

ATHLETE RESOURCE GUIDE

**A PLAY BY PLAY GUIDE TO
SUPPORTING YOUR TEAMMATES
OFF THE FIELD**

GALEAHEALTH

WHAT IS AN ATHLETE ADVOCATE?

Athlete advocates are current and former athletes who understand the unique challenges athletes experience as well as the barriers they face when seeking mental health care. Athlete advocates provide their support, create space for open conversations, and connect their peers to tailored resources and therapy options. As resources on mental health, advocates are committed to changing the game of mental health for the athlete community and beyond. When you sign the Athlete Advocate Pledge, you join a community of other athletes committed to promoting openness about mental health in athletics. You can connect with advocates on other campuses and teams and encourage your own teammates to join the athlete advocate community.

ATHLETE ADVOCATE PLEDGE

As someone who understands the challenges athletes face, I'm committed to supporting fellow athletes on and off the field. I will both check-in with and reach out to my friends and teammates when I notice that they might be struggling. I will learn about resources and strategies to help lend a hand and listen openly when they are ready to talk. I will advocate for open conversations about mental health in the athlete community.

HOW DO ATHLETICS AFFECT MENTAL HEALTH?

1 in 4 people experience a mental health condition at some point in their lives, and athletes are no exception. An athlete's relationship to their sport plays a key role in their mental health – sports can offer athletes joy, stability, and a community, but they can also cause unanticipated challenges or exacerbate pre-existing mental health conditions. Athletes are more likely to experience concussions, injuries, and chronic pain, factors which, in addition to posing challenges in everyday life, can impact athletes' income, eligibility, scholarships, social life, and sense of identity.

At Galea Health, we believe in the importance of improving athletes' relationships to their sport while acknowledging that athletics is just one facet of a person's identity. We are committed to understanding current and former athletes as dynamic people both on and off the court.



SIGNS YOUR TEAMMATE MAY BE STRUGGLING

1. They're distant and don't feel like hanging out as often
2. They seem distracted and can't concentrate
3. They talk about feeling numb, sad, or hopeless
4. They're not acting like themselves and are quieter or more irritable than usual
5. They seem tired
6. They're showing up late to practice and struggling to balance their sport with their schoolwork or social life

KEEP IN MIND

No sweat if the conversation doesn't go as planned! Just letting them know that they have your support is a huge step. Keep checking in and let them open up at their own pace.

If you're feeling overwhelmed or not sure how to best support your friend, don't hesitate to get some outside help, too.

Reach out to a parent, teacher, counselor, or someone you trust to make sure you're getting the support you need.



NINE

WAYS TO INITIATE AN OPEN CONVERSATION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

1. Timing is important – find a quiet, comfortable setting and give your undivided attention during the conversation
2. You don't have to be an expert on mental health - starting the conversation takes compassion, not a PhD!
3. Your teammate might not know exactly how to express how they feel, but that doesn't mean they don't appreciate you lending an ear
4. Ask caring, open-ended, and nonjudgmental questions
5. Avoid immediate problem-solving; remind them that it's okay to feel the way they feel
6. Ask whether they've talked about what they're going through with someone else
7. Offer to help them look for a therapist or connect with other support systems
8. Listen with intent and let them know you're there for them beyond this conversation
9. Keep checking in!

- *Hey, haven't seen you around as much lately, how's everything going?
- *I've noticed you haven't really seemed like yourself lately. What's up?
- *I know you've been going through a lot lately. If you want to talk, I'm here for you.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

CRISIS AND EMERGENCY HELP

SIGNS YOUR TEAMMATE MAY NEED IMMEDIATE HELP

1. Difficulty performing routine tasks, especially personal hygiene
2. Rapid mood swings; suddenly acting depressed or withdrawn
3. Acting aggressive and agitated
4. Self-harm
5. Substance use
6. Isolating themselves from teammates and loved ones
7. Losing touch with reality or experiencing paranoia

IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
- Crisis Text Line: text BRAVE to 741-741
- National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)
- IMAlive: online crisis chat
- National Hopeline Network: 1-800-784-2433
- NAMI Helpline: 800-950-NAMI (6264)
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233

