



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Current Landscape of Athlete Mental Health in Canadian Universities: Is there a crisis?



Dr. Carla Edwards

MD, Sports Psychiatrist
Assistant Clinical Professor, Dept of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neurosciences,
McMaster University
Mental Health Committee co-chair
U SPORTS Sports Medicine and Research Science Committee



Current State of Mental Health in U SPORTS Athletes

Dr. Carla Edwards, MD, Sports Psychiatrist
Assistant Clinical Professor, McMaster University
U SPORTS Sports Medicine and Research Science Committee
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Outline



Overview of mental health challenges in U SPORTS athletes 2021-22



Goal- pay attention to the important things



Goal- increase mental health supports at U SPORTS schools



Goal- optimize available services

Mental Health Challenges 2021-22

- Team dynamic problems (coach-player, between players, culture issues)
- ADHD
- Discrimination, harassment, abuse, poisoned environment (most often involving coaches, and including sexual harassment)
- Depression
- Self harm
- Suicidal thoughts
- Eating disorders
- Anxiety
- Impact of Covid-related roster challenges
- Adjustment and resilience (2 years of rookies, long lay off due to missed 2020-21 season)



GOAL: Pay attention to the important things

- Team dynamic problems: safe mechanisms for feedback, referral pathways
- ADHD: screening, referral pathways for assessment
- Discrimination, harassment, abuse, poisoned environment: safe mechanism for reporting, and FOLLOW THROUGH. Do your policies have teeth?
- Depression: screening, management (personnel and pathways)
- Self harm: awareness, pathways for support (staff and athletes)
- Suicidal thoughts: screening, referral pathways
- Eating disorders: screening, awareness, referral pathways
- Anxiety: screening, management (personnel and pathways)
- Impact of Covid-related roster challenges
- Adjustment and resilience (2 years of rookies, long lay off due to missed 2020-21 season)



GOAL: Increase mental health supports at U SPORTS schools

- FACT: **Most** schools do not have a sports psychiatrist on staff
- FACT: **Some** schools have mental health practitioners associated with their athletics departments (Registered psychotherapist, social worker, or psychologist)
- FACT: **All** schools have general mental health supports available for the general student body (typically not enough, and typically not well sport-informed)
- FACT: **Not all schools** are screening for MH (reason: resources, liability, execution; but there is guidance!)



GOAL: Increase mental health supports at U SPORTS schools

- **PROBLEM:** There are not enough sport-informed mental health practitioners associated with U SPORTS school athletics departments (availability/budget-related)
- **POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:**
 1. Connect more Sports Psychiatrists to U SPORTS schools (free!)
 2. Enhance and expand the sports competence of existing campus wellness resources
 3. Enhance and expand MH screening at all U SPORTS schools



GOAL: Optimize available services

- **IDENTIFY** current available resources: Sports Psychiatrists, SAMHI (evolving, expanding), campus wellness, ?department-based resources, other community resources
- **INCORPORATE** mental health in all department agendas
 1. Incorporate Mental Health intro into varsity athlete orientation
 2. Mental Health handbook for all athletes (including resources)
 3. Safe Sport Compliance, mental health training for coaches and IST





THERE IS **WORK TO BE DONE,
BUT **SOLUTIONS** CAN BE
FOUND!**

Questions? Comments?

Dr. Carla Edwards
edwardcd@mcmaster.ca

