

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS



RECOGNIZE TO
RECOVER.



RECOGNIZE TO
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REMINDER ON A SAFESPORT ENVIRONMENT

CREATE A SAFE AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT, FREE FROM EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL, AND SEXUAL ABUSE AND MISCONDUCT

- U.S. Center for SafeSport: <https://safesport.org/>
- Never communicate one-on-one with a minor
- Athletes may view coaches, referees, parents or peers as a trustworthy individuals
→ this does not excuse and does not allow for inappropriate behavior or abuse
- There are training modules and mental health resources are available to athletes and parents on the SafeSport Website



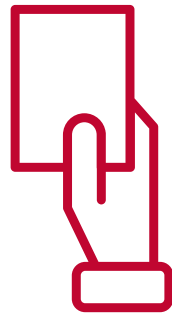
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SEE THE PERSON

SEE THE PERSON, NOT THE ROLE



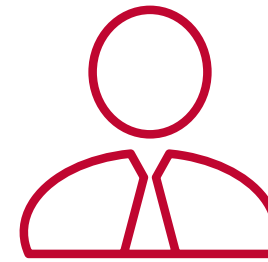
ATHLETE



REFEREE



COACH



ADMINISTRATOR



**PARENT/
GUARDIAN**

Mental Health issues/illnesses are not exclusive to youth, college, amateur or pro sports

→ these issues can affect anyone at any age or at any point in their career



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WHY IS RECOGNIZING MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES IMPORTANT?

INCIDENCE OF MHI (MENTAL HEALTH ILLNESSES)

- 1 in 6 U.S. Youth age 6-17 experience a Mental Health Disorder each year
 - Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people age 10-34
 - Suicide remains the 3rd leading cause of death for athletes, according to the Indiana Law Journal
 - In 2016, nearly 25% of collegiate athletes reported symptoms of depression
 - Most common disorders: ADHD, Anxiety, Depression, other behavior disorders
-

RESPONSIBILITY TO EACH OTHER

Promoting an inclusive and supportive environment

Recognizing warning signs others may exhibit

Referring the person to appropriate mental health resources



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SPORT CULTURE RESPONSIBILITIES

SET EXPECTATIONS AROUND

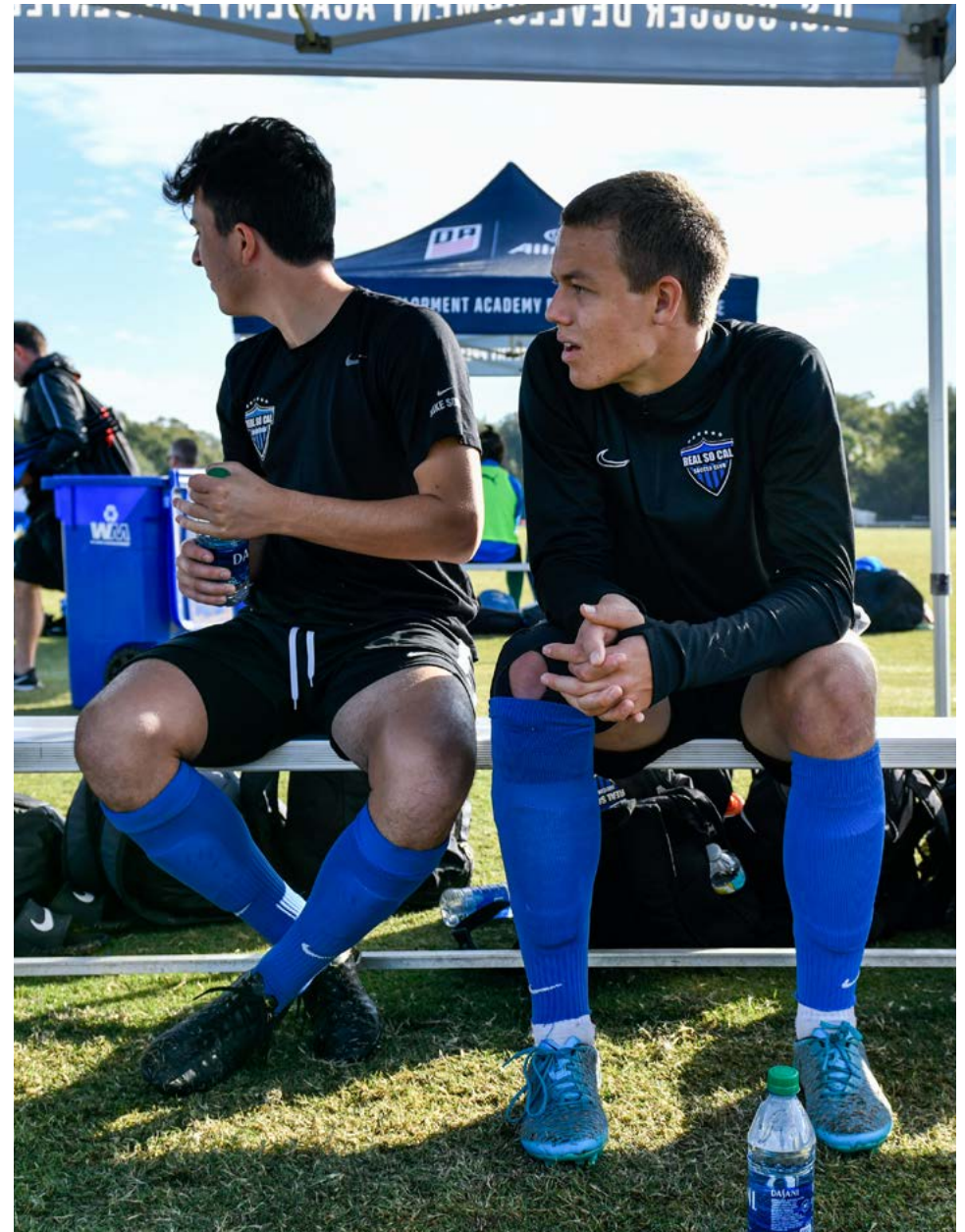
- Respecting each other by understanding and celebrating differences
- Celebrating working through challenges together, while encouraging a growth mindset (focusing on what you can change/control)
- Providing positive reinforcement and creating an environment where individuals feel comfortable asking for help, talking about their life experiences/struggles
- Everyone involved in sport leading by example, modeling behavior that allows for taking time to be a person/self-care, modeling taking the coach's hat off



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CREATING A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

- Reduce social isolation
- Encourage people to talk to each other
→ for example, change up groups/
partners in activities
- Be approachable
- Encourage athletes to talk to friends
and family
- Get to know your players and
teammates → understand motivations,
goals, habits and understand what is
“normal” for them





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GAME FACE VS. FACE FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

Athletes, coaches, referees, and administrators are often encouraged and sometimes expected to be immersed within the sport environment, leaving little time for life outside of sport. But is this healthy and sustainable?

PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE

- Field training sessions, gym training sessions
- Physical preparation to train (Prehab/rehab → w/ athletic trainers)
- Recovery: Rest/sleep, nutrition, hydration



These outcomes are easy to implement and hold others accountable for



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GAME FACE VS. FACE FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

MENTAL PERFORMANCE

- Video Sessions, team meetings, tactical meetings, feedback from coach/staff
- Psychological match preparation: Imagery, focus

These outcomes are easy to implement and hold others accountable for



MENTAL HEALTH WELL-BEING

- Recovery: switching off → relaxing, not thinking about your role → enjoying life outside of sport/being a person

Do we do a good job of encouraging this aspect of recovery? Are we less comfortable in referring to the mental health of sport?



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MENTAL PERFORMANCE & MENTAL HEALTH

MENTAL PERFORMANCE

Strategies to help cope with challenges in sport

- Nutrition/Hydration/Sleep
- Training
- Confidence

MENTAL HEALTH

Ability to relate to life and the person's ability to relate to others, affected by:

- Nutrition, Hydration, Sleep
- Physical Activity
- Mental Wellness → confidence
- Environment

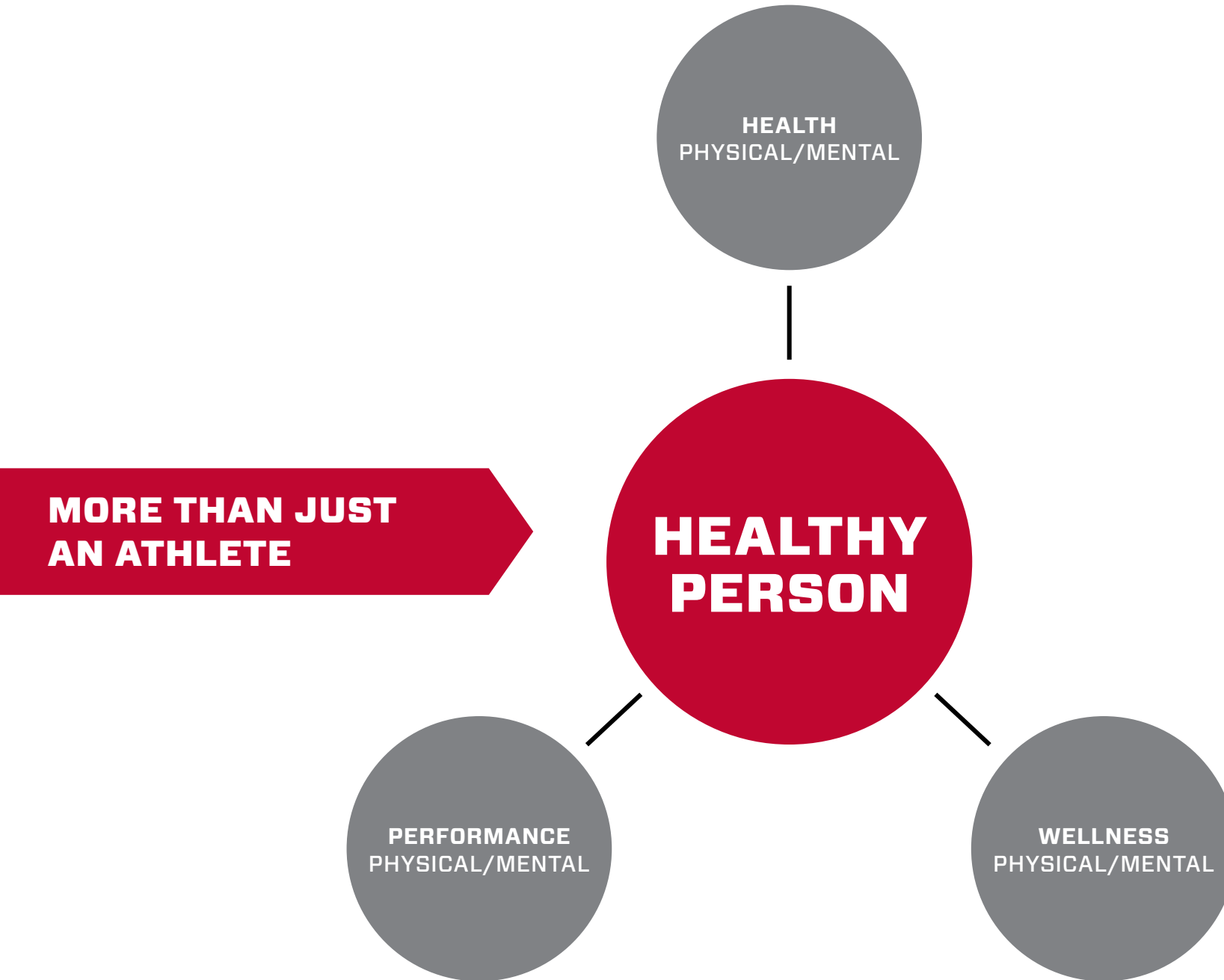
Not exclusive of each other - can directly influence/affect both the person and the athlete

PERFORMANCE ANXIETY VS. GENERAL ANXIETY



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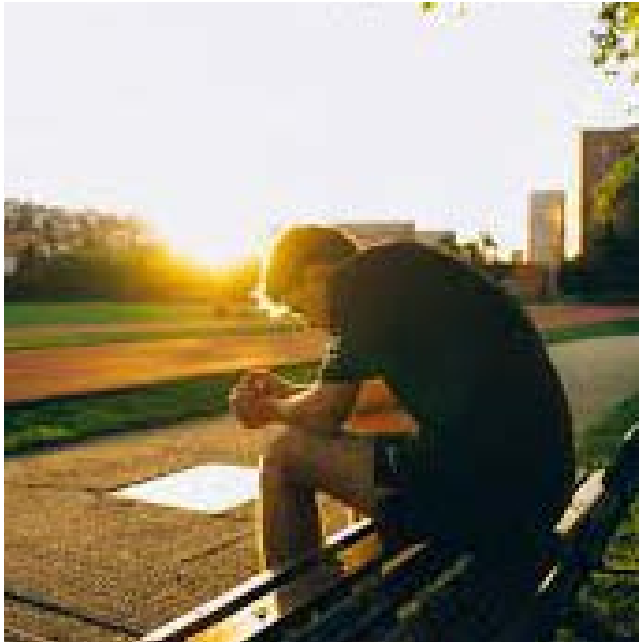
COMPONENTS OF A HEALTHY PERSON





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HOW WOULD YOU APPROACH THESE PEOPLE?





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WOULD YOU APPROACH THESE INDIVIDUALS DIFFERENTLY?





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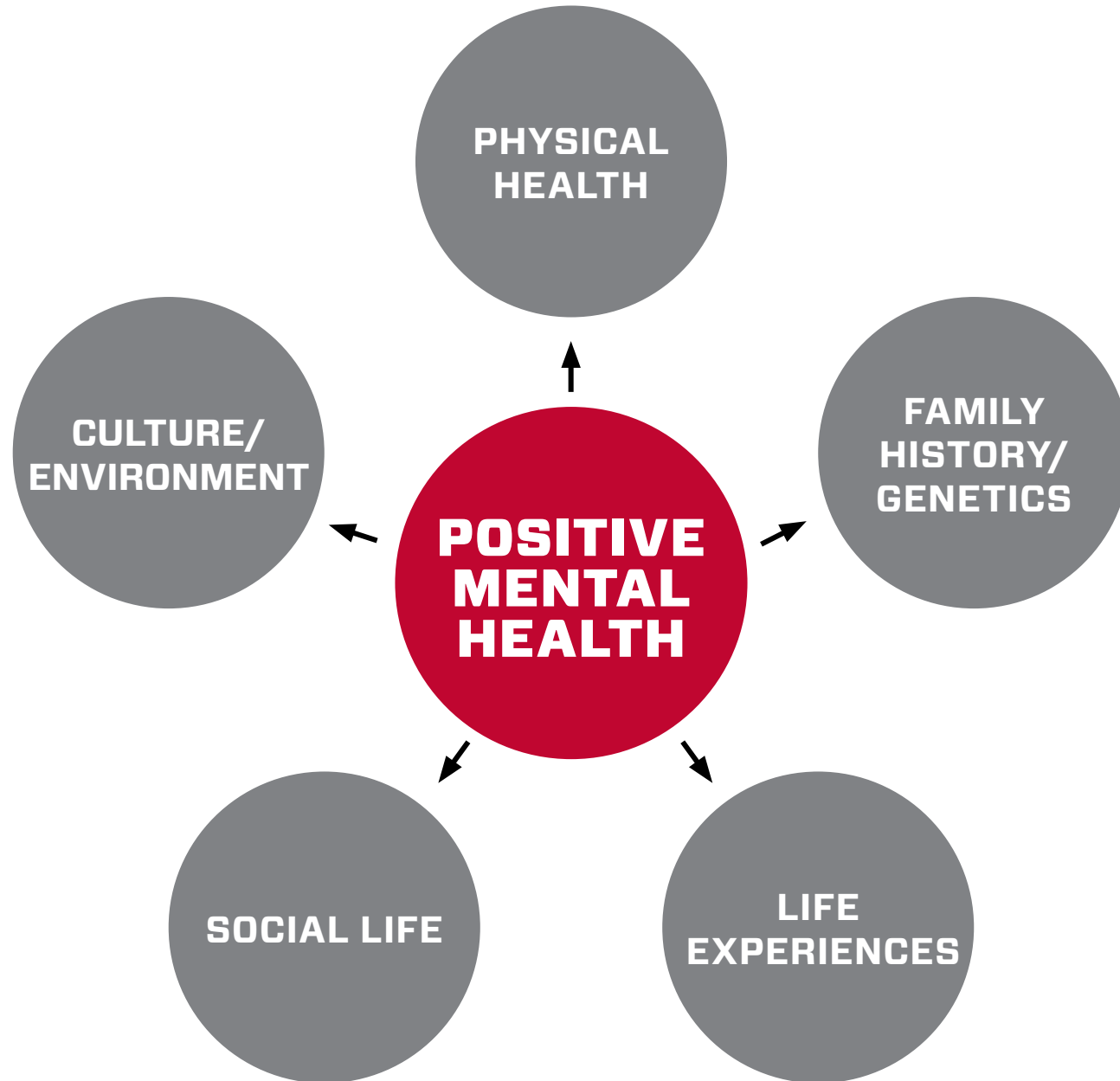
WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?





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MENTAL HEALTH INFLUENCES





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POSITIVE EFFECTS OF SPORT ON MENTAL HEALTH

- Provide an outlet for stress, anxiety or an escape from negative situations that may be occurring off the field
- Help develop resiliency and a growth mindset: continuing to pursue goals even when you fail
- Physical activity has many benefits for overall health and well-being
- Provide a platform for social inclusion





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IF LEFT UNCHECKED, MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES CAN BE EXACERBATED

- High stress (intrinsic & extrinsic) and performance environments can intensify already-present mental health issues, if not treated appropriately
- As symptoms of mental illness intensify, performance can be negatively affected, leaving a person vulnerable and exposed to further symptoms of common mental disorders
- The pressure of performance can also expose individuals to overtraining, overworking, overanalyzing, and poor motivation, which can mimic signs of depression and anxiety





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STIGMA SURROUNDING MENTAL HEALTH

- The stigma associated with mental health issues creates barriers to openly discussing personal struggles with one's mental health
- Cultural stigma
- Feeling like someone may be burdening others
- Counteracting the stigma is achieved through creating a positive and inclusive environment where people feel comfortable talking openly





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WHY MH ISSUES ARE DIFFICULT TO RECOGNIZE



- Athletic culture celebrates “mental toughness”, so people may be less likely to report struggles
- People tend to underreport mental health symptoms and don’t seek resources for fear of being stigmatized
- People don’t want to or don’t know how to address others with mental health concerns, and may fear that bringing it up may “weaken” or “worsen” the athlete and/or team culture



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RISK FACTORS FOR MHI

PRESSURES OF HIGH-LEVEL COMPETITION

TRAVEL/TIME AWAY FROM FAMILY/FRIENDS/EXPERIENCES

CONSEQUENCES OF INJURY

FINANCIAL STRESS

CANCELLATIONS, POSTPONEMENTS OF COMPETITION

INJURY

ENDING OF CAREER/RETIREMENT (COLLEGE, PROFESSIONAL, DUE TO INJURY)

→ CHANGE OR PERCEIVED LOSS OF IDENTITY

LGBTQ, GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION

UNDERLYING MENTAL HEALTH DISORDER



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BALANCING SPORTING IDENTITY

An individual's identity may contain numerous dimensions. However, it is possible for one in particular to become dominant or preferred, and a lens through which the others are viewed. Athletic identity is described as the degree in which an individual identifies with the athlete role and looks to others for acknowledgement of that role.

(Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993)



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BALANCING SPORTING IDENTITY

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO REDUCE THE CHANCES OF DEPRESSION FOLLOWING RETIREMENT FROM SPORT:

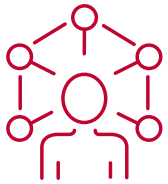
- Reduce exclusive identification with sporting role
- Expand self-identity pursuits
- Discover interests and competencies for other activities beyond sport
- Acquire stress-management and time-management skills
- Encourage strong relationships with coaches, family, friends, and others who care about sporting success and personal growth



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EARLY WARNING SIGNS

SIGNS TO LOOK FOR



BEHAVIORAL SYMPTOMS

Social withdrawal, disruption of activities of daily living, irresponsibility, decrease in sport or academic performance, substance abuse



COGNITIVE SYMPTOMS

Suicidal thoughts, confusion/difficulty making decisions, obsessive thoughts, poor concentration, all-or-nothing thoughts, negative self-talk



EMOTIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS

Feeling out of control, mood swings, excessive worry/fear, agitation/irritability, low self-esteem, lack of motivation



PHYSICAL/MEDICAL SYMPTOMS

Sleep difficulty, change in appetite or weight gain/loss, shaking, trembling, fatigue, weakness, GI complaints, headaches, overuse injuries



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HOW TO HAVE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT MH

- Everyone plays a pivotal role in recognition (not diagnosis or treatment) of concerns and taking action to help the individual gain access to necessary resources for help
- These conversations can be difficult, and we need to adhere to SafeSport Code/Guidelines/Rules
 - U.S. Center for SafeSport: <https://safesport.org/>
- It can be difficult for individuals to admit when we are struggling
- The biggest key is counteracting the stigma surrounding mental health issues by modeling behavior, creating a positive, inclusive and safe environment
 - With mental health issues, one cannot simply “tough it out”



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HOW TO HAVE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT MH

IF YOU ARE CONCERNED SOMEONE MAY BE STRUGGLING:

- Never speak to a minor alone, one-on-one
 - If concerned about a minor, speak to their parents/guardians using the same techniques
- Ask if they are ok
- Let them tell their story
- Be non-judgmental, sensitive, empathetic, and understanding
- Give reassurance and information: MH issues are treatable, people can recover with the right help
- If you are worried or if an individual admits to self-harm or thoughts of suicide:
 - **ALWAYS SEEK EMERGENCY MEDICAL HELP** if someone is actively suicidal



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COMMON MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS





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MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

HOW TO FIND MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDER

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Find a psychologist:

<https://locator.apa.org/>

AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION

Find a psychiatrist:

<http://finder.psychiatry.org/>

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS

Educational resources/find providers/
support groups:

<https://www.nami.org/Support-Education>

EMERGENCY NEEDS

CALL 911 IF IN IMMEDIATE DANGER

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFE LINE:

800-273-TALK (8255)

NAMI CRISIS TEXT LINE:

Text NAMI to 741-741

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE:

800-799-SAFE (7233)

SEXUAL ASSAULT HOTLINE:

800-656-HOPE (4673)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

FIND FREE ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS:

[https://www.nami.org/Support-
Education/Support-Groups](https://www.nami.org/Support-Education/Support-Groups)

SEARCH FOR LOCAL RESOURCES IN YOUR AREA:

<https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/>

TELETHERAPY TELEPSYCHIATRY

Counseling apps available



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U.S. SOCCER MH RESOURCES

For more information on Mental Health as it relates to sport, check out:

<http://www.recognizetorecover.org/mental-health>

Please take a brief survey on Mental Health here:

<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/5995902/Mental-Health-Awareness>

THANK YOU



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