



STUDENT ATHLETES

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

When a person is suffering from depression, most aspects of his or her life are affected. If a student athlete is experiencing any of the symptoms listed below, it would be expected that their athletic performance would weaken.

Poor performance on the field can intensify some of these depressive symptoms which is why responding quickly is of utmost importance.

- **Lack of motivation**
- **Low self-esteem**
- **Withdrawal**
- **Fatigue, tiredness, weakness**
- **Negative thought patterns**
- **Unusual sleeping behavior**

Staying active in college can play a huge role in creating balance in your life. In fact, research has shown that those who regularly exercise are usually less stressed and feel better about themselves than those who do not exercise.

While student athletes may experience the positive effects of exercise and activity, they can also feel added pressure to succeed both academically and athletically. With demanding schedules and increased pressure to perform, it shouldn't come as a surprise that student athletes are at equal risk for experiencing common mood disorders like depression or anxiety as their non-athlete classmates.

POSSIBLE CAUSE OF DEPRESSION IN ATHLETES

Transitioning into college: Major transitions in life can trigger or sometimes highlight an existing mental health disorder.

Pressure to succeed: Mental health disorders can also be caused by feelings of stress in someone's life and athletic participation may enhance this stress.

Injury: Injury can affect more than just an athlete's ability to participate in athletics. Injury for an athlete can take a toll on self-esteem and bring about feelings of isolation. Participating in athletics in college can also provide a sense of identity to student athletes, which can be lost if they are unable to participate due to an injury.

WHO CAN I TALK TO?

- Coaches and athletic trainers often have access to useful resources.
- Make an appointment with the campus counseling center/health center to speak with a professional about your concerns.

RESPONDING TO A TEAMMATE:

Students will often turn to their peers for support when they are feeling down. If a teammate approaches you with concerns about his or her mental health, let them know that they are not alone and that professional help is available to them on campus.