



Supporting Your Child in Athletics: Mental Health

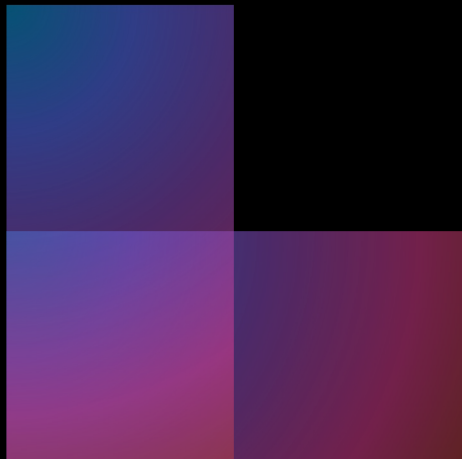
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Mental Health Benefits for Student- Athletes

Exercise positively impacts levels of serotonin (regulates mental health), releases endorphins ("happy chemicals"), and reduces cortisol (stress hormones)

Sports are associated with lower rates of stress, anxiety, depression, and suicidal behavior





Mental Health Benefits for Student-Athletes

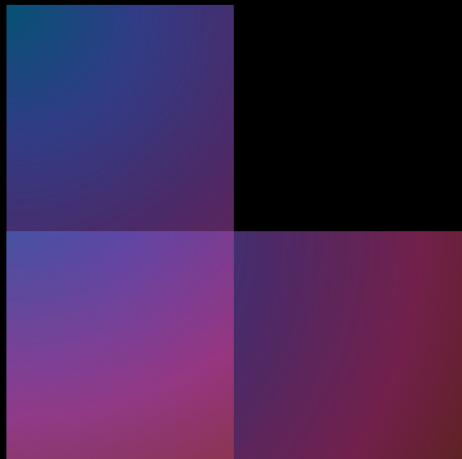
Participation in team sports reduces the risk of **teen substance abuse**

Team sports enhance resilience, empathy, confidence and empowerment

Increases executive functioning, creativity, cognitive development, and self-regulation

Improves teamwork and social responsibility

Mental Health Benefits for Student- Athletes



Better well-being for teens with disabilities

Teen sports can get teens outside so they can experience the **benefits of time in nature**

Sleep improves when teens are physically active - **sleep is essential for maintaining mental health**

Are There Mental Health Concerns for Student-Athletes?

Pressure to adhere to academic deadlines combined with excessive sporting commitment

Physical difficulties such as sleep problems and fatigue, aches and pains, and potential risk for eating disorders

- Other concerns include:
- Potential of suffering serious injury, or fears of playing after a serious injury
 - Anxiety over getting cut from the team (and social concerns)
 - Experiencing conflict with other team members or coaches



Signs that a Student-Athlete May Be Experiencing Difficulties

Changes in sleep patterns – may be constantly fatigued or hyperactive

Not eating well

Mood swings

Long stretches of apathy (lack of interest/enthusiasm)

Decline in academic performance

Social Isolation



How to Help Your Student Athlete if They're Struggling

- Open the channels of communication: if you notice signs, ask your child about them **directly**
- Reach out to your school counselor:
 - Can check-in on the student in the school setting
 - Can communicate with teachers and coaches to see if they have noticed concerns or changes in behavior
 - Can share community resources and/or therapist referrals



Reflections

Questions?

Resources

- <https://believeperform.com/mental-health-in-the-student-athlete/>
- <https://timely.md/blog/student-athlete-mental-health/>
- https://www.newportacademy.com/resources/mental-health/sports-and-mental-health/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=NA_leads_performancemax&utm_term=&kpid=go_cmp-17884784088_adg-ad-dev-c_ext-prd-&gclid=CjwKCAiAjs2bBhACEiwALTBWZTgKxMm5azzMwhv8_xGynZn9Z87sYCOsGDSY4QpZgeXjSzwoFXYzpRoCZ7oQAvD_BwE
- https://www.newportacademy.com/resources/mental-health/sports-and-mental-health/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=NA_leads_performancemax&utm_term=&kpid=go_cmp-17884784088_adg-ad-dev-c_ext-prd-&gclid=CjwKCAiAjs2bBhACEiwALTBWZTgKxMm5azzMwhv8_xGynZn9Z87sYCOsGDSY4QpZgeXjSzwoFXYzpRoCZ7oQAvD_BwE