

# Student Athlete Mental Health:

A Review of Resources and Discussion of Next Steps



SPORT SCIENCE  
INSTITUTE™



# OBJECTIVES

## ONE

Describe the significance of student-athlete mental health as it relates to athletic performance, academic success, and overall health.

## TWO

Identify existing mental health resources for student-athletes, athletics health care collaboration teams, and campus administrators.

## THREE

Explain the current NCAA Mental Health Best Practices and recommendations for promotion of student-athlete mental health.

## FOUR

Understand and discuss the objectives, foci, and timeline of the NCAA Mental Health Advisory Group.

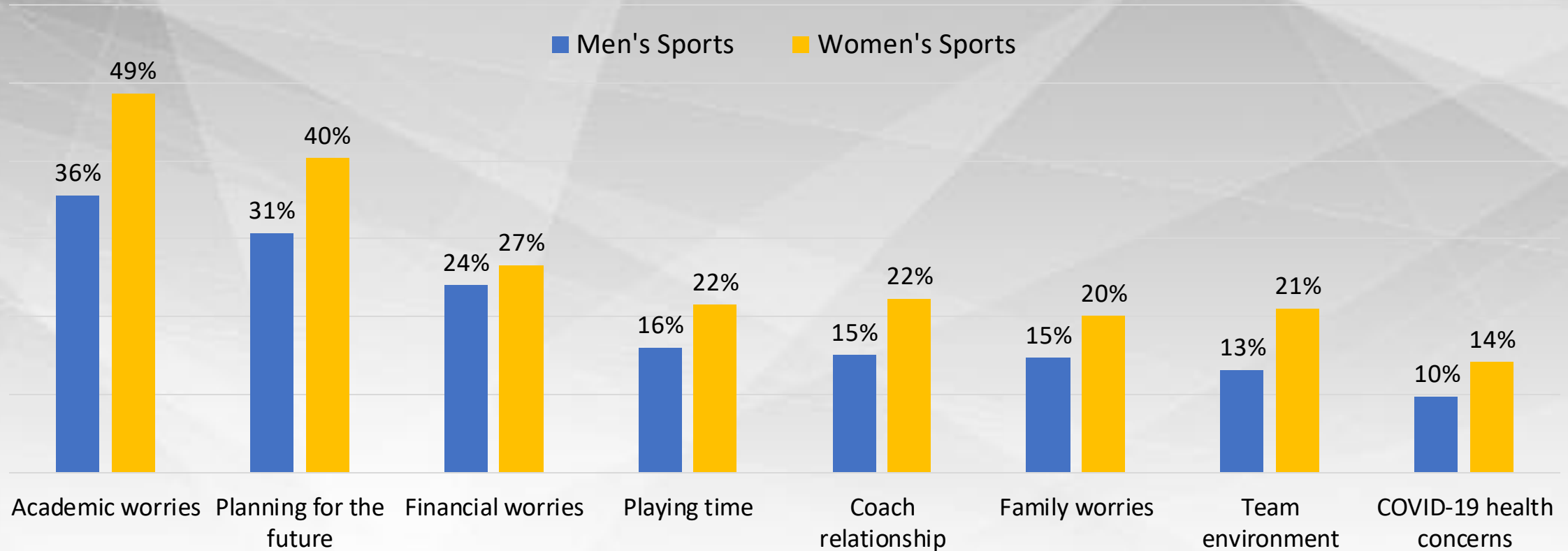


A high-angle, close-up photograph of a red running track. The track is composed of a reddish-brown synthetic material with white lane markings. The lines are curved, suggesting a turn in the track. The lighting is bright, creating a slight shadow on the track surface.

**The significance of  
student-athlete mental  
health and well-being.**

# Factors Negatively Impacting Student-Athlete Mental Health in the Month Before the Survey

(Percentage of Participants Who Responded “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”)



Note: Top 2 points on a 6-point scale. The survey asked, “How much do you agree or disagree that the following have negatively impacted your mental health within the last month?” The survey was in the field Nov. 17-Dec. 13, 2021. Source: NCAA Student-Athlete Well-Being Study (Fall 2021).

**NCAA Mental Health:  
Legislation, Resources &  
Best Practices**

# NCAA Health, Safety and Performance Priorities

1. Cardiac health.
2. Concussion.
3. Doping and substance abuse.
4. Mental health.
5. Nutrition, sleep and performance.
6. Overuse injuries and periodization.
7. Sexual assault and interpersonal violence.
8. Athletics health care administration.
9. Data-driven decisions.



CSMAS  
RECOMMENDED

- Mental and physical health.
- Sport-related illness and injury.
- Training and performance.
- Education and policy.



# NCAA Legislation and Mental Health

**Make mental health services and resources available consistent with the Mental Health Best Practices.**

**Distribute mental health educational materials and resources to student-athletes.**

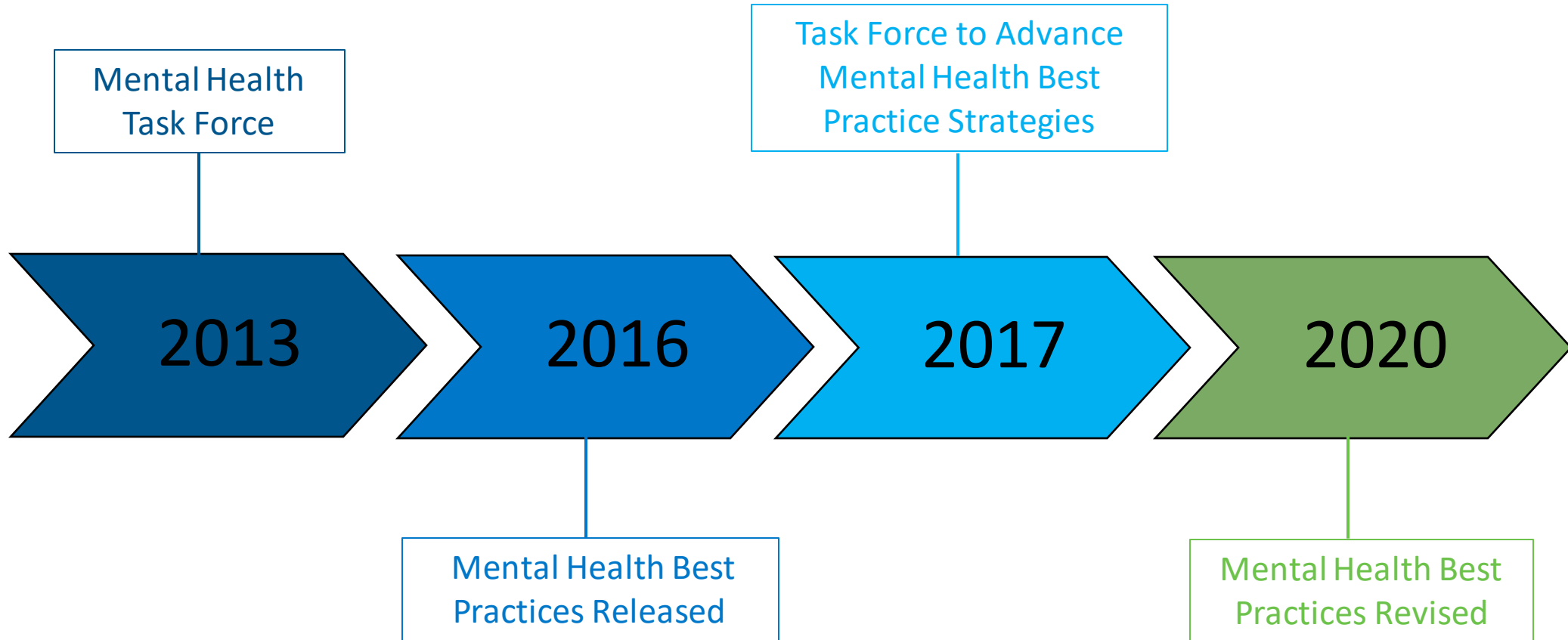
**Include a guide to the mental health services and resources available and how to access them.**

Bylaw 16.4.2



SPORT SCIENCE  
INSTITUTE™

# Mental Health Best Practices





# NCAA Mental Health Best Practices

Endorsed by 24 of the leading mental health, sports medicine and medical associations in the country.

**1**

Clinical **Licensure** of Practitioners Providing Mental Health Care.

Procedures for Identification and **Referral** of Student-Athletes to Qualified Practitioners.

**2**

**3**

Pre-Participation Mental Health **Screening**.

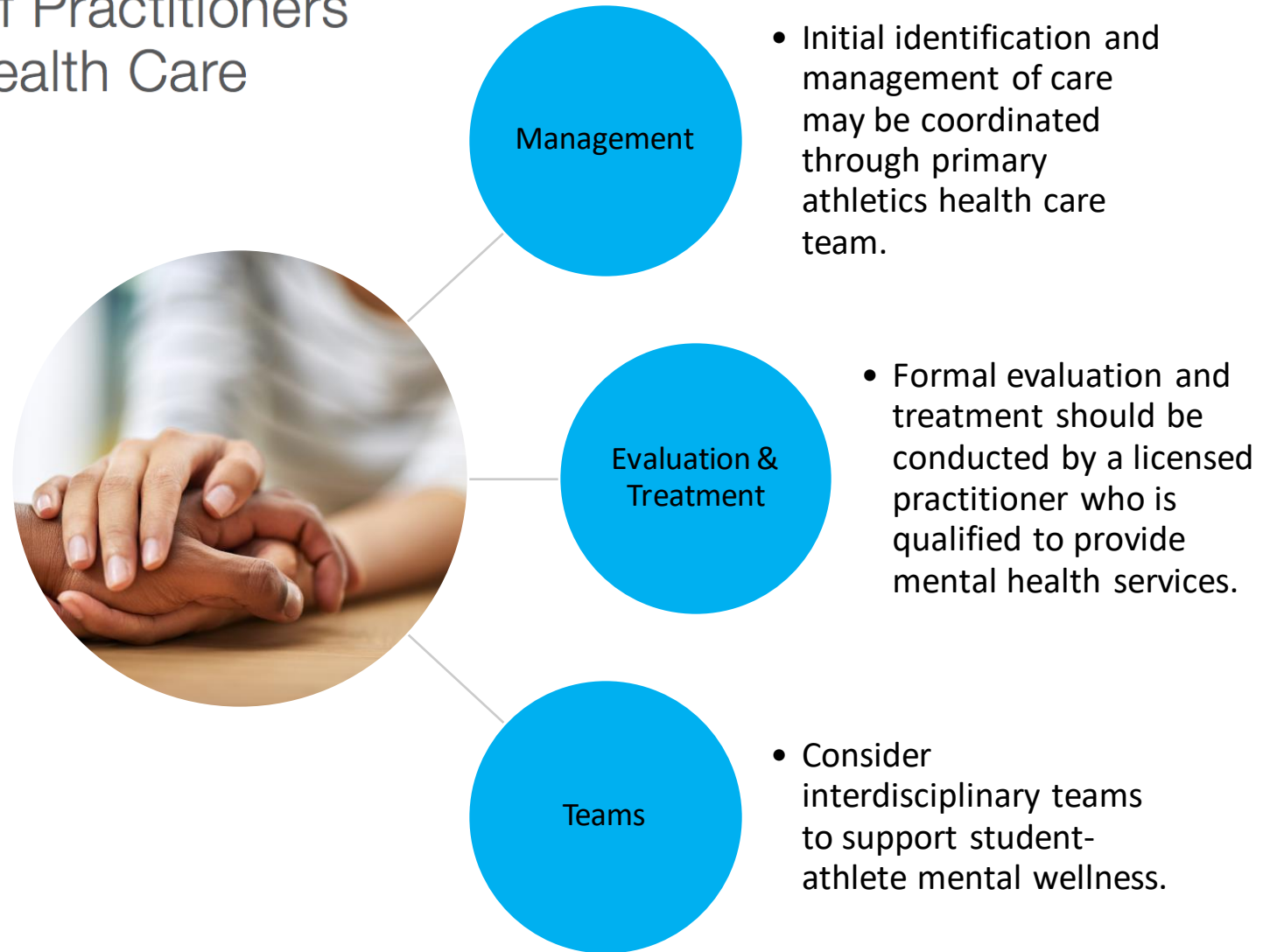
Health-Promoting **Environments** that Support Mental Well-Being and Resilience.

**4**



SPORT SCIENCE  
INSTITUTE™

# 1 Clinical Licensure of Practitioners Providing Mental Health Care



**Routine  
Mental  
Health  
Referral**

**Emergency Mental Health Situation**

**Potential Emergency Situations**

**Mental Health  
Emergency  
Action  
Management  
Plan**

Suicidal or  
Homicidal  
Ideation

Sexual  
Assault

Psychosis or  
Highly  
Threatening  
Behavior

Acute  
Intoxication  
or Overdose



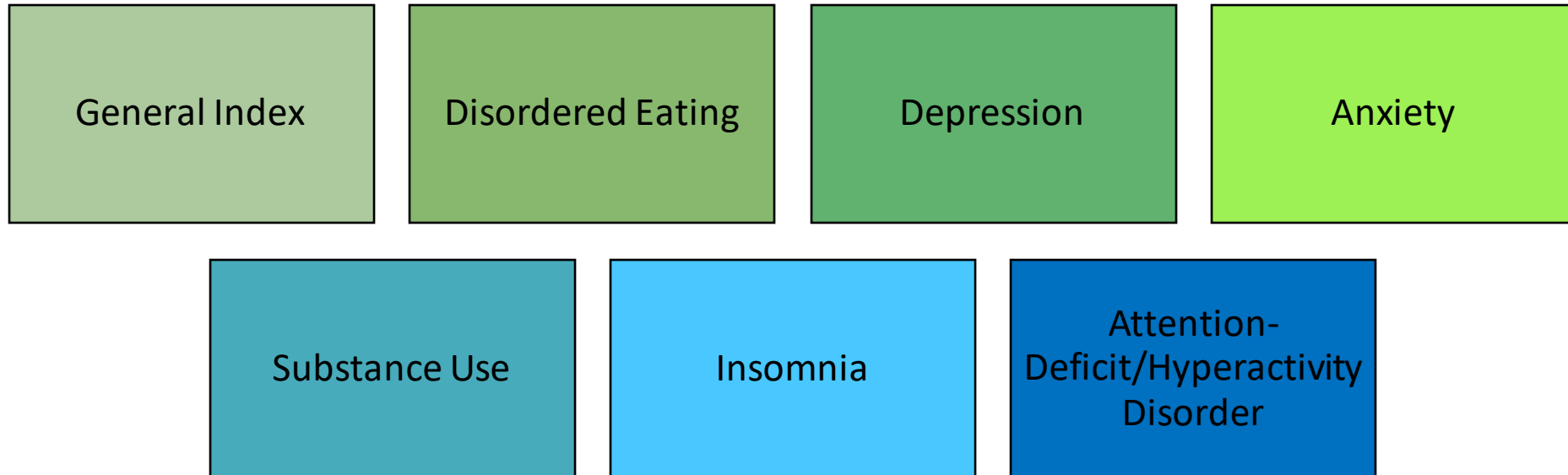
SPORT SCIENCE  
INSTITUTE™

**2** PROCEDURES FOR IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL  
OF STUDENT-ATHLETES TO QUALIFIED PRACTITIONERS

# Mental Health Emergency Management Action Plan MHEMAP



# 3 Pre-Participation Mental Health Screening



Please note: Screening tools are not validated stand alone assessment tools.

# 4 Health-Promoting Environments That Support Mental Well-Being and Resilience





## SPORT SCIENCE INSTITUTE

through research, education, best practices, and collaboration with member schools, national governing bodies, key medical and youth sport organizations, and the public and private sectors.

Student-athlete well-being is a foundational component of the NCAA mission and has been a priority for the NCAA for more than 100 years.

### Mental Health Resources



The NCAA has developed and made available a multitude of mental health educational resources. The Association, its member schools and core stakeholder associations remain committed to prioritizing the critical challenge of creating and maintaining an environment where student-athletes can obtain mental health services without stigma while thriving in an environment that promotes mental and physical well-being. [More >>](#)

[NCAA Student-Athlete Well-Being Study](#) | [NCAA Social Series Recap](#)

### Social Series: Focusing on Mental Health



# Mental Health Resources

[Mental Health - NCAA.org](https://www.ncaa.org/mental-health)

Educational Resources

Best Practices for Campuses

Data and Research

Summits and Task Forces

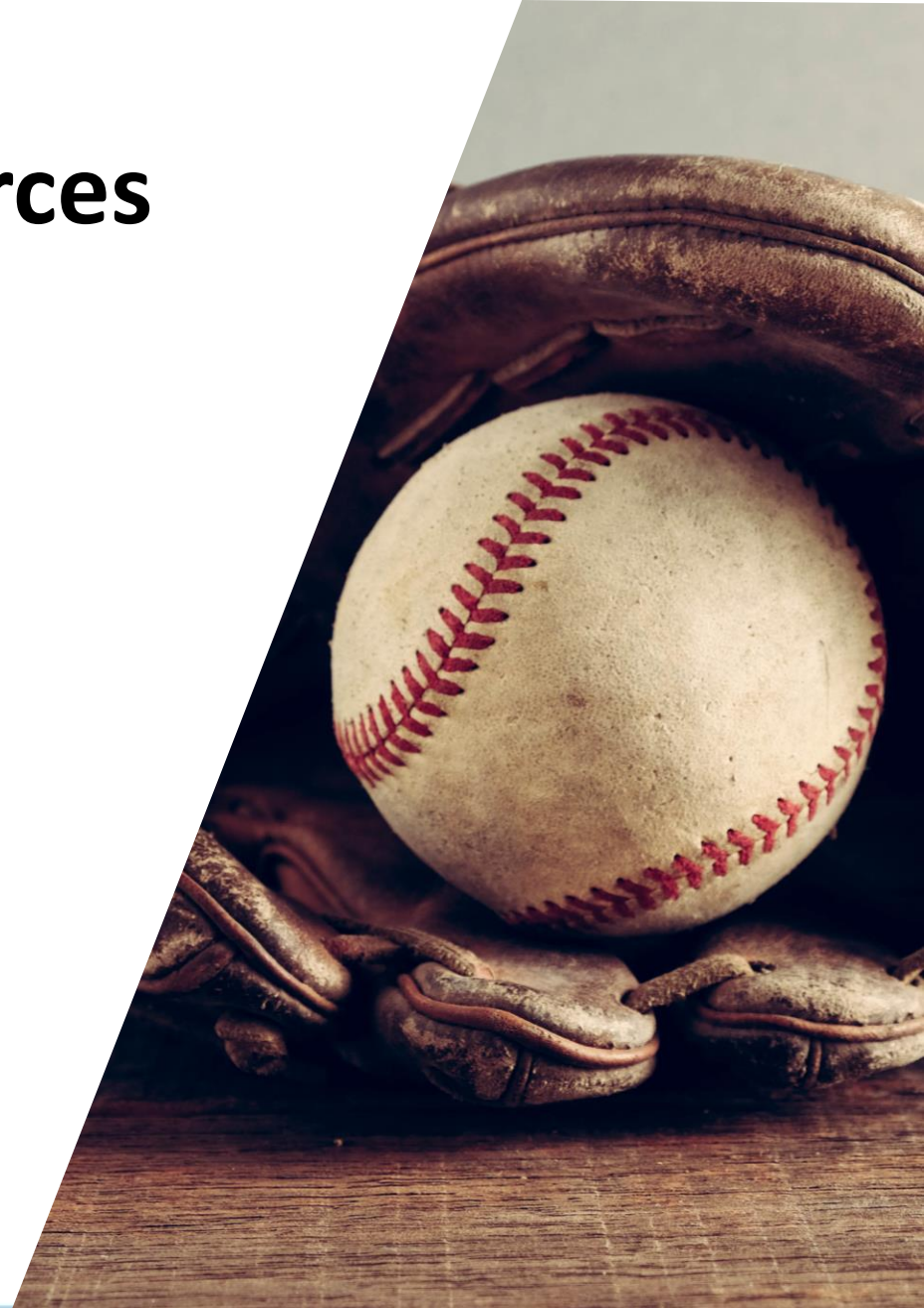


SPORT SCIENCE  
INSTITUTE™



# Mental Health Educational Resources

- [Mental Health Educational Resources - NCAA.org](https://www.ncaa.org/mental-health)
  - Fact Sheets
  - Videos & Educational Modules
  - Checklists and Toolkits
  - Campus Resources



SPORT SCIENCE  
INSTITUTE™

## 1. Clinical Licensure of Practitioners Providing Mental Health Care

- Mental health care of student-athletes should be done in collaboration with the primary athletics health care providers (athletic trainers and team physicians) and the licensed practitioners who are qualified to provide mental health services.
- Formal mental health evaluation and treatment for student-athletes is provided ONLY by practitioners who are qualified to provide mental health services (clinical or counseling psychologists, psychiatrists, licensed clinical social workers, psychiatric mental health nurses, licensed mental health counselors, board certified primary care physicians with core competencies to treat mental health disorders.)
- Individuals providing mental health care to student-athletes have autonomous authority, consistent with their professional licensure and professional ethical standards, to make mental health management decisions for student-athletes.
- Individuals providing mental health care to student-athletes should have cultural competency in treating student-athletes from diverse racial, ethnic, gender identified, and other unique cultural experiences influencing help-seeking.
- Individuals providing mental health care to student-athletes ideally should have cultural competency in working with collegiate student-athletes, as evidenced by professional training related to athletics, continuing education courses related to athletics or other professional development activities or experiences related to athletics.

## 2. Procedures for Identification and Referral of Student-Athletes to Qualified Practitioners

Mental Health Emergency Action Management Plan (MHEAMP) that specifies:

- Situations, symptoms or behaviors that are considered mental health emergencies.
- Written procedures for management of the following mental health emergencies:
  - Suicidal and/or homicidal ideation.
  - Sexual assault.
  - Highly agitated or threatening behavior, acute psychosis or paranoia.
  - Acute delirium/confusional state.
  - Acute intoxication or drug overdose.
- Situations in which the individual responding to the crisis situation should immediately contact emergency medical services (EMS).
- Individuals responding to the acute crisis should be familiar with the local municipality protocol for involuntary retention, e.g., if the student-athlete is at risk of self-harm or harm to others.
- Situations in which the individual responding to the crisis situation should contact a trained on-call counselor.

# Data & Research

## ▶ NCAA Student-Athlete Well-Being Studies

- ▶ Examined the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the physical and mental well-being of student-athletes during spring 2020, fall 2020 and fall 2021. The three online surveys generated over 70,000 student-athlete responses.

## ▶ NCAA GOALS Study

- ▶ Quadrennial study of the well-being and experiences of student-athletes in relation to academics, athletics, social life, recruiting, time demands, campus support and finances. The 2019 survey generated over 20,000 student-athlete responses.


## ▶ NCAA Social Environments Study

- ▶ Quadrennial study of the social environments of student-athletes. The 2016 survey generated over 20,000+ student-athlete responses.





[ncaa.org/research](https://ncaa.org/research)

 @ncaaresearch

 RESEARCH

# Mental Health Summits & Task Forces

[Mental Health Summits and Task Forces - NCAA.org](https://www.ncaa.org/mental-health)



SPORT SCIENCE  
INSTITUTE™



**NCAA Mental Health:  
Legislation, Resources &  
Best Practices**

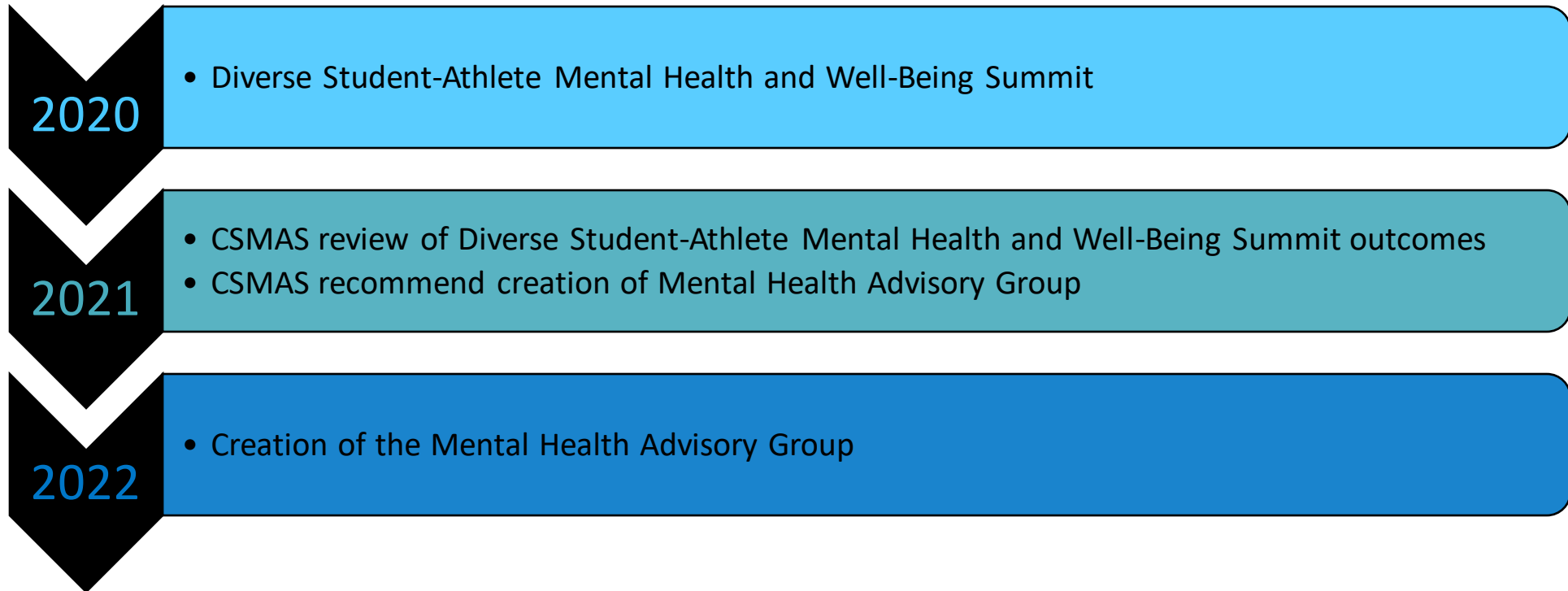
# Mental Health Best Practices:

## A Timeline Review



SPORT SCIENCE  
INSTITUTE™

# Creating The Mental Health Advisory Group





# Diverse Student-Athlete Mental Health and Well-Being Summit

50

Representatives participated to amplify need of supporting SA mental health and continue efforts to [better support student-athletes of color](#).

GOALS

[Foundational statements](#) to shape education, research and policy with a focus on the challenges for people of color.

Infrastructure challenges and how college athletics may address [underrepresentation of people of color](#) in the professions of mental health care, athletic training and sports medicine.



SPORT SCIENCE  
INSTITUTE™

# Creating The Mental Health Advisory Group

- Following 2020 Diverse Student-Athlete Mental Health and Well-Being Summit, CSMAS determined a need for review and update of the MHBP:
  - **Student-athletes of color.**
  - **Student-athletes with disabilities.**
  - **International student-athletes.**
  - **LGBTQ+ student-athletes.**



# Creating The Mental Health Advisory Group

- CSMAS provided recommendations for the creation of the Mental Health Advisory Group

## Work of the Group

- Akin to NCAA Concussion Safety Advisory Group
- Scope of the MHAG

## Group Representatives

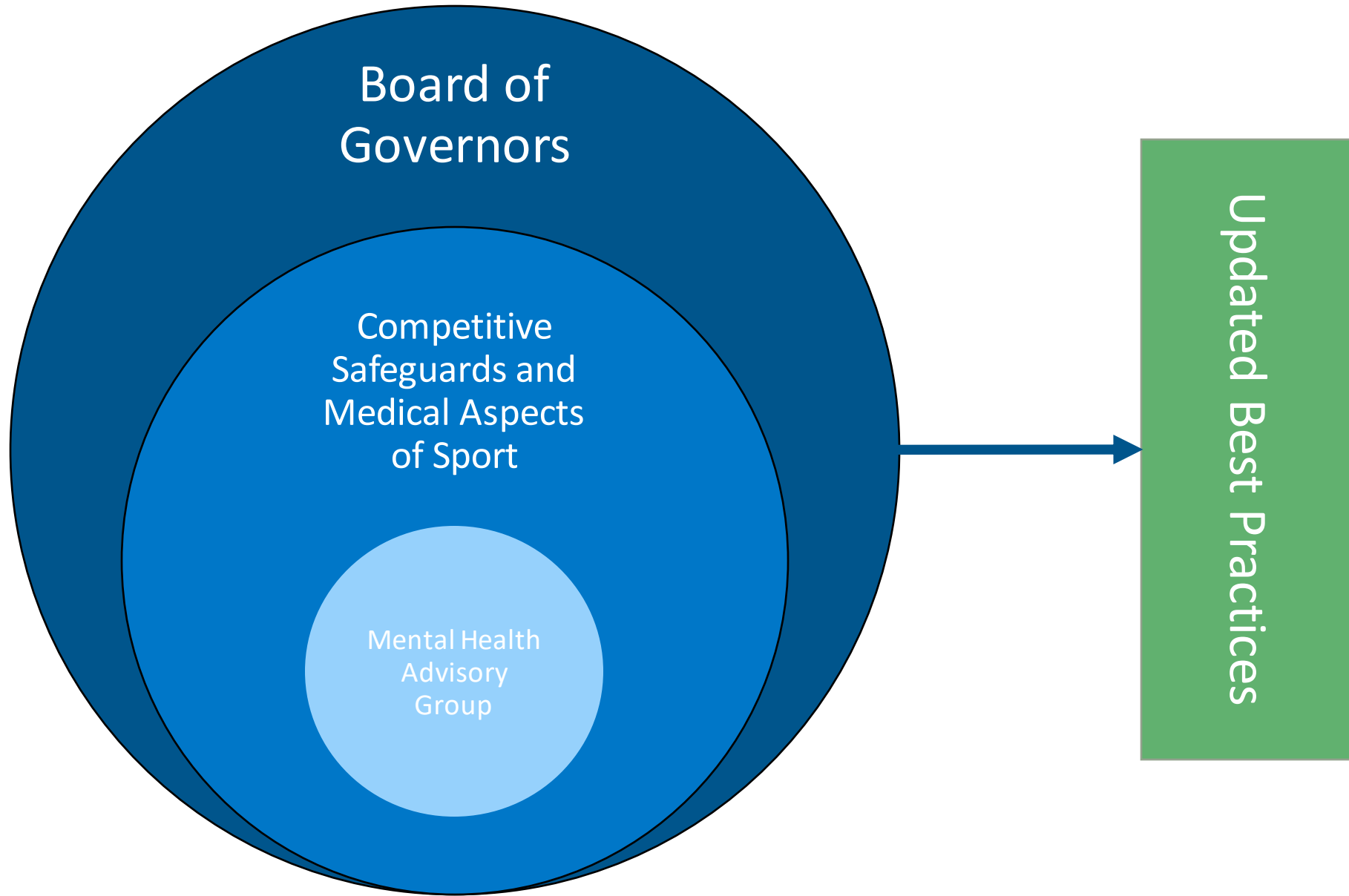
- Representation internal and external to organization
- Expertise in areas relevant to MHBP and diverse SA populations



# The MHAG was empowered by CSMAS to:

1. Make recommendations on **updating MHBP** and Mental Health materials.
2. Using data and literature, **update and create programming** to support student-athletes, including diverse student-athlete populations
3. Establish **criteria for determining when to update** NCAA Mental Health materials.
4. Provide **feedback on mental health topics**.





# Composition of the Mental Health Advisory Group

19

External Representatives

Organizations with expertise in mental health, education, diverse student-athlete populations, and athletics

Representatives appointed by corresponding organization

11

Membership Representatives

Represent Divisions I, Division II and Division III

Over ½ are student-athlete representatives



SPORT SCIENCE  
INSTITUTE™

# MHAG Organization with Representatives

Invitations sent to organizations that previously endorsed MHBP.

Additional organizations with representatives:

- Alliance of Social Workers in Sport
- Asian American Psychological Association
- Athlete Ally
- Society of Indian Psychologists
- The Trevor Project
- United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee



SPORT SCIENCE  
INSTITUTE™

# MHAG Anticipated Timeline

2022

- Initial meeting.
- Background information.

2023

- Consensus building.
- Provide CSMAS & BOG recommendations.

2024

(Anticipated)

- Updated documents disseminated to membership.
- Membership implementation.



SPORT SCIENCE  
INSTITUTE™



# Initial Meeting of the MHAG

October 6, 2022 (Virtual)

MHBP

Current Research

Diverse Student-Athlete Mental Health Well-Being Summit

Review of Existing Best Practices

Gaps and Opportunities

NCAA

American College Health Association

Outcomes

Recommendations

2021 NCAA Student-Athlete Well-Being Study

2018-19 ACHA National College Health Assessment

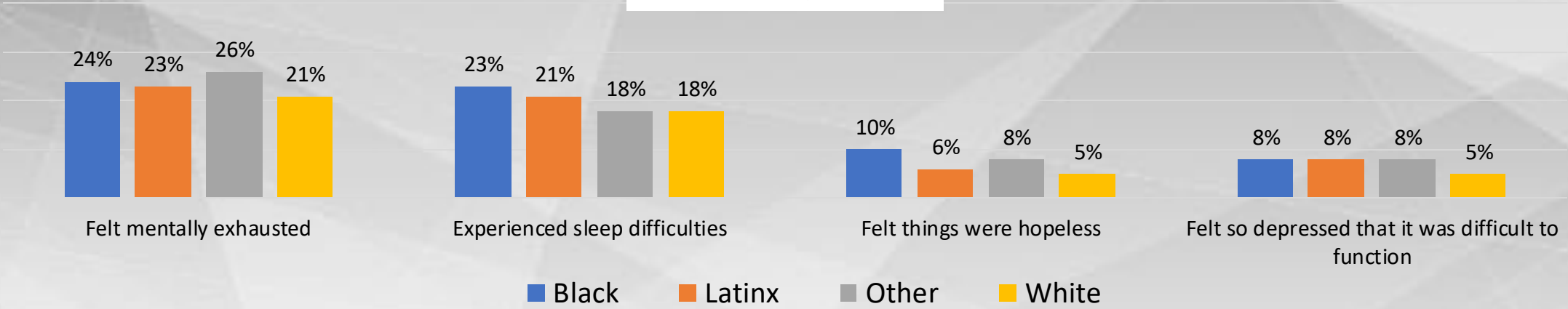


SPORT SCIENCE INSTITUTE™

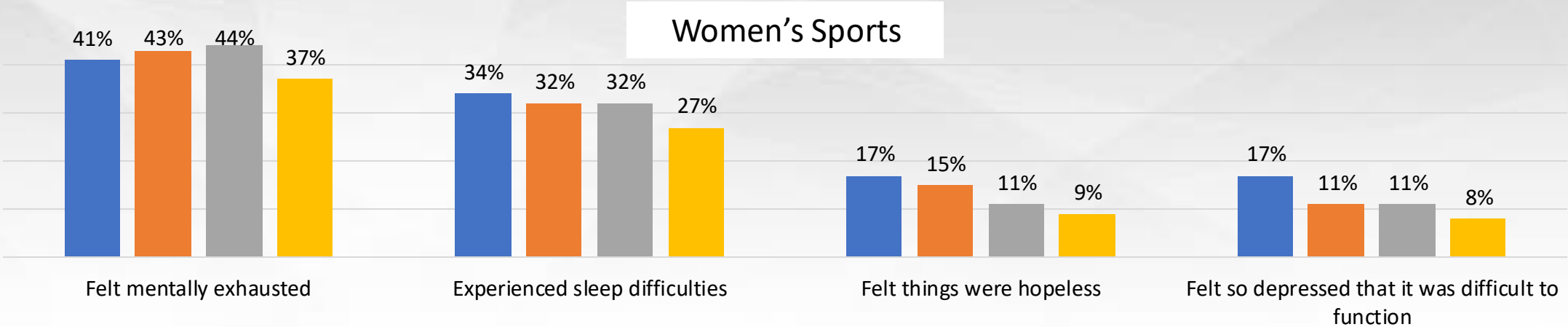
# Fall 2021 Mental Health Concerns

(Percentage of Participants Who Endorsed “Constantly” or “Most Every Day” by Race/Ethnicity)

## Men’s Sports

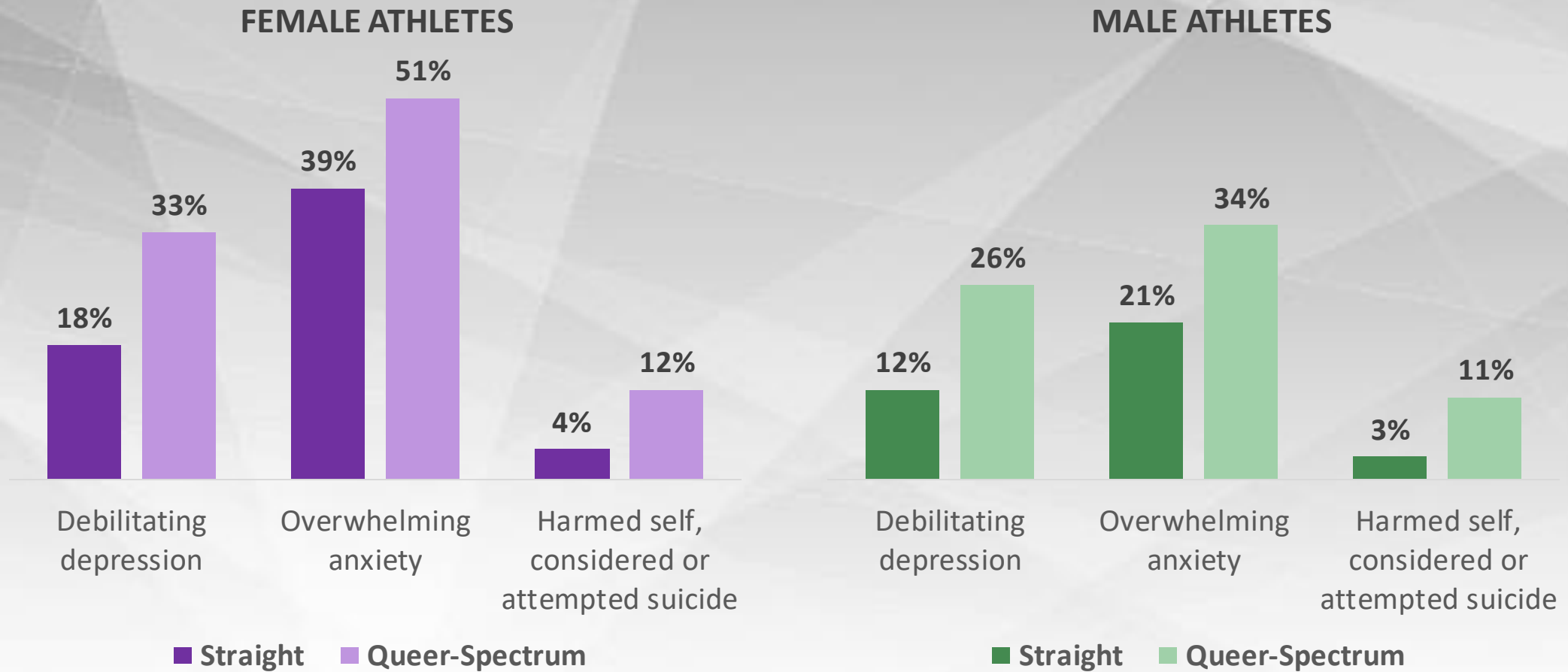


## Women’s Sports



Note: “Other” includes those who selected American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and other racial identities. Source: NCAA Student-Athlete Well-Being Study (Fall 2021).

# Mental Well-Being of Queer-Spectrum Athletes Compared to Straight Athlete Peers (Experienced Within the Previous 30 Days)



**Note: Number of queer-spectrum cisgender athletes in the sample is 721 females and 156 males. Queer-spectrum includes those self-identifying as asexual, bisexual, gay, lesbian, pansexual, queer, questioning, same gender loving or another identity.**

# MHAG Next Steps Include...



SPORT SCIENCE  
INSTITUTE™

# MARCH

2023

In-person in Indianapolis for 1 ½ day consensus meeting.

# JUNE

2023

Virtual meeting to follow initial CSMAS feedback.

# OCTOBER

2023 and annually

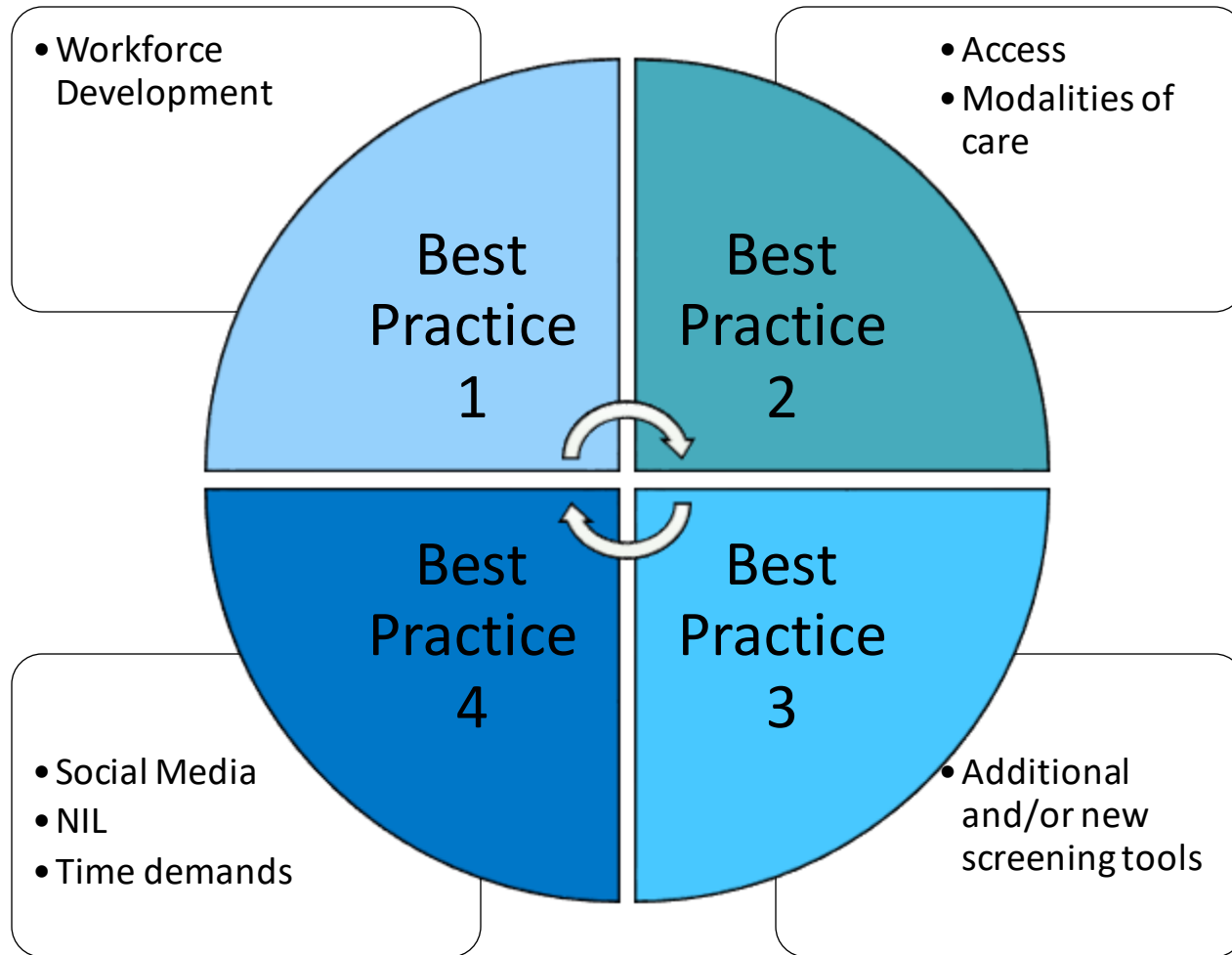
Format and location TBD for 2023.

Anticipated annual in-person meeting in Indianapolis beginning 2024.



SPORT SCIENCE  
INSTITUTE™

# Consensus Building Approach



# Mental Health Take-Aways

## Protective Effect for Student-Athletes

- ACHA-NCHA Survey 2018/19

## Mental Health Best Practices

- Recommendations
- Checklists
- Emergency action

## Looking Ahead

- Updated MHBP
- Convention sessions

