

# Checklist

## MENTAL HEALTH BEST PRACTICES CHECKLIST: BEST PRACTICES FOR MEMBER SCHOOLS IN SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING STUDENT-ATHLETE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

This checklist serves as a supplement to the Mental Health Best Practices, Second Edition, and is intended to aid membership in implementation of Mental Health Best Practices; it is not intended to serve as a stand-alone document. Completion of the Mental Health Best Practices Checklist should be done in accordance with the best practice recommendations and foundational principles discussed in the Mental Health Best Practices.

### **Best Practice 1:**

#### **Create Healthy Environments That Support Mental Health and Promote Well-Being**

##### **CORE COMPONENTS:**

- ☐ A written plan that is developed in collaboration with a licensed mental health care provider.
- ☐ Plan includes multiple levels for mental health promotion programming, such as:
  - Individual student-athletes.
  - Teams and the personnel that comprise them.
  - Athletics departments.
  - Campus culture and policy.
  - Community, state and federal culture and policy.
- ☐ Plan considers diversity, equity and inclusion throughout all aspects of health promoting environments.

##### **ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER:**

- Train and support coaches about mental health and their role in mental health promotion. Relevant topics may include mental health first aid, mental health literacy, trauma-informed coaching, cultural sensitivity, empathic listening and resources for supporting and promoting coach mental health.
- Provide opportunity for athlete-facing staff to have a working knowledge of trauma-informed approaches.
- Provide annual education about the importance of sleep for health and performance and strategies for improving sleep hygiene.
- Provide guidance and support related to social media and NIL.
- Engage recruits and their families through sharing information about mental health resources and mental health promotion initiatives.
- Develop a written plan to support student-athletes in preparing for a successful transition in or from sport.
- Consider continuous improvement processes that consider dynamic multilevel risk and protective factors of student-athlete mental health and well-being.

### **Best Practice 2:**

#### **Procedures for Identification of Student-Athletes With Mental Health Symptoms and Disorders, Including Mental Health Screening Tools**

##### **CORE COMPONENTS:**

- ☐ Use validated screening tools as part of a process to identify student-athletes experiencing psychological distress.
- ☐ Screen all student-athletes at least once annually, with consideration for pre-participation examination screening as a baseline.
- ☐ Screening is used in consultation with a licensed mental health care provider.

##### **ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER:**

- In addition to screening for psychological distress, screen for specific mental health disorders and risk factors.
- Use screening tools that have athlete-relevant cut points and/or screening tools that have been validated diverse populations.
- To foster trust with student-athletes, share screening information with student-athletes on an annual basis, including the purpose of screening and what happens after screening.
- Have athlete-facing staff complete evidence-based training in mental health literacy.
- Consider continuous improvement strategies that help ensure mental health screening is meeting student-athlete and member school needs.

### **Best Practice 3:**

#### **Mental Health Action Plans That Outline Referral Pathways of Student-Athletes to Qualified Providers**

##### **CORE COMPONENTS:**

- ☐ Have written action plans for routine and emergency mental health care needs.
- ☐ Action plans address the full spectrum of mental health care, including:
  - How student-athletes with mental health symptoms are identified.
  - When and how they are referred for mental health care, including evaluation, ongoing treatment, follow up and reentry when indicated.
  - Who is involved in the identification, referral and care process.
- ☐ Action plans provide well-defined considerations for what constitutes a routine and/or emergency mental health condition.
- ☐ Action plans discuss opportunities for regular outreach, including communication, rehearsal and ongoing continuous improvement.

##### **ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER:**

- Recognize that student-athletes may have experienced or be experiencing maltreatment and/or psychosocial trauma by prioritizing student-athlete safety and trust, empowering athletes in the care process and attending to cultural and individual identity factors.
- Conduct annual outreach about action plans to all stakeholders involved.
- Provide a brief visual summary of the action plan(s).
- Include post-crisis support in the action plan(s).
- Consider non-clinical aspects of care.
- Consult with campus disability services.
- Continuous improvement strategies could consider how action plans are understood, implemented and experienced.

### **Best Practice 4:**

#### **Licensure of Providers Who Oversee and Manage Student-Athlete Mental Health Care**

##### **CORE COMPONENTS:**

- ☐ Formal evaluation and treatment of student-athletes with mental health symptoms should be performed by qualified mental health care providers acting within the scope of their clinical licensure.

##### **ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER:**

- Recognize the value of accessible providers and student-athlete choice of provider in the care process.
- Prioritize cultural sensitivity in recruitment, hiring, retention and professional development of licensed mental health care providers.
- Continuous improvement strategies could consider student-athlete experiences with accessing and utilizing mental health services, while being mindful of student-athlete privacy.

