Mental Health: Women in College Sports
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What is Mental Health

- Mental health refers to our emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It determines how we handle stress, relate to others and make healthy choices.

- What we know:

  Female athletes are at greater risk for depression and anxiety as compared to their male counterparts

  Suicide is the 3rd leading cause for death among college athletes

  Unaddressed mental health issues can affect one’s performance and functioning

  NCAA has recognize the importance of mental health in the student athlete and they have made recommendations for universities/college to create an environment that supports the wellness and provides resources including referral to mental health services.
Figure 3 Neurotransmitters and their hypothetically malfunctioning brain circuits in regions associated with the diagnostic symptoms for depression.

Notes: Depression diagnosis requires at least one of these "symptoms and ≥2 of these "symptoms. From Lum CT, Stahl SP: Opportunities for reversible inhibitors of monoamine oxidase-A (RIMAs) in the treatment of depression. CNS Spectrums. 2012;17(5):107–120, reproduced with permission."

Abbreviations: A, amygdala; BF, basal forebrain; C, cerebellum; H, hypothalamus; NA, nucleus accumbens; NT, neurotransmitter centers; PFC, prefrontal cortex; S, striatum; SC, spinal cord; T, thalamus.
Review this list developed by the University of Michigan and check all that apply to you:

- I am often restless and irritable.
- I am having irregular sleep patterns—either too much or too little.
- I don’t enjoy hobbies, my friends, family or leisure activities any more.
- I am having trouble managing my diabetes, hypertension or other chronic illness.
- I have nagging aches and pains that do not get better no matter what I do.
- I have trouble concentrating or making simple decisions.
- My weight has changed a considerable amount.
- Others have commented on my mood or attitude lately.

I often experience:
- Digestive problems
- Headache or backache
- Chest pains
- Vague aches and pains like joint or muscle pains
- Dizziness

Once you have filled out the checklist, share this information with your doctor or healthcare provider for an evaluation.

Excessive worry
- Irritability
- Sleep disturbance
- Poor concentration
- Restlessness
- Muscle tension
- Fatigue

Mental Health Issues of the Collegiate Athlete

- Transitioning from high school sports to collegiate sports
- Difficulty managing the academics, training and social
- Performance pressure
- Body image
- Sexual violence
MANAGING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

The Goal
To feel vital and balanced, free from depression and anxiety

Physical Self-Care
- Nutrition
- Sleep
- Exercise
- Water intake
- Medication
- Supplements
- Breathing

Lifestyle
- Structure/routine
- Relaxation
- Setting goals
- Fulfilling work
- Time in nature
- Pleasure

Mental/Emotional Self-Care
- Positive self-talk
- Positive beliefs
- Feeling one’s feelings
- Mood journal
- A library of positive memories
- Psychotherapy
- Family of origin healing
- Working through grief
- Working with a good therapist

People Support
- Family
- Friends
- Psychiatrist/therapist
- Minster/rabbi
- Support group
- Day treatment
- Community service

Spiritual Self-Care
- Prayer
- Meditation
- Spiritual community
- Forgiveness
- Finding purpose and meaning

WHAT SELF-CARE ISN'T

A SIGN OF WEAKNESS
You are never weak for taking the time to care for yourself. Actually, prioritizing your self-care is bound to ensure your mental and physical health, and through that, your strength as an individual.

ONLY EMOTIONAL CARE
Self-care techniques can be as emotionally rooted as journaling or as physical as going to the gym. Taking care of yourself comes in all types of packages.

ONLY FOR SOME PEOPLE
It doesn't matter who you are — caring for yourself is important. Feelings of being run down and exhausted don't discriminate, and neither does the need for self-care.

SOMETHING TO KEEP QUIET
Keep talking about self-care! Exchange self-care techniques and start a campus-wide conversation. It's our responsibility to look after ourselves and to look out for each other.

THE SAME FOR EVERYONE
Your self-care routine is likely very different from your friends', from your sister's, from your professor’s — and that's okay. Every individual is different, and so are our self-care needs.

BUT SELF CARE IS...

... whatever it looks like to you, an extremely important and extremely healthy way to manage stress, to achieve success, and to always make sure you’re doing your best.
Techniques

• Container

• Happy Place

• Maintaining a positive attitude

• Progressive Muscle Relaxation