

Social Media and Mental Health

What Student-Athletes Should Know

Social media can impact your mental health. Understanding the risks and benefits of social media use can help you engage with social media in ways that positively impact your mental health, as well as recognize when social media use may be negatively impacting your mental health.

HOW CAN SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT MENTAL HEALTH?

Potential benefits of social media use:

- Connecting with friends, fans and teammates.
- Building a supportive community.
- Sharing your story or advocating for causes you care about.
- Build their brand and fulfill NIL contracts.

Potential risks of social media use:

- Receiving harmful and harassing messages.
- Developing body image concerns or negatively comparing yourself to others.
- Experiencing sleep problems that can affect your health or performance.

Negative impacts of social media use may be associated with symptoms of depression, anxiety, disordered eating, and in extreme circumstances, be a contributing factor to suicidal thoughts or actions.

Recognizing the Signs

- **Mood changes.**
- Feelings of **hopelessness, isolation or low motivation.**
- Changes in **eating or sleeping habits.**
- **Loss of confidence or self-doubt** about your abilities.
- **Constantly checking accounts.**

What To Do

You're not alone, and support is available.

Strategies for managing your social media:

- **Protect your social accounts:** Filter negative words, limit or turn off comments, mute or block harmful accounts, and ask a friend to monitor comments.
- **Set boundaries** on sharing, prioritize real-life connections and take regular social media breaks.
- **Don't check social accounts after an event** until you've reflected on your performance.

Strategies for identifying support:

- **Understand when to elevate concerns,** especially if you receive threats, discriminatory messages or other harassment that could lead to self-harm or suicidal thoughts. Reach out to a friend, family member or trusted adult.
- **Speak with a licensed mental health provider** or encourage your teammate to do so.
- **Talk about your experiences.** It's likely some of your teammates have gone through it, too.
- **Be there for a teammate** by listening carefully and asking follow-ups.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, call, text or chat 988.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WELL-BEING



About **20%** of student-athletes say social media engagement makes it hard to get to sleep at night.



Nearly **30%** of female student-athletes say social media frequently makes them feel worse about the way their bodies look.

For resources and guidance on mental health education check out the [NCAA Mental Health Best Practices](#).

