

# MENTAL HEALTH 101 FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES (Grades 9–12)

## This Season Is a Lot — And You're Not Alone.

Balancing school, sports, friends, recruiting, college apps, social media, and NIL...it's a lot. Stress is normal. What matters is noticing when it starts to feel too heavy or not like you.

### 1. **Signs a Person Might Be Struggling**

- Constant worry or overthinking
- Feeling overwhelmed, exhausted, or irritable
- Sleep or appetite changes
- Loss of motivation or joy
- Pulling back from friends or teammates
- Pressure to be "perfect"
- Burnout or emotional exhaustion

### 2. **If You Notice a Friend Struggling**

- Check-in. "I've been thinking of you, I noticed you've been \_\_\_\_\_. How are you?"
- Care. Listen, don't fix. Connect. Help them get to a trusted adult or counselor.
- If you're concerned about safety, tell an adult immediately.

### 3. **If You Notice These Signs in Yourself**

- Label what you're feeling, "I feel overwhelmed. I feel pressured. I feel exhausted. I feel sad."
- Step away from social media for a bit
- Try 4–6 breathing (inhale for a count of 4, exhale for a count of 6)
- Talk to someone you trust
- Don't wait, reach out for support

### 4. **When to Talk to a Professional**

- Stress, anxiety, depressive feelings and thoughts last more than a couple of weeks
- School, sleep, appetite, or sport is impacted
- You feel alone in it
- You're overwhelmed
- You're having thoughts of hurting yourself
- Support is strength. Your mental and emotional health is just as important as your physical health!

### 5. **Where to Begin to Find Support**

- School counselor
- Athletic trainer
- Trusted teacher/coach
- Parent/guardian
- Therapist

## 988 Lifeline (24/7 Support)



Crisis support: 988 or  
text HOME to 741741

<https://988lifeline.org/>

## Read Articles for Athletes:



*Athlete Illuminated,*  
A blog for the athlete

community:<https://icollinsicsw.com/athleteilluminate/>

## Find an Athlete-Centered Care Provider

Alliance of Social Workers In Sports  
(ASWIS):[aswis.org/provider-network](https://aswis.org/provider-network)

Onrise: <https://www.onrise.care/>

Peak Sports Psychiatry:[peaksportspsychiatry.com](https://peaksportspsychiatry.com)