

Working towards mental wellness for athletes and coaches in 2020

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How do we manage stresses so large, chronic and disruptive to our world?

We have to admit, this is really hard
And it is unprecedented.



What's the data on how people are doing?

- University of Wisconsin Study out this week
 - 3,000 High School Athletes
 - Experiencing disruption of sports and school during pandemic
- 2/3^{rds} experiencing significant symptoms of depression and anxiety
- 1/3rd experiencing moderate to severe mood and anxiety issues
- Reported physical activity levels 50% lower than last year

What are the factors impacting mental health in athletes?

- LOSS- of structure, socialization, physical activity, achievement, self-identity, focus, opportunities for success and self-esteem
- UNCERTAINTY-
 - When and If?
 - Health
 - Financial
 - School?
- COMPROMISE- in most cases, quality of training and life is lower

Special Issues Creating Stress For Coaches

- Stress of “responsibility” without knowing what is possible
- Uncertain timeline with pools, competitions, and virus
- Worry about balancing proper virus response and preparation
- Worry about our loved ones and their health
- Worry about ourselves and our health
- Worry about jobs and finances

What are some strategies to manage?

Behavioral strategies that impact your brain

- Maintain sleep discipline- may be harder with less training but try to maintain bed and wake times.
- Maintain enough physical work to regulate your mood.
- Develop a structure for your day- schedule your cross-training

What are some strategies to manage?

Emotional, and cognitive strategies

- Don't beat yourself up for grieving if you are. Don't have to be a model of resilience all the time. Permission to feel.
- Do something to build yourself as a human being every day. Its tough when your identity is solely tied to your sport.
- Focus attention on your own situation, your own building plan, without worrying about what others are doing. You have time.

What are some strategies to manage?

Purposeful Attention Strategies

- Mindfulness work- 5- 30 minutes a day is enough to reduce stress.
 - (reach out to me if you would like to do a structured 2 x weekly session)
- Make worrying a conscious decision
 - Purposeful, goal directed
 - Time limited focus of your attention- not always running in background

What are some strategies to manage?

Social Strategies

- Maintain social connections- group chats, #swim-on, face-time, Netflix Party, Mario-Kart. Stay connected to get out of your head.
- Reach out to talk. Use any/all resources you need to reduce stress and recover effectively from this disruption.
- Rest from social media if you want- take a break if necessary

What can coaches do for their athletes?

- Never underestimate your importance.
 - Finding ways to maintain contact, even if nothing new.
 - Help facilitate social connections
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- What do coaches do for their athletes?
 - DIRECTION
 - FEEDBACK
 - SUPPORT

What can coaches do for themselves?

- Stay Healthy
- Focus more on recovery
- Re-build, create, or maintain, social networks
- Be kind to yourself- its not being weak- it's the key to resilience

Thanks Everyone- Any Questions/Discussion?

