

MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

IOWA SWIMMING

PREVENTION

★ WHY IS AN EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN VALUABLE? ★

- 39% OF COLLEGE STUDENTS EXPERIENCE A SIGNIFICANT MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE.
- 67% COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH ANXIETY OR DEPRESSION DO NOT SEEK TREATMENT.
- PEERS ARE OFTEN THE FIRST POINT OF CONTACT FOR THOSE WHO ARE STRUGGLING.
- 67% OF COLLEGE STUDENTS FIRST TELL A FRIEND THEY ARE FEELING SUICIDAL BEFORE TELLING ANYONE ELSE.

SOURCE: ACTIVEMINDS. "VAR: VALIDATE, APPRECIATE, REFER" UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

TO CONSIDER WHEN ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THOSE IN OUR CARE



1. Changes in their physical appearance?

- Look more tired than usual
- Seem 'flat' or drained of energy
- Have had a pattern of illness or being run down
- Are complaining of physical health issues such as headaches/migraines
- Are eating more than usual



2. Changes in mood?

- Seem more irritable, snappy
- Appear more anxious and worried
- React more emotionally than the situation warrants
- Are quick to anger
- Appear to be overwhelmed by tasks they had previously found manageable



3. Changes in behavior?

- Seem more withdrawn
- Don't seem to enjoy hobbies/interests as they once did
- Seem to have difficulty concentrating
- Are not performing to usual standard



4. Changes in how thoughts are expressed?

- Struggle to see any positive perspective; "it's always terrible"
- Seem to think the worst
- Personalize situations; "they are trying to make things worse of me..."
- Saying things that sound confused or irrational

Ways IASI Clubs Can Reach Swimmers Proactively

- Provide 741741 number to athletes
- Provide Mental Health resources via social media
- Parent Option: If you know your child is having a tough day, email coaches predetermined code for "Please help keep an eye on them today"



R U OK- A Conversation Could Change a Life

The R U OK way contributes to suicide prevention efforts by encouraging people to invest more time in their personal relationships. Building the capacity of informal support networks- friends, family, and teammates- to be alert to those around them, have a conversation if they identify signs of distress or difficulty, and connecting someone to appropriate support will also help long before they're in crisis. Our coaches are invested in having these conversations and creating that support network.

Conversation Starters We Use:

- "How are you? Are you ok?"
- "I've recently noticed..."
- "That sounds difficult. How can I support you?"
- "I remember dealing with that when I was a student/swimmer. What would be helpful?"
- "I may not know the answer, but I want to support you and connect you with the right resources."

Ways to Validate:

- "That makes sense"
- "That sounds difficult"
- "I am sorry you are struggling right now"
- "I hear you."



CONVERSATION STARTERS FOR SWIMMERS AND COACHES

Swimmers in our practices or on our team may approach coaches for help. This is a good sign that swimmers trust coaches. As a team member, sometimes we are so worried about saying the wrong things that we don't say anything. Simply showing that we care and that we can connect them to the appropriate resources will hopefully go a long way.

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RESPONSE

★ WHAT TO DO DURING A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS ★

Ask yourself...

- Is the person in danger of hurting themselves, others or property?
- Do you have time to start with a phone call for guidance and support from a mental health professional?

SPECIFIC STEPS DURING A CRISIS:

- ! • If imminent danger is observed or reported, the club head coach should be notified and the coach will talk to the athlete.
 - Coaches: Important questions to ask/ tools to use:
 - How long have you been feeling this way?
 - Do you have a plan?
 - What is the plan?
 - When will I see you next?
 - When having conversations with young people and athletes suspected to be at risk - it's important to be sensitive and ask non judgmental, open-ended questions. But asking about suicide should be done directly. **There is no evidence asking about suicide contributes to suicide.**
 - "Are you having thoughts of wanting to die?"
 - "Have you ever considered hurting yourself?"
- !! • If troubling or concerning verbiage or actions are observed/heard, the athlete's parent should be contacted immediately.
- If direct threats to oneself or plans for self-harm are observed/heard, 911 should be called (or the 988 Crisis Hotline is an option if unsure about calling 911)
 - Do you need emergency assistance?
- !!! • If the situation is life-threatening or if serious property damage is occurring, don't hesitate to call 911 and ask for immediate assistance.

Techniques that may help de-escalate a crisis:



CRISIS



- Keep your voice calm
- Avoid overreacting
- Listen to the person
- Express support and concern
- Avoid continuous eye contact
- Ask how you can help
- Keep stimulation level low
- Offer options instead of trying to take control
- Avoid touching the person unless you ask for permission
- Be patient
- DON'T make judgmental comments
- DON'T argue or try to reason with the person

WHAT TO DO AFTER A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

As a Coach-

If you learn about a suicide or suicide attempt during practice, quietly and quickly work to verify the information from a knowledgeable and trusted source. You do not want to spread rumors or share information that isn't public knowledge.

If you are able to verify the information **is accurate before the end of practice**, consider sitting your group down and sharing the facts with the group. With social media as ubiquitous as it is, athletes may get in their car and learn of the passing before getting home. Emotional drivers are unsafe drivers.

KEEP IN MIND:

1. Speak clearly. "We've learned that ___ has taken their own life."
NOT: "A teammate is in trouble and no longer here."
2. Reiterate that we care about each and every athlete.
3. Offer to stay on site as long as it takes for any athlete to process what's happened.
4. Allow athletes time to have an immediate response and grieve.
 5. Do your best to arrange safe transportation home.
DON'T allow emotional athletes to drive away
6. Contact group parents ASAP to let them know you've informed the group of the incident.

Counseling Options:

Central Iowa Psychological Services- iowacounseling.com

Family Legacy- familylegacycounseling.com

Glen Haven Counseling- glenhavencounseling.com

Heartland Christian Counseling- heartland-christiancounseling.com

*Accepts medicare and medicaid

New Hope Personal Growth Center- grownnewhope.com

Journey Counseling Services- (telehealth available) <https://journeycounselingservices.net/>

Behavioral Health Options:

Iowa Lutheran

<https://www.mentalhealthfacilities.net/listings/iowa-lutheran-hospital-behavioral-health-services-des-moines-ia.html>

Broadlawns

<https://www.broadlawns.org/clinics-and-services/mental-health/outpatient-services>

Clive Behavioral Health

<https://clivebehavioral.com/>

Crisis Help Lines

Text Help Line:

741 741

A live, trained Crisis Counselor receives the text and responds quickly.

Crisis Help Line

988

offers 24/7 call, text and chat access to trained crisis counselors who can help people experiencing suicidal, substance use, and/or mental health crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress. People can also dial 988 if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.