

Athlete Leadership: Take Care of Your Mental Health



Issue 4: Take Care of Your Mental Health

Youth sports are a great avenue for kids of all ages to make friends, be physically active, and learn skills such as teamwork, sportsmanship, and the value of hard work—all of which can provide great steps towards personal growth. When it comes to mental health, sports can be an immensely positive experience for many participants. Simultaneously, being an athlete may present unique challenges to an individual's mental health. It is important for parents, family members, coaches, and teammates to understand both the mental health risks and benefits to ensure youth athletes have the greatest opportunity for success and enjoy participating in sports.

Reasons athletes may get stressed out:

- Over-Training / Heavy Workload
- Pressure to deliver peak performance
- Lack of Rest / Sleep
- Injuries

Key areas to help reduce stresses:

Sleep – Focus on getting quality 8-10hrs of sleep

Meals – Eat nourishing / balanced food and remember to hydrate

Activity – Make sure you have activities outside of your chosen sport

Relaxation – Find ways that work for you to unwind. E.g. unplug yourself from your phone

Time Outside – Take in some fresh air with a walk

It is important to have a PLAN in place in the event you feel stressed or experience negative thoughts.

Period of Time – Identify a time in our day to unwind

Location – Find a space for you to use to de-stress

Activity – Do an activity that you enjoy

Name – Identify someone that you can talk to about your stresses

Sleep Tips - Help yourself sleep better

- Keep your bedroom DARK, COOL, and quiet.
- Create a bedtime routine.
- Keep a regular schedule.
- Avoid going to bed on an empty or really full stomach.
- Avoid naps.
- No screens 1 hour before bed!

Crisis Text Line: 741741
If you or a friend are ever in crisis, text HELLO to 741741