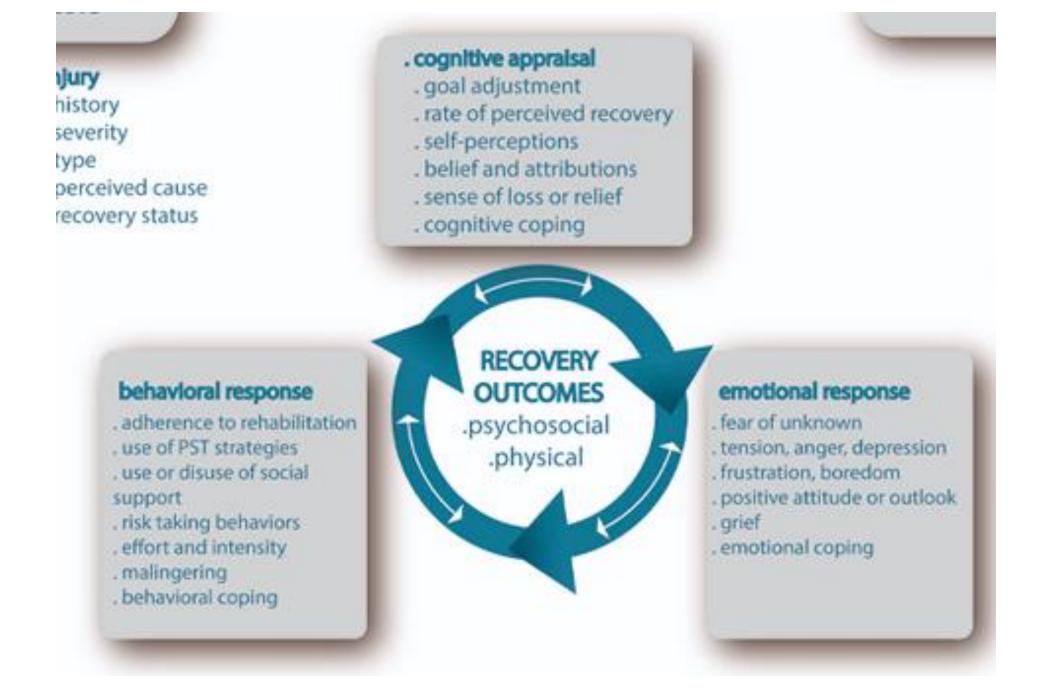
**Anxiety** Long-Term **Avoidance Anxiety Growth Short-Term Relief** from Anxiety

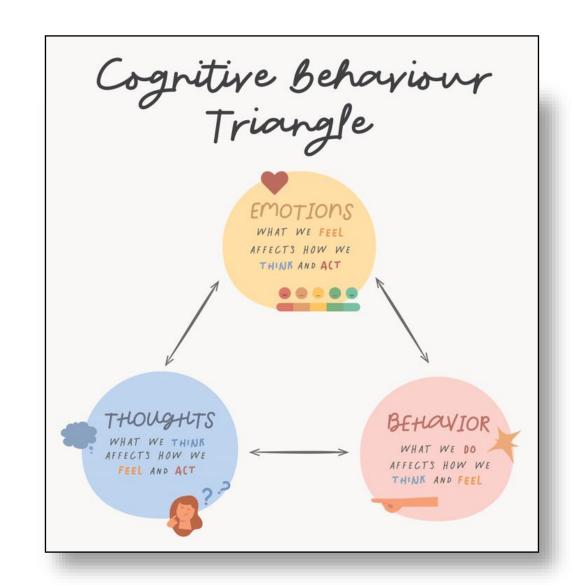
(Podlog, 2014)



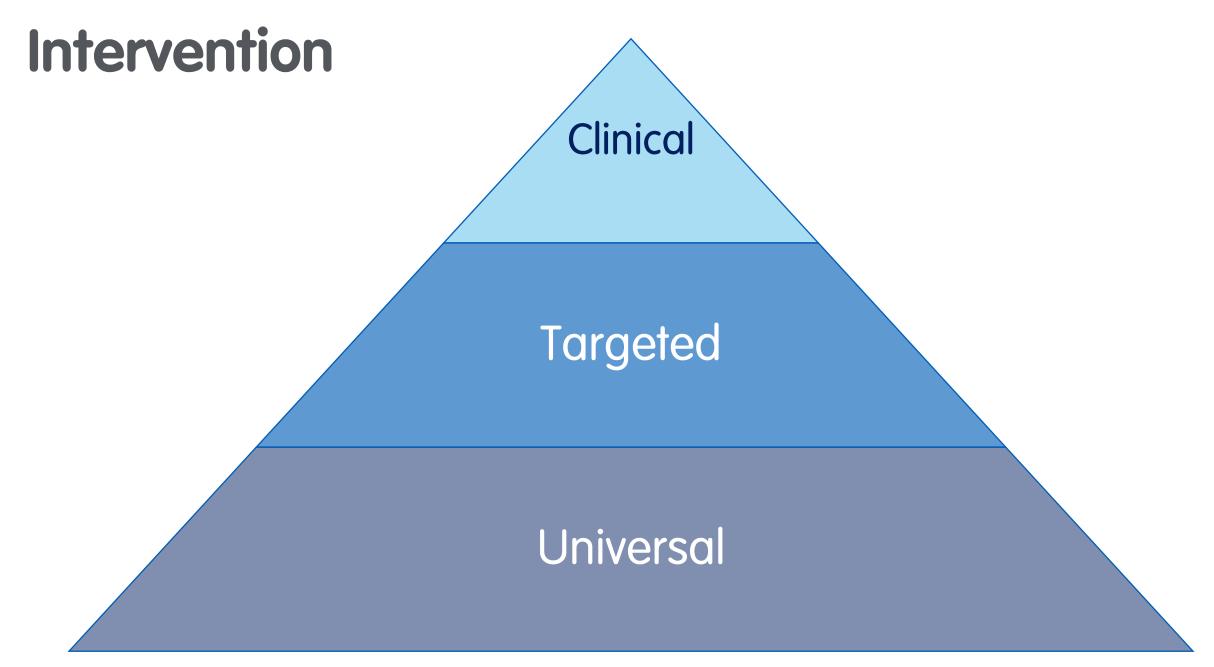
(Therapistaid.com)







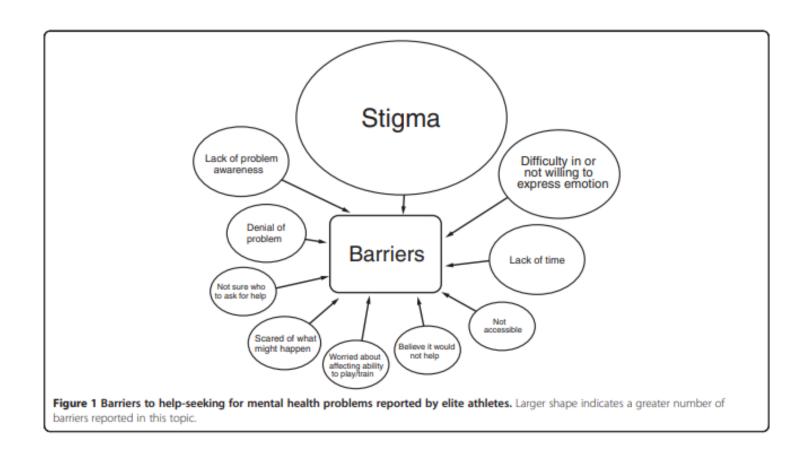




## Athlete-Specific Barriers to Mental Health Care

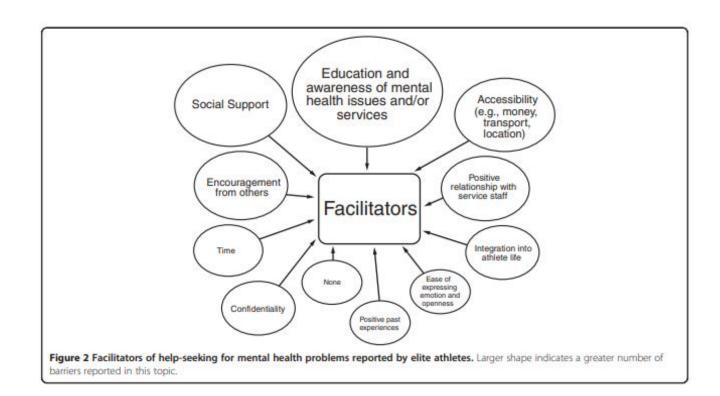
#### BARRIERS TO HELP SEEKING

- Stigma
- Difficulty or unwillingness to express emotion
- 3. Lack of problem awareness
- 4. Lack of time
- 5. Denial of problem
- 6. Scared of what might happen
- 7. Impacts on ability to play or train
- 8. Not sure who to reach out to
- Accessibility
- 10. Belief that it would not help



### Predictors of Help Seeking in Athletes

- Mental health literacy
  - Understanding of how to maintain positive MH
  - Knowledge of MH disorders and treatment
  - Decreasing stigma associated with mental illness
  - Enhancing help-seeking selfefficacy
- Support from peers and/or adults
- Perception of benefit
- Insight
- Access



#### **Standard Practice**

#### Core Philosophy

Address physical impairments based on biomedical concepts

#### **Primary Goal**

Reduce symptoms

#### **Psychologically Informed Practice**

#### **Core Philosophy**

Incorporating patient beliefs, attitudes, and emotional responses into patient management based on biophysical models

#### **Primary Goal**

Secondary prevention of disability

#### **Mental Health Practice**

#### **Core Philosophy**

Identifying and treating mental illness

#### **Primary Goal**

Minimizing the impact of psychological disorder on well-being and function

(Baez & Jochimsen, 2023; Main & George, 2011)

**Consideration of Psychological Factors** 

### Psychologically-Informed Practice



### PIP Domains



Prevention and universal supports



Assessment and monitoring of psychological difficulties



Intervention strategies



Referral to MH professionals

### **Universal PIP**

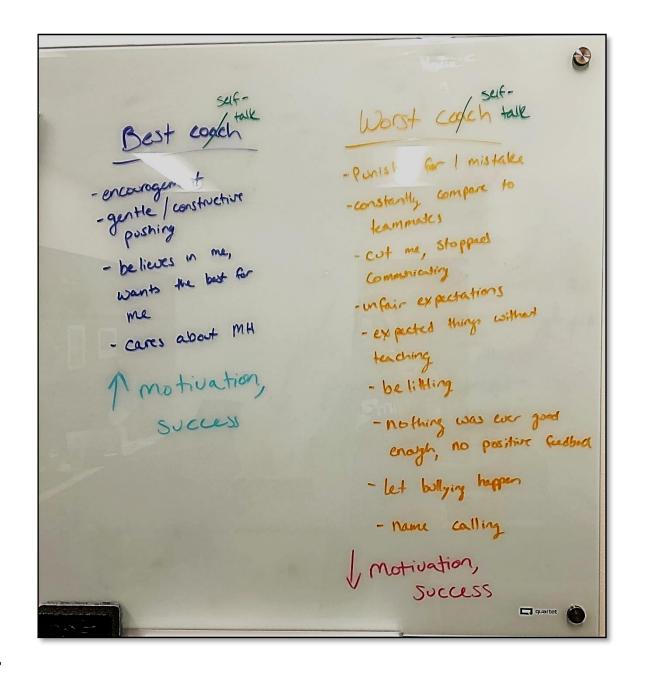
- Familiarize yourself with:
  - State and organizational policies on mandatory reporting, confidentiality, etc.
  - Your organization's mental health policies and available resources
- Proactively establish procedures and pathways
  - Integrated care is the gold standard
  - Formal screening is a target
  - Established crisis and referral pathways are the minimum
- Contribute to the culture
  - Mental health literacy
  - Counteracting stigma
  - Modeling
- Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion and acknowledge personal biases
- Speak up against danger, harm, and abuse

### Modeling

- Who do you want to be?
- What do you want athletes, parents, or colleagues to think is normal and acceptable?

### Modeling

- Self-care
- Sleep
- Respect
- Integrity
- Self-compassion
- Kindness
- Assertiveness
- Substance use
- Pain management
- Mental health
- Attitudes toward mental health
- Response to adversity
- Growth mindset
- Applies to athletes, families, colleagues, community members, etc.



### Universal PIP: Microsystem

- Build a strong therapeutic alliance & provide individualized care
- Establish psychological safety
  - I am included/valued
  - I can share my ideas
  - I can make mistakes and learn from them
  - I can challenge
- Implement a trauma-informed care approach: Realize, Recognize, Respond, Resist re-traumatization
- Implement trauma-informed care practices
  - Safety
  - Choice
  - Trustworthiness
  - Collaboration
  - Empowerment

Universal

### Universal PIP: Microsystem

- Prioritize communication
  - Engage using familiar and easy-to-understand language
  - Empathize and try to understand their POV
  - Educate the patient on details of the injury and recovery process
  - Enlist the patient into decision-making and collaboration
- Provide education and anticipatory guidance
- Check in during critical periods
  - Initial period after an injury
  - Leading up to RTS
  - Major career transitions

Universal

### Patient-Practitioner Interactions

- Strong therapeutic alliance is associated with significantly improved MH and functional outcomes
- Source of education, reassurance, motivation, collaborative goal-setting, and problem-solving
- PT support contributes more to overall well-being than other providers' or coach's
- Athletes report the importance of providing reassurance about getting better, keeping things in perspective, focusing on future opportunities, and encouragement to adhere to rehab program
- Athletes report needing informational, emotional, and practical support at different points
- Better outcomes when they felt like plan and goals were tailored to them

### Targeted PIP: Assessment

- Know the signs and symptoms of mental health difficulty
- Use observations, patient-reported outcome measures, and discussions with the athlete/family
- Know how to assess for more information
- Sit with discomfort in having uncomfortable conversations
- Focus on validation and ongoing education

### Table. Behaviors to Monitor That May Reflect Psychological Concerns<sup>4,17</sup>

- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Unexplained weight loss or gain
- · Drug or alcohol abuse
- Gambling issues
- Withdrawing from social contact
- Decreased interest in activities that have been enjoyable or taking up risky behavior
- · Talking about death, dying, or "going away"
- Loss of emotion or sudden changes of emotion within a short period of time
- · Problems concentrating, focusing, or remembering
- Frequent complaints of fatigue, illness, or being injured that prevent participation
- · Unexplained wounds or deliberate self-harm
- · Becoming more irritable or having problems managing anger
- · Irresponsibility, lying
- · Legal problems, fighting, difficulty with authority
- · All-or-nothing thinking
- Negative self-talk
- Feeling out of control
- Mood swings
- Excessive worry or fear
- · Agitation or irritability
- · Shaking, trembling
- · Gastrointestinal complaints, headaches
- · Overuse injuries, unresolved injuries, or continually being injured

### PIP: Assessment Strategies

- Talk privately.
- Use open-ended questions.
  - A lot of my patients with ACL injuries struggle with worries about re-injury at this point in the rehab process. How is that going for you?
  - Missing out on your senior season can be really tough. How are you feeling about that?
  - When you're having a hard time, how do you get through it? What do you do to cope?
  - O What does your support system look like?
- Point out observations.
  - I've noticed you seem a little hesitant to do lunges. What do you think is going on there?
  - I'm seeing huge progress in your strength. Are you seeing that too?
- Use active listening.

### What helps kids to disclose?

- Realizing it's not normal
- Inability to cope with emotional distress
- Wanting something to be done about it
- Access to someone you can trust
- Expecting to be believed
- 6. Being asked

NEEDING to tell

**OPPORTUNITY** to tell

(Davis, 2024)

### PIP: Responding to an Athlete Disclosure

- Validate!
- Reinforce them for sharing.
- Ask how you can help.
  - Space to vent
  - Support in talking with someone
  - Connection to resources
- Normalize and/or provide reassurance
  - I know this can be hard to talk about, and I really appreciate you telling me.
  - Mental blocks or anxiety are signs that your brain is working.
  - Pain is processed in the brain's emotion center, so it's impossible to be in pain without some type of emotion.
  - This is a fixable problem!
- Remember:
  - You are not expected to have all the answers, and that's okay.
  - Sometimes this conversation IS the intervention.

According to the Step UP! program, an initiative created in partnership with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), there are five steps to approaching an athlete:

EXAMPLES OF WHAT TO SAY:

#### I CARE:

"John, do you have a minute? Because you're such a critical part of this team and I care about you, I want to talk to you about something very important." "What else can I help you with? I'm someone who cares and wants to listen. What do you want me to know about how you are feeling?"

I SEE:

"I've been noticing that you have been avoidant lately, and some of the team is worried about your drinking. From my perspective, you really don't seem to be yourself."

"Who or what has helped you deal with something similar in the past?"
"What can I do to help you talk to someone about what's going on?"

I FEEL:

"I'm worried about how this may be affecting you, not only in terms of your sport, but also your schooling, and personal life." "I've been worried about you. Can we talk about what you're experiencing? If not, who are you comfortable, or more comfortable, talking to?"
"What can I do to help you talk to someone about what's going on?"

I WONDER:

"I want what's best for you, you have so much to offer. Is there something you want to talk about? I wonder what we could do to turn this around." "Sometimes talking to someone who has dealt with a similar experience helps. Do you know of others who have experienced these types of things that you can talk to?"

I WILL:

"I would be willing to find you some resources that could help. I want to support you however I can, but I will not lie for you or watch you continue to make unhealthy choices. I am really concerned John."

"It seems like you are going through a difficult time. How can help you to find help?"

"How can I help you find more information about \_\_\_\_\_?"



#### KEY MESSAGES TO REMIND THE STUDENT-ATHLETE:

- [1] Getting support is normal.
- [2] Get support as early as possible.

#### HELPFUL WAYS TO RESPOND WHEN A STUDENT APPROACHES YOU WITH AN ISSUE OR CONCERN:

#### GOOD THINGS TO SAY #1:

"I'm glad you came to me about this."

[The athlete is most likely worried about how the conversation will go and what the consequences will be. This will make them comfortable and like you' are not judging them.]

#### GOOD THINGS TO SAY #2:

"I'm sorry you're going through this. It must be hard."

[Let the athlete know that you understand the severity of this, – and that you understand the importance of the conversation.]

#### Other examples:

- "This will not change how I see you."
- · "This will not change our relationship."
- "How are you coping?"
- "How can I help you."
- "Are you looking for my perspective/advice or do you just need me to listen?"

### A Few Notes About Suicide and Abuse

- There is often a misconception that talking about depression or suicide can cause or increase suicidality – this is false.
- Talking about mental health openly and asking directly are two of the most important factors in patients disclosing SI or abuse and connecting to care.
- I highly recommend *first* validating, *second* thanking them for sharing, and *third* offering to help.



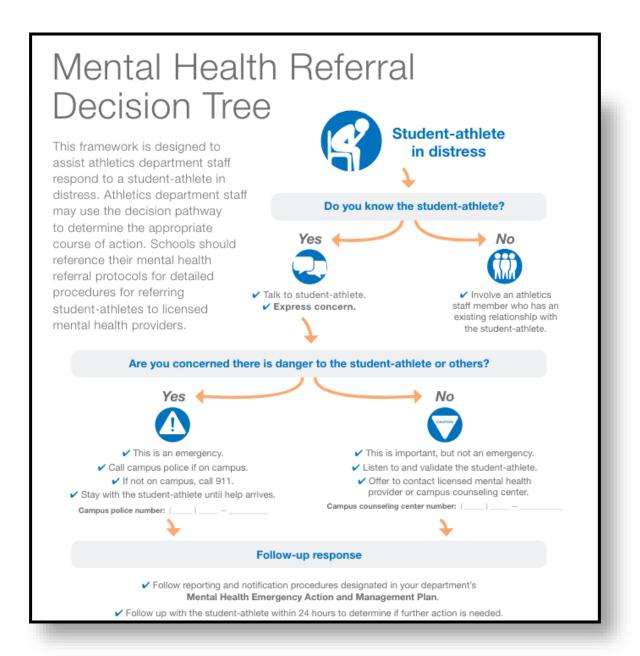




# When to Refer for Mental Health Evaluation

- You, the athlete, or someone who knows them well thinks they might need help.
- Symptoms get more serious or are uncomfortable.
- Symptoms are getting in the way of functioning (e.g. school, work, activities).
- They have experienced several stressors or traumatic events.
- They are engaging in unhealthy or unsafe behaviors.
- They engage in self-harm (e.g. cutting) or have suicidal thoughts or actions.





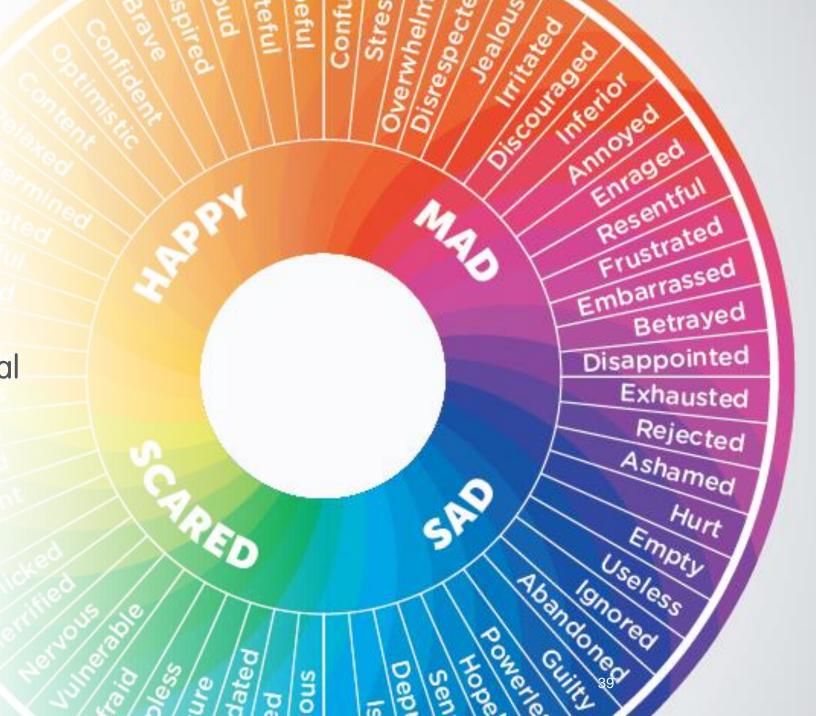
- Know your organization's MH crisis policies and resources (e.g. school, community)
- Recommendations for families:
  - Talk with medical professionals, school counselors/staff
  - Psychologytoday.com
  - Locate therapists through insurance
  - Ask PCP for recommendations
  - Community MH centers
- Crisis help:
  - National Suicide Lifeline: call or text 988
  - o Call 911
  - Go to the nearest ED

## PIP: Specific Interventions

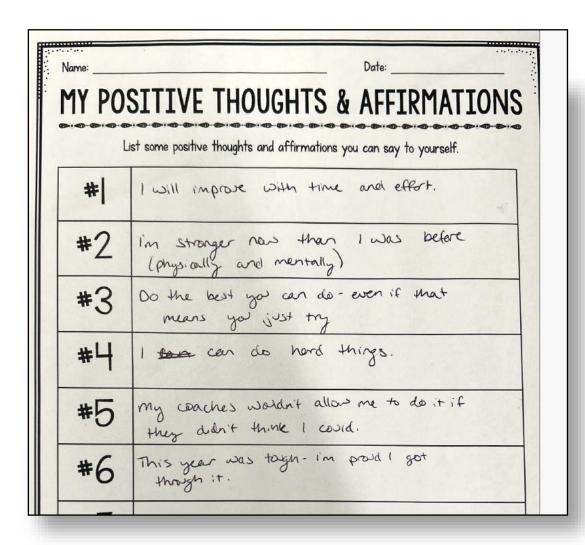
- Encouraging emotional awareness and expression
- Positive self-talk and cognitive restructuring
- Values exploration and motivation
- Mindfulness and relaxation training
- Graded exposure
- Goal-setting (SMART)
- Collaborative problem-solving
- Motivational Interviewing

# **Emotional Awareness**

- "I feel" language
- Name it to tame it
- Values BEFORE emotional control



## Self-Talk



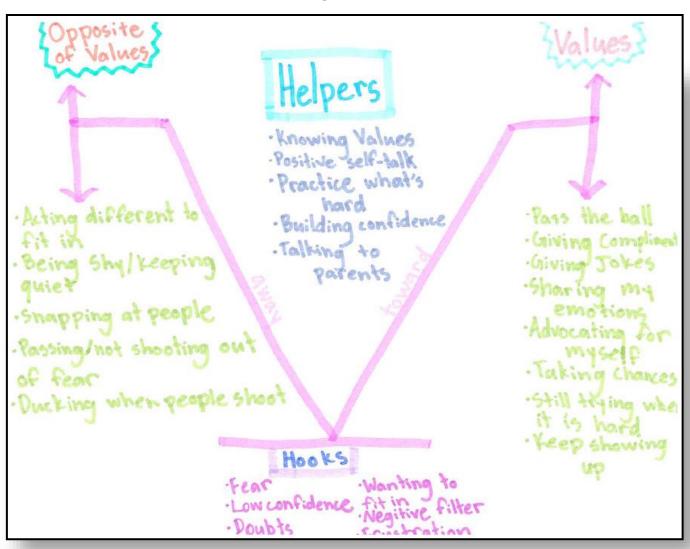
### **Thought Questions**

- What is the worst that could happen?
- What are the chances of that happening?
- Could I handle it if it did?
- Are my expectations too high? Should I set a different goal?
- Is this within my control?
- What is the evidence for this thought?
   What is the evidence against this thought?
- What would I say to a friend in this situation?
- Have I gotten through anything like this before?
- Will this matter in a day? A month? A year?



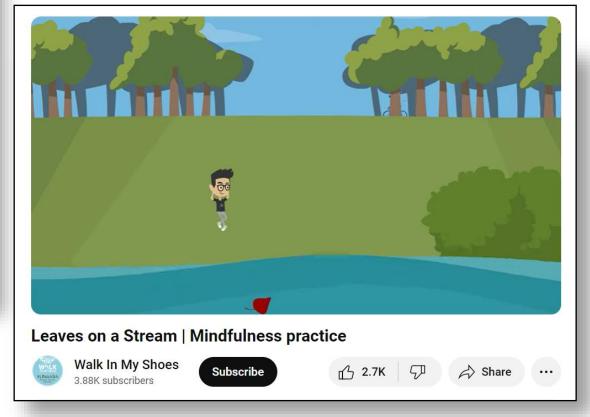
# Values Exploration – Your "Why"

#### "Values" include what is most important to you, and the type of person you want to be. This includes the type of daughter, friend, student, dancer, sister, et cetera! Below are some examples of common values. Note: there are no such things as 'right values' or 'wrong values'. It's like our taste in ice cream. If you prefet chocolate but I prefer vanilla, that doesn't mean that my taste in ice cream is right and yours is wrong. It just Please read through the list below and for each domain of life, tick 5-10 of the MOST IMPORTANT VALUES for that domain. Feel free to write in any other values you can think of! Responsibility Relaxation Love Wealth Integrity Family Empathy Commitment Morals Lovalty Success Independence Courage Knowledge Achievement Friendliness Friends Forgiveness Free Time Religion Gratitude Δdventure Spirituality Kindness Variety Respect Persistence/ determination Calmness Responsibility Freedom Stability Curiosity Fun Wisdom Acceptance Recognition Humor/ Comedy Adventure Natur Fairness Power Creativity Caring Flexibility



## Mindfulness, Grounding, and Relaxation



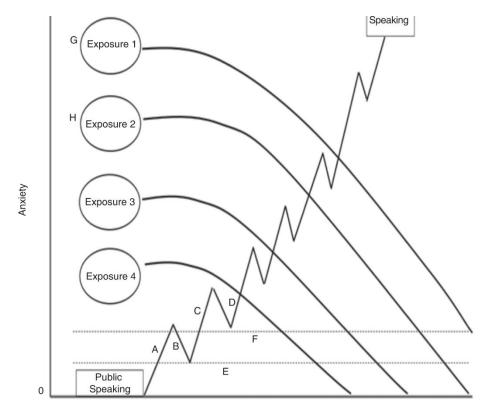




(e.g. Brenner, 2024)

## **Graded Exposure**

- Evidence-based treatment strategy for anxiety and OCD.
- Goal is to approach anxiety-provoking stimuli gradually, progressively, and repeatedly (i.e. eliminating avoidance).
- In order to be effective, *habituation* must be reached.



escribe specific anxiety-provoking situations:	SUDS (0-100)
On the floor	0
On low beam with parel mats stocked no	nifway 3
On law beam with parel mass stack	et 14 4
On high beam with a spot	5
On low beam by myself	6
	d 8

# **Graded Exposure**

Table 3. Graded-Exposure Therapy Progression\*

	Progression				
Task	1	2	3	4	
Landing after a double-legged jump	On floor	Off 4-in (10.2-cm) step	Off 8-in (20.3-cm) step	Off 12-in (30.5-cm) step	
Squats	Mini squat	Wall squat with ball	Double-legged squat with no weight	Double-legged squat with weight	
Volleyball spike approach	Without a swing or ball	With swing without ball	With swing and ball	With swing, ball, and blocker	
Baseball/softball throw	Toss ball using only wrist	Nonstride throw	Incorporate stride into throw	Long toss	
Нор	Double-legged vertical hop	Double-legged forward hop	Single-legged vertical hop	Single-legged forward hop	
Pivoting movement	Rotational lunge	Walk forward and change direction	Jog forward and change direction	Sprint forward and change direction	

Adapted from Baez et al<sup>34</sup>.



# Behavior Management

- Use immediate and positive reinforcement when possible.
- The gold standard for behavior change is 5 positive/neutral interactions for every 1 negative/critical piece of feedback.
- Focus on effort or value-based actions instead of outcome-based reinforcement.
- Goals and expectations need to be realistic. Shape behavior toward larger goals.
- Use punishment equitably.
- Mind your Cs!



## **Goal Setting**



Be thoughtful and specific about what you want to focus on.

Pick a goal that is **measurable** so you can continually monitor your progress.

Set yourself up for success by choosing something that is **achievable**.

Be **realistic** when choosing your goal. Think about how it will affect your day-to-day life.

Motivate yourself by setting an end **time** or date. Knowing there's an end in sight will help you focus and push yourself.





# **Problem-Solving**

- Identify the problem.
- Brainstorm ALL possible solutions.
- Evaluate the options.
- Choose the best option to try.
- Implement that option.
- Return, re-evaluate, and re-adjust as needed.

```
Problem: Not getting Nutrition; wellness work done

teacher: today; work + 1 missing assignment per day

-distracted, methodran

Solutions:

XXX - drap at + homeschool

XXX - drap at + homeschool

XXX - sit on the floor also read good after make a

XXX - go to a private space to work (Sample's read)

XXX - go to a private space to work (Sample's read)
```

# Take Home Points

- Athletes are not immune to mental health challenges, especially in the context of injury and athletic demands.
- Approaching assessment and intervention from a biopsychosocial lens is associated with better outcomes and, likely, less frustration.
- Being thoughtful about your actions and approaches can impact both individuals and systems.
- I highly recommend familiarizing yourself with signs of mental health difficulty and organization and community resources.

## **Resources: Toolkits**



#### NATA ICSM Mental Health Toolkit

The ICSM and the NCAA recognize the challenges associated with Mental Health care and both agree that Mental Health is growing concern. This toolkit which is composed of five sections has been prepared based on the best knowledge and mental health availability from the authors and utilizes elements from their respective institution's mental health policies and procedures.

Sections Include:

#### Sections Include:

- 1. Finding an Appropriate Team of Providers
- 2. Assembling a Multidisciplinary Mental Health Team
- 3. Procedures for Identification and Referral
- 4. Pre-Participation Mental Health Screening
- 5. Establishing a Health Promoting Environment that Supports Well-Being and Resilience

## Supporting Mental Health in Youth Sport: Introducing a Toolkit for Coaches, Clubs, and Organisations

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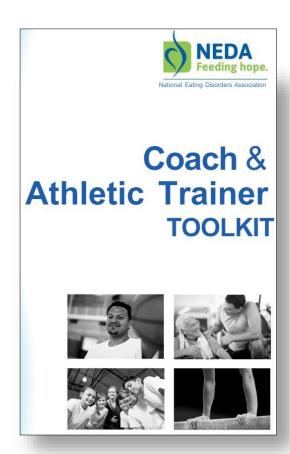
Courtney C Walton · Serena Carberry · 

Michael Wilson · Show all 7 authors · 

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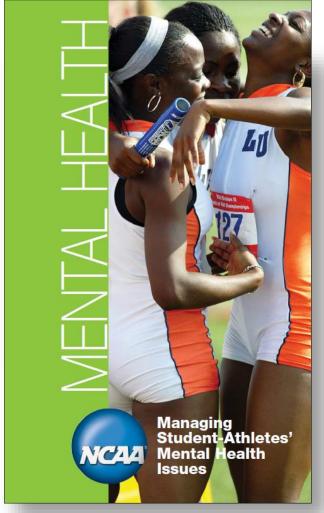
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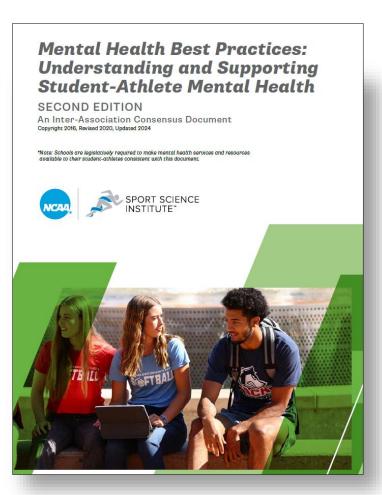
Simon M Rice



## Resources



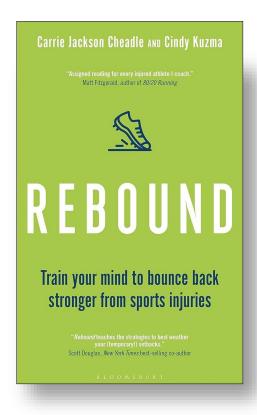




## **Resource Banks**

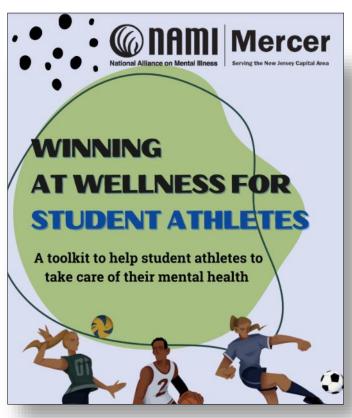
- NCAA Mental Health Educational Resources
   <a href="https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2016/8/4/mental-health-educational-resources.aspx">https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2016/8/4/mental-health-educational-resources.aspx</a>
- Association for Applied Sport Psychology Mental Wellness Resource Center <a href="https://appliedsportpsych.org/resources/mental-wellness-resource-center/">https://appliedsportpsych.org/resources/mental-wellness-resource-center/</a>
- ANAD (National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders) <a href="https://anad.org/get-informed/">https://anad.org/get-informed/</a>

# Patient and Family Resources











#### Mental Health Toolkit for High School Athletes



#### Why is it important to be mindful of our Mental Health?

- Our mental and emotional well-being can have a significant impact on our athletic and academic performance, injury risk, and recovery after injury.
- Fear, worry, stress, anxiety, frustration, or sadness—among many other emotions are normal, human responses to events in our lives.
- When these emotions become overwhelming and start impacting the ability to function day-to-day, it is essential to assess for mental health concerns.

#### What can I do to improve my mental health?

- 1. Get sufficient sleep
  - Recommended in adolescents: 8-10 hours/night

https://lahs.mvla.net/documents/Athletics/FORMS--RESOURCES/Mental Health Toolkit.pdf



#### Mental Health Toolkit for High School Athletes



Phone Application	ons for Anxiety and	Depression (continued)	
eQuoo	Android & iOS	Mobile game to teach psychological skills to help cope with emotional and mental stressors     Focuses on resilience, personal development, interpersonal relationship skills, and skills for coping with anxiety and depression	Free
Sanvello	Android & iOS	Clinically validated techniques for reducing stress and treating anxiety and depression Daily mood tracking, coping tools, techniques, weekly check-ins Includes techniques from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Different levels of membership including therapy sessions at highest level	Free trial, then self- pay +/- insurance coverage
Phone Application	ons for Sleep Hygien	ne	
Application Name	Device Compatibility	Description	Cost
CBT-i	Android & iOS	Resources from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy     Provided education on good sleep hygiene practices     Has relaxation tools such as guided imagery,     diaphragmatic breathing, and progressive muscle     relaxation coaching	Free

#### Online Tools

Name	Description	
Kaiser Permanente Guided Imagery Podcasts	https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/southern-california/health-wellness/podcasts     User friendly and easy access: download or stream online     Audible and visual options     Podcasts available for different concerns: pain, sleep, stress, anxiety, relaxation, & more	

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