**Being An Athlete Is Not Easy!**

If your friend or teammate is struggling due to the pressures of being an athlete, consider this information!

The National Athletic Trainer’s Association found, “many student-athletes report higher levels of negative emotional states than non-student-athlete adolescentes.” So why are athletes showing higher levels of negative emotion? The pressures of being an elite athlete in high school trickles down from college into the high school sports culture. Injury, poor performance, or strife with the coach or teammates can trigger a psychological concern or exacerbate an existing one that will threaten a student-athlete’s identity. The right side-bar gives examples of signs and symptoms, triggering events, and behaviors to look for. Consider directing your friend to someone they trust, like those listed below.

## Depression signs and symptoms:

sadness, anxiousness, emptiness, hopelessness, worthlessness, aches, pains, decrease in sports performance, and many more.

## Triggering events:

alcohol or drug abuse, physical or sexual abuse, conflicts with coaches, changes in sports expectations.

## Behaviors to look out for:

anger management issues, domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, all-or-nothing thinking

## Anxiety Disorders- warning signs:

feeling powerless, weak, timid, panicked, fearful; having suicidal or aggressive thoughts

### Parents/Guardians

### Coaches/teammates

### Athletic trainers

 October 7, 2020

Beartown Newsletter

Student Athletes and Mental Health

Who can you talk to?

* **Why Is There Pressure On The Athlete? Where Do These Pressures Come From?**
* **33% of college students struggle with a mental illness. Among that group, 30% seek help. However, of the college athletes who have mental health issue, only 10% seek help.**
* **An NCAA survey found that 30% of college athletes report they were “intractably overwhelmed in the last month.”**
* **Nearly 25% of all college athletes have reported clinically relevant levels of depressive symptoms.**
* **35% of elite athletes suffer from mental illness which stems from stress burnout, depression, or an eating disorder brought upon by their sport. \*These statistics show that athletes at all levels struggle and we can assume the problem may start in high school athletics.**

 October 7, 2020

* **Marshall Mintz, a New Jersey–based sports psychologist suggests that “the professional consensus is that the incidence of anxiety and depression among scholastic athletes has increased over the past 10 to 15 years.”**

Potential question to ask if you think the pressure of athletics is affecting a friend or teammate:

"How are things going for you?’’

“Hey, what is going on? You don't seem yourself."

“Can you tell me more [about the incident].”

"How do you feel about this [the incident or the facts presented]?’’

‘‘Tell me how those cuts [or other wounds] got there[

“Do you want to talk to someone about this issue?”

Flanagan, L. (2019). Why Are So Many Teen Athletes Struggling With Depression? *The Atlantic.* <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2019/04/teen-athletes-mental-illness/586720/>.

Neal, T, L., Diamond, A, B., Goldman, S., Liedtka, K, D., Mathis, K., Morse, E, D., Putukian, M,. et al. (2015) Interassociation Recommendations for Developing a Plan to Recognize and Refer Student-Athletes With Psychological Concerns at the Secondary School Level: A Consensus Statement. *Journal of Athletic Training* 50(3), 231–49. <https://doi.org/10.4085/1062-6050-50.3.03>

Ripley, A. (2014). The Case Against High-School Sports. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/10/the-case-against-high-school-sports/309447/>