

Addressing Student-Athlete Stress, Anxiety, & other Mental Health Issues

Friday Apr 23 10:10 - 11:10

A dark blue diagonal gradient bar that starts from the bottom left corner and extends towards the top right corner, covering the lower half of the slide.

About me

- Cody Kelly
 - Been an AD and Physical Education for 13 years
 - 3.5 years ago diagnosed with depression
 - This past spring began dealing with anxiety for the first time.
 - Since then, I share my story and have become an advocate for Mental Health for Students

What is Anxiety

- **Anxiety** is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure.
- People with **anxiety** disorders usually have recurring intrusive thoughts or concerns. They may avoid certain situations out of worry.

Symptoms

- Feeling nervous, restless or tense
- Having a sense of impending danger, panic or doom
- Having an increased heart rate/Heart palpitations
- Breathing rapidly (hyperventilation)
- Sweating
- Trembling
- Feeling weak or tired
- Trouble concentrating or thinking about anything other than the present worry
- Having trouble sleeping
- Experiencing gastrointestinal (GI) problems
- Having difficulty controlling worry
- Having the urge to avoid things that trigger anxiety

What is depression

- **Depression** is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest. Also called major depressive disorder or clinical depression, it affects how you feel, think and behave and can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems.
- You may have trouble doing normal day-to-day activities, and sometimes you may feel as if life isn't worth living.
- More than just a bout of the blues, depression isn't a weakness and you can't simply "snap out" of it. Depression may require long-term treatment.

Symptoms

- Feeling sadness, tearfulness, emptiness, and hopelessness
- Angry outbursts, irritability or frustration, even over small matters
- Loss of interest or pleasure in most or all normal activities, may include sports
- Sleep disturbances, including insomnia or sleeping too much
- Tiredness and lack of energy, so even small tasks take extra effort
- Reduced appetite and weight loss or increased cravings for food and weight gain
- Anxiety, agitation or restlessness

Symptoms

- Slowed thinking, speaking or body movements
- Feeling of worthlessness or guilt, fixating on past failures or self-blame
- Trouble thinking, concentrating, making decisions and remembering things
- Frequent or recurrent thoughts of death, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts or suicide
- Unexplained physical problems, such as back pain or headaches.
- In teens, symptoms may include sadness, irritability, feeling negative and worthless, anger, poor performance or poor attendance at school, feeling misunderstood and extremely sensitive, using recreational drugs or alcohol, eating or sleeping too much, self-harm, loss of interest in normal activities, and avoidance of social interaction.

UW Health Research

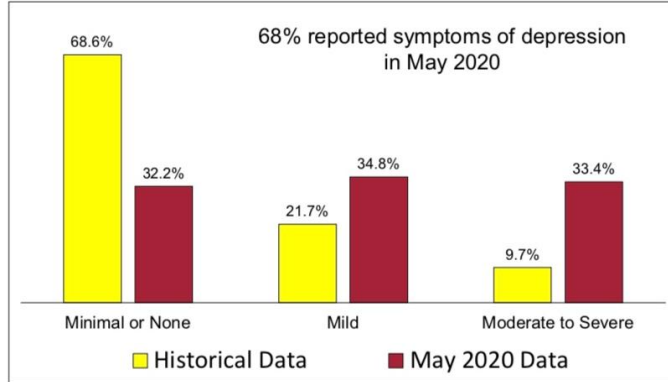
- 65% reported anxiety symptoms
- 25% suffering moderate to severe symptoms
- The study estimates that 66,000 Wisconsin adolescent athletes are at risk for depression, with short-term effects of mental health disorders impacting students use of drugs and alcohol, staying in school, engaging with peers, and graduating from high school.
- Long term concerns of the mental health disorder increase can include impacting whether individuals go to college, extensive use of drugs and/or alcohol, and the ability to form meaningful relationships.

McGuine, T., PhD. (2020). *The Impact of School Closures and Sport Cancellations on the Health of Wisconsin Adolescent Athletes* (pp. 6-13, Publication). Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health.

doi:https://cdn1.sportngin.com/attachments/document/33fe-2195426/McGuine_study.pdf#_ga=2.92734036.892212749.1607348474-333730317.1606838224

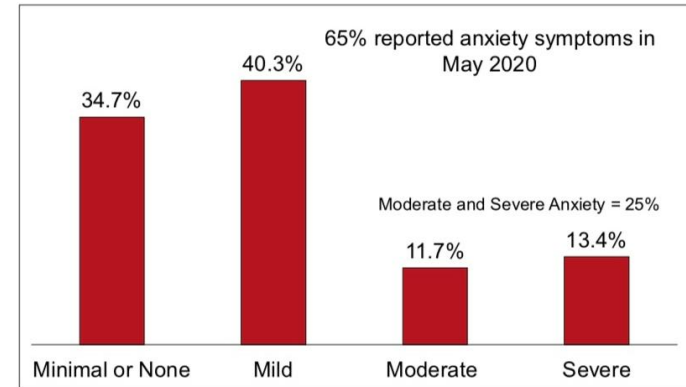
UW Health Research

Prevalence of Depression Symptoms in Adolescent Athletes During COVID-19 Related School Closures and Sport Cancellations in Wisconsin



Moderate to Severe Depression was 3.5X higher during May 2020 ($p < 0.001$)

Prevalence of Anxiety Symptoms in Adolescent Athletes During COVID-19 Related School Closures and Sport Cancellations in Wisconsin



What can we do to help?

- Check-ins
 - Make them sincere
 - Listen and allow them to share without interruption
 - Thank them for being so open
 - Ask what they would like from you?

Be Authentic

- Being authentic is key in fostering relationships
- Changing your tone in your voice
- Be vulnerable with them and share

Questions to ask

Ask:

- How are you coping?
- Is there anything you would like to share?

Questions to avoid

Avoid:

- How are you?
- Are you good?
- What's up?
- What's going on?
- Anything that is impersonal

Avoid

- It's not a big deal
 - This minimizes their very real distress
 - **I can see that you're really worried**
- I know how you feel or don't compare
 - We don't know as we all deal with things so differently
- Stop worrying / Calm down
 - They want to but in that moment they are unable to. Validate their feelings as normalcy
- Have to tried ...
 - This is individual and no one way will help someone
 - What can I do to help?
- It's all in your head
 - They typically know it's all in their head, don't dismiss that
- Get over it

“In situations of severe anxiety or a panic attack, I don’t need that (advice)—I want someone to listen and be there. They don’t have to do or say anything.”

Replace with or try

- I am always here for you
- I'm here to listen
- What can I do to help?
- What do you need?
- Let's go for a walk and you can tell me all about how you are feeling
- Let's find a quiet space
- Breathing techniques
- Listen to music
- This is tough, but we'll get through it together.
- Give it TIME!!

What Can You Do as a Leader in your School?

- Normalize it!!!
- Schools play a vital role in providing access to mental health services for disadvantaged students
- Be Open about your Mental Health
- Training your coaches
- Show that it is not a personal flaw or weakness
- Create a Mental Health Awareness Group
 - Bring Change 2 Mind
 - Hope Happens Here
- Use of Social Media
 - #ItsOkNotToBeOk
 - #EndTheStigma

Contact

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Group sharing:

Group sharing:

