



# MENTAL HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS

## A FRAMEWORK FOR A SAFE AND HEALTHY DUAL CAREER

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## A FRAMEWORK FOR A SAFE AND HEALTHY DUAL CAREER

This PDF includes a **comprehensive set of recommendations for dual career organizations to optimize DC athletes' mental health** at a structural level.

The recommendations are embedded in a mental health promotion framework for dual career organizations, related to:

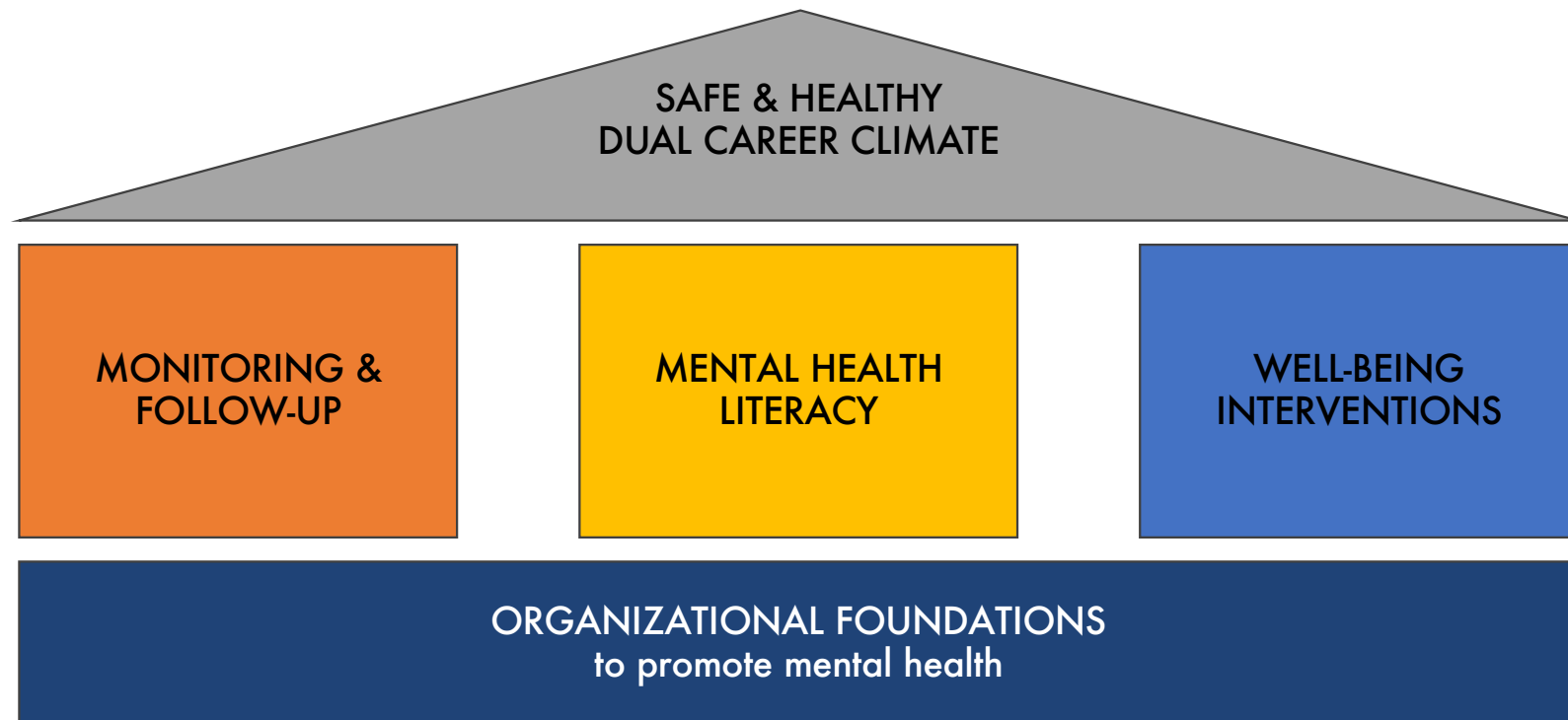
1. organizational foundations
2. monitoring and follow-up
3. mental health literacy, and
4. well-being interventions.



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# MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION FRAMEWORK FOR DUAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENTS (DCDEs)



## ORGANIZATIONAL FOUNDATIONS TO PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH

1. *DCDEs should develop and adhere to a mental health policy document*
  - Incorporating mental health within mission, vision, values
  - Provide theoretical and legal grounding of mental health
  - Engage stakeholders in development and implementation of policy document
  
2. *DCDEs should establish clear responsibilities and interdisciplinary cooperation*
  - Establish designated contact point for mental health within support team
  - Establish collaboration structures for different mental health needs
  - Recognise and respect different types of expertise regarding mental health treatment/promotion
  
3. *DCDEs should guarantee the human and financial resources required to implement the mental health policy document*
  - Ensure adequate personnel to implement mental health policy
  - Establish formal agreement with internal and/or external mental health care services
  - Provide the necessary financial resources to implement mental health policy



## MONITORING AND FOLLOW-UP

4. *DCDEs should establish strategies to monitor dual career athletes' mental health*
  - Consider most appropriate monitoring approach (e.g., screening; systematic monitoring; informal monitoring)
  - Engage multidisciplinary cooperation in mental health monitoring; but with respect to mental health expertise
  
5. *DCDEs should establish protocols to follow-up on early signs of mental health problems*
  - Establish clear referral protocols to appropriate mental health care
  - Establish crisis action plan
  - Provide individualised 'return to sport and education' trajectories
  
6. *DCDEs should consider ethical and legal issues in the monitoring and follow-up of mental health*
  - Respect athletes' rights for confidentiality and privacy regulations
  - Provide a data management plan

## MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY

7. *DCDEs should develop awareness and attitudes which help in the promotion of mental health*
  - Knowledge of lifestyle habits and self-care strategies (e.g., sleep, nutrition, recovery, ...)
  - Knowledge of nature and causes of mental health problems
  - Reducing stigma and lowering threshold for help-seeking
  - Knowledge of available (external) help and resources
  
8. *DCDEs should develop mental health literacy in both athletes and their entourage*
  - Including entourage members' mental health first aid competencies
  - Including entourage members' self-care competencies
  
9. *DCDEs should consider strategic and multiformat approaches to improve literacy*
  - Including formal options (e.g. online quiz, workshop, infographics)
  - Including informal options (e.g. role models, personal conversations)
  - Monitor mental health literacy over time



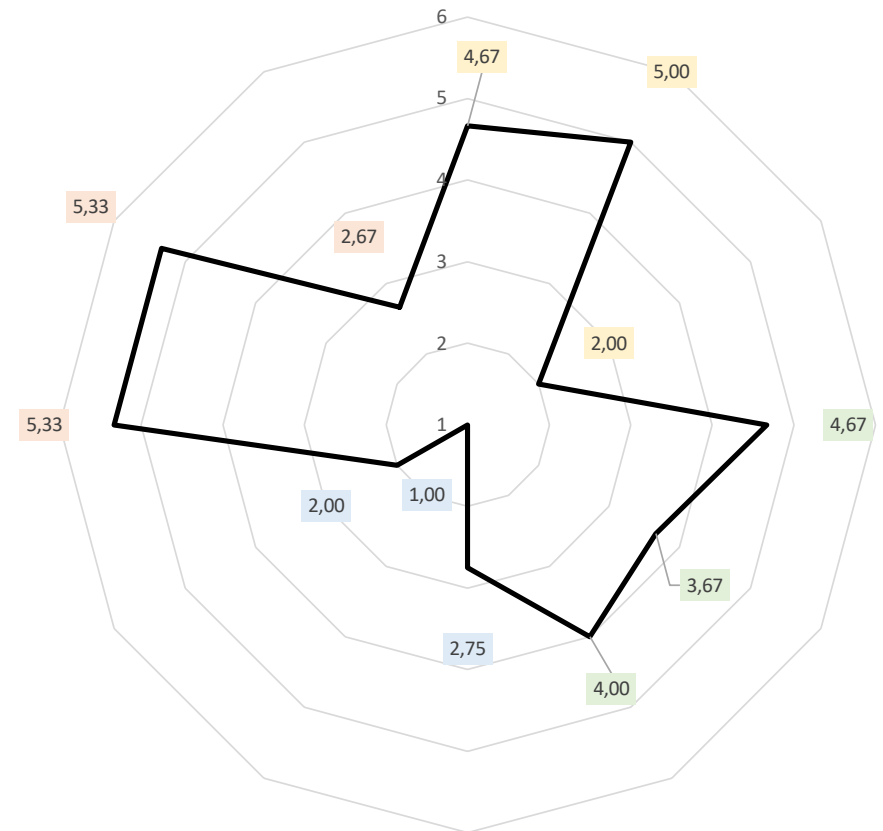
## WELL-BEING INTERVENTIONS

10. *DCDEs should provide preventive interventions to help individual athletes manage stressors, build resilience and promote well-being*
  - Draw upon evidence-based well-being interventions (e.g. CBT, ACT, positive psychology)
  - Provided by competent and adequately trained personnel
  
11. *DCDEs should provide preventive interventions to help athletes manage dual career specific challenges*
  - Develop dual career competencies (career planning, dual career management, social intelligence, emotional awareness)
  - Preparing athletes for key career transitions
  
12. *DCDEs should support entourage members to create a safe and healthy climate*
  - Ongoing development of entourage members' own competencies
  - Supporting entourage members' own mental health

## ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR DUAL CAREER ORGANIZATIONS

To allow dual career organizations and stakeholders to **assess the extent to which their DC organisation is consistent with these recommendations**, a self-assessment tool was developed.

This tool allows dual career organizations to evaluate compliance with and reflect on the mental health promotion recommendations.





## NEED MORE INFORMATION?

This output was developed as part of the Erasmus+ Sport project "Dual Careers for Mental Health" (DC4MH).

### Interested in using this tool?

### Curious about the other tools we developed on dual career and mental health?

Please consult our DC4MH website, DC4MH socials, and/or contact prof. dr. Koen De Brandt of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

- <https://spmb.research.vub.be/dc4mh>
- [koen.de.brandt@vub.be](mailto:koen.de.brandt@vub.be)
- Instagram [@dc4mh](#) ; Twitter [@dc4mh](#)



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