



Mental Health Matters

Chatting mental health with our kids doesn't have to be overwhelming.

Mental health relates to our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It impacts how people think, feel, and act, as well as how people can manage stress, connect with others, and live their day-to-day lives.

When someone is mentally healthy, they express positive emotions, and have limited lingering 'negative' (e.g., sadness, hopelessness) emotions, and are satisfied with their life. They strive for growth, feel a sense of purpose, and want to learn. They can rely on themselves and do things on their own. They accept themselves. They have positive relationships with others and are well-integrated into their community.

Mental health is not an 'all-or-nothing'. It also is not static throughout life. Just like we expect every human to get sick or have some sort of physical injury throughout their life, we expect people to have periods of being mentally healthy and mentally unwell.

Unlike an injury or physical pain that tends to be easier to recognize and rehabilitate, mental health can sometimes feel more complicated. Many parents are unsure of how to support their child's mental health due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of the topic. As a parent, it is okay for you not to have all the answers! You can start by building an understanding of mental health as it relates to what you see, hear, and experience when being around your athlete.

SCORECARD

Taking care of our mental health is essential when striving for sustainable peak athletic performance. Athletes need to be well mentally, in order to perform their best. Athletes also need to be performing their best to be mentally well.

Mental health impacts an athlete's ability in a variety of areas, including attention, decision-making, perception, coordination, memory, problem-solving, emotion regulation and focus.

Being a high-performance athlete also has many factors that can impact one's mental health. This may include:

- 'Pinch yourself mentality' for athletes who make it on tour
- Feeling isolated
- Judging performance in terms of success or failure
- Performing on demand

- Having high personal standards. Never feeling 'good enough'
- Being the face for sponsors, coach, parents
- Stress and burnout
- Only connecting identity with performance
- Media
- Experiencing imposter syndrome
- Managing stress
- Strained relationships

Consider your athlete. What factors have impacted their golf journey so far?

Looking forward to what may be ahead, are there factors or points along the journey that you think will be especially challenging for them?

FOLLOW THROUGH

Parents can support their child with their mental health by leading by example! How often do you check in on your own well-being? Have you developed strategies to regulate your behaviour and mood? The mental health continuum (found in the Up and Down resource) is not only a tool that you can use to support your athlete's mental health, but it is a tool that you can use on yourself! By showing your child that you are taking your own mental health seriously, they may be more inclined to see you as someone they can approach and lean on for support.

For more information on strategies to support mental health for performance check out the "**Mental Health Matters – Up and Down**". Here we discuss how to use mental skills to achieve peak performance as well as additional mental health resources.

"It is tough to stay mentally well when we are giving everything we have to something."

- Dr. Adrienne Leslie-Toogood, Sport Psychologist