TOP TIP #7

COVID-19 has caused unprecedented mental health concerns in sport.

Despite much of sport offerings returning to pre-pandemic levels, mental health concerns among youth athletes continue to amplify. Most notably these include anxiety, depression, and social isolation; decreased quality of life; and caused disruptions in sleep quality and quantity.

While some short bouts of sadness and low mood are normal human emotions, prolonged feelings are not something you should hide or ignore. Most common first signs of everything not being ok include frequent mood fluctuations, and persistent changes in eating, sleeping, and hygiene habits.

HELPFUL DEFINITION:

Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in.
(World Health Organization, 2022)

Helpful points to note:

1. If you feel you are not OK, know that there are always adults around who are willing to help you.
2. Be brave in reaching out to your parents, guardians, teachers, school counselors, coaches.
3. Seeking help is not a sign of weakness, but quite the opposite. It takes strength and courage to say I need help.
4. Taking care of your mental health is just as important as your physical health. Remember the base triangle in your see-saw? There is a reason why psychological/sociocultural factors form the foundational side of the triangle.

SCIENCE FACT:

Data from 13002 US adolescent athletes revealed that COVID-19 had a negative effect on their mental health and wellbeing. Various demographic factors (e.g., biological sex, grade level, sport(s) played, level of poverty) influenced mental health symptoms frequency, physical activity levels, and quality of life. (McGuine et al., 2021)

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

This infographic is part of the Wisconsin Swimming Safe Sport Athlete Education: "Adopting a Healthy Swim Philosophy for Success: Top 10 Tips From Sports Science" – series.
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