



GET YOUR HEAD IN THE GAME

on and off the field

LIFE AS A STUDENT ATHLETE:



Most Common Psychiatric Disorders Among Student-Athletes:^[1]



Eating Disorders

- Common in female dominated sports that judge on aesthetic.
- Common in sports where having a lower weight improves performance.
- Individuals fixate on counting calories & monitoring all food intake.



Performance Anxiety

- Occurs when an individual becomes overwhelmed prior and during certain areas of performance.
- Common symptoms: panic attacks, racing heart, shortness of breath, shakiness, and sweating.
- Individuals may present traits such as, excessive worrying, self-criticism, negative thoughts.

STIGMA:^[2]



- The sports community adopts a stigma that athletes do not show weaknesses.
- This stigma is what deters athletes from disclosing symptoms to coaches and healthcare professionals.
- College athletics call for heavy training and a constant drive to improve performance, thereby increasing the risk of psychiatric disorders.

UNTREATED MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS:



1 out of 4 student-athletes report clinically relevant levels of depression.^[3]

UNTREATED ISSUES MAY RESULT IN...^[1]



PROBLEMS IN ACADEMIC SUCCESS



PROBLEMS IN SPORT PERFORMANCE



PROBLEMS IN SOCIAL LIFE

EARLY RECOGNITION



Early recognition of mental wellness issues shortens time between onset and treatment.^[1]

STARTING A CONVERSATION:^[1]

Starting a conversation is an important first step towards better overall health within the student-athlete population.



- Athletic departments can do their part by implementing daily programs to make their athletes aware of their health and wellness.
- This opens the door to a more comprehensive conversation and safer environment to discuss factors that positively or negatively impact athletic and academic performance.
- Opening a conversation about mental health and wellness helps athletes feel more comfortable tackling the responsibilities of being a student and athlete.



[1] Stull T. Mind, Body and Sport: The psychiatrist perspective. NCAA.org. <http://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/mind-body-and-sport-psychiatrist-perspective>. Published July 18, 2017. Accessed October 1, 2019.

[2] Schellong M. How college athletes are fighting the stigma of mental illness. USA Today. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/college/2017/07/19/how-college-athletes-are-fighting-the-stigma-of-mental-illness/37433673/>. Published July 19, 2017. Accessed October 16, 2019.

[3] Lubarsky O. The Invisible Competition: Mental Health Within Athletics – Mental Health America. MHA. <https://www.mhanational.org/blog/invisible-competition-mental-health-within-athletics>. Accessed October 19, 2019.

