

Suicide and Mental Health Emergencies

What Student-Athletes Should Know

Understanding the signs of mental health emergencies can help you recognize them and seek support for yourself or a teammate.

**You are
not alone
and help is
available.**

WHAT ARE SUICIDE AND MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCIES?

All of these are cause for concern and a reason to seek help:

- **Self-harm** is when someone is having thoughts of harming themselves.
- **Suicidal thoughts** are thoughts about wanting to die, from fleeting ideas to detailed plans.
- **Suicide attempts** are when someone takes action to end their life.
- **Violent thoughts** are thoughts about harming yourself or someone else.
- **Psychosis** is when someone has significant difficulty telling the difference between what is real and what is not.
- **Intoxication/overdose** is when someone uses a toxic amount of a substance.
- **Experiencing violence** can be a mental health emergency.

Recognizing the Signs

In Yourself:

- Thinking things would be easier if you were no longer alive; thinking about ways to end your life; feeling “over it”; believing you are a burden.
- Intentionally inflicting cuts, burns, bruises or harm on yourself.
- Feeling paranoid or unusually suspicious of others.
- Uncharacteristically or obsessively thinking about wanting to hurt someone.

In Someone Else:

- Saying people would be better off without them; posting on social media about wanting to give up; making statements that sound like “goodbyes”; talking about plans to end their life.
- Seeing unexplained wounds on them (often on wrists, arms, thighs or torso).
- A prolonged state of confusion, talking about things that don’t make sense or appearing out of touch with reality.
- Talking about wanting to hurt someone or seeming unusually aggressive.

What To Do

If you’re concerned about yourself:

- Immediately reach out to a licensed mental health provider, team physician, coach or other trusted adult.
- Call, text or chat the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: 988.

If you’re concerned about a teammate:

- Approach them with compassion and let them know you care about them.
- Ask if they are having thoughts of harming themselves or someone else; asking about suicidal thoughts or other mental health concerns can encourage them to seek help.
- Tell your team physician, licensed mental health provider or another trusted adult – speaking up may feel hard but can save a life.

I’ve noticed you seem down lately. I care about you and want to help. Would you like to talk about it?

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



See NCAA Mental Health Best Practices for more information.

