

# GOOD PRACTICES FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION

## A cross-case analysis



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### MONITORING & FOLLOW-UP

- Good practices:
  - Both regular formal and informal monitoring with clear link to procedures on follow-up (step-wise approach), while maintaining possibilities for personal/individualized approach.
- Point of improvement:
  - The link between monitoring and follow-up procedures is sometimes unclear.

### MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY

- Good practices
  - Informal practices: workshops, general openness to discuss mental health topics openly, sharing of mental health topics/testimonials through social media, role models tackling stigma ...
- Points of improvement
  - A need for more systematic approaches to enhance mental health literacy.

### WELL-BEING INTERVENTIONS

- Good practices:
  - Individual and group offers on resilience and well-being specifically (e.g., based on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy etc.).
  - Indirect preventive resilience-building workshops (e.g., DC competencies, lifestyle, sleep, nutrition, social competencies ...)
- Point of improvement:
  - Some practices lack structural implementation and follow-up.

### ORGANIZATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

- Good practices:
  - Organisation-specific mental health policy and philosophy, with incorporation of Mental health elements in mission, vision, values.
  - Formal interdisciplinary cooperation specifically on mental health.
- Point of improvement:
  - Prime responsibilities on mental health not always clear in some organisations.





## PRACTICES FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION at the High-Performance Center of Sant Cugat



### MONITORING & FOLLOW-UP

- Formal process (e.g., interviews, surveys and medical tests) performed by specific services (i.e., Psychology Department, Medical Services and Nutritionists).
- Informal process (e.g., observation, informal approach and closeness) performed by the whole entourage.

### MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY

- Normalize positive and negative aspects of Mental Health.
- Openness as part of the philosophy and structure of the Center.
- Informal strategies for student-athletes
  - Intake interviews
  - Testimonials

### WELL-BEING INTERVENTIONS

- Specific intervention when needed (e.g., sport psychology).
- Workshops on, amongst others:
  - Development of specific dual career competencies
  - Career planning

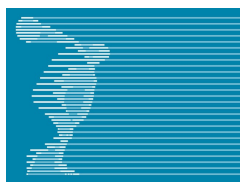
### ORGANIZATIONAL FOUNDATIONS to promote mental health

- Holistic approach and student-athlete centred environment.
- CAR's essence philosophy: constant communication, interdisciplinary work and support for athletes to be competitive while considering their personal development.
- Clear intervention plan: (a) prevent, (b) communicate, (c) act and (d) normalize.
- Constant communication between departments of the High-Performance Center.
- Good collaborations with CAR-associated organisations (e.g., Autonomous University of Barcelona).



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## PRACTICES FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION at the Gimnazija Šiška



### MONITORING & FOLLOW-UP

- No systematic mental health screening
- Informal approach and closeness to student-athletes
- Close interaction between student athlete – sport coordinator – psychologist
- Student-athletes' self-assessment of their mental health during workshops

### MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY

- Extra-curriculum activities about mental health
- Informative material and factsheets to support knowledge and awareness on stressors, resilience, mental disorders
- Workshops for debunking common myths about mental health support

### WELL-BEING INTERVENTIONS

- Activity days to improve students' wellbeing
- Wellbeing areas within the school area
- Workshops on, amongst others:
  - Learning competencies
  - Coping with stress, relaxation techniques
  - Mindfulness
  - Healthy lifestyle
  - Development of specific DC competencies
  - ....

### ORGANIZATIONAL FOUNDATIONS to promote mental health

- Preventive approach: adopting strategies that aim to reduce the incidence of mental health disorders
- Close collaboration between sport coordinator, pedagogic coordinator, teachers, sports club, and sport psychologists in taking care of athlete's mental health and wellbeing
- Good collaborations with external mental health institutions and practitioners



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## Practices for mental health promotion at the Italian Rugby Federation's Academies

### MONITORING & FOLLOW-UP

- Specific formal mental health (MH) monitoring interventions and follow-up are in place for elite rugby players involved in the Academies activities, performed by a Staff of sport psychologists and clinical psychologists.
- Informal and continuous MH monitoring and follow-up for elite rugby players activities performed by the Staff of the FIR Academies.

### MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY

- Specific MH literacy interventions are in place for elite rugby players involved in the Academies activities, performed by a Staff of sport psychologists, clinical psychologists, and by the Staff of the FIR Academies (e.g., training session, interviews, assessments, MH literacy and enhancing session with a MH expert).

### WELL-BEING INTERVENTIONS

- Specific intervention when needed performed by sport psychologists and/or clinical psychologists/psychotherapists with specific expertise in sport psychology and MH.

### ORGANIZATIONAL FOUNDATIONS to promote mental health

Italian Rugby Federation is a private law non-profit sport organization.

- Holistic approach and student-athlete centred environment in the Italian Rugby Federation Academies.
- Italian Rugby Federation Academies philosophy: constant communication, interdisciplinary work and support for student-athletes to be competitive while considering their personal development, well-being, and MH.
- Good collaborations with FIR-associated organisations (e.g., University of Verona, UNIVR).



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OMS - WHO Collaborating Centre for Research and Training in Mental Health and Service Evaluation



## Practices for mental health promotion at the *WHO Collaborating Centre for Research & Training In Mental Health & Service Evaluation*

### MONITORING & FOLLOW-UP

- Formal monitoring and follow-up (e.g., psychological tests, interviews in depth, surveys) performed by WHO CC's staff that includes psychiatrists, clinical psychologists (in addition to computer scientists, physicists, geographers and social scientists, statisticians, technicians and secretaries).

### MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY

- No specific MH literacy interventions in place for student-athletes until 2022.
- Future specific MH literacy interventions will be held by WHO CC in 2023 for student-athletes.

### WELL-BEING INTERVENTIONS

- Specific intervention when needed performed by WHO CC's staff that (e.g., sport psychologists, clinical psychologists, psychiatrists).

### ORGANIZATIONAL FOUNDATIONS to promote mental health

Since 1987, there is a *WHO Collaborating Centre for Research & Training In Mental Health & Service Evaluation* (WHO CC) at UNIVR. The WHO CC is part of the section of Psychiatry and clinical psychology of the UNIVR. It provides care, education and research. Clinical activity takes place in the Psychiatric University Clinic, in the Mental Health Centre, in the staffed residential facilities and apartments for long-term patients, in the outpatient departments, and in other community-based facilities. This constitutes an integrated system of Mental Health Care, dedicated to the residents in the south-Verona area and run by the UNIVR in collaboration with the hospital trust and the local health trust. The main activities of the WHO CC are:

1. Participation in collaborative projects under the Organization's leadership, including systematic reviews and meta-analyses, implementation studies and analyses of existing WHO databases.
2. Planning, organising and conducting, jointly with WHO, training activities such as courses and seminars and information exchange.
3. Collecting, collating and disseminating, on behalf of WHO, scientific information on selected topics, as well as providing expert comments and advice on various draft documents circulated by WHO.



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## PRACTICES FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel



### MONITORING & FOLLOW-UP

- No formal VUB-wide system
- Well-being surveys
- Monitoring of student-athletes through online platform
- Informal approach and closeness to student-athletes

### MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY

- Factsheets to support knowledge and awareness, for example on:
  - Social support, resilience
  - Stressors, mental disorders
- Informal strategies for student-athletes
  - Intake interviews
  - Testimonials
  - Tips via online platform

### WELL-BEING INTERVENTIONS

- Workshops on, amongst others:
  - Fear of failure
  - ACT, mindfulness, self-compassion
  - Sleep
  - Resilience and stress management
  - Development of specific dual career competencies
  - Career planning
  - ....

### ORGANIZATIONAL FOUNDATIONS to promote mental health

- Holistic approach
- Central well-being coordinator
- Clear first line contacts and consultation centre available (BRUCC)
- Financial aid structures for students and staff members
- Good collaborations with VUB-associated organisations



## ORGANIZATIONAL FOUNDATIONS to promote mental health

- No specific MH model of philosophy present : 1 day/week sport psychologist (3)
- All mental support is grounded within the high-performance attitudes model

### MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY

- Public cases of mental health issues in famous athletes are sometimes discussed informally
- Stigma around MH is still very much perceived within the football culture and cultural differences
- Need for more parent coaching & involvement
- Workshops are offered according to the mindset model (min. 4 /year)
- Content of the strategies to promote resilience and well-being

### MONITORING and FOLLOW-UP

- RPE: daily questionnaires
  - Informal conversations
  - Evaluation /observation performances
  - Body language
  - Input partnerschools & Coordinators
  - Social media
- FOLLOW-UP: Individual re-integration trajectories.  
Focus on catching up physically & technically (e.g., individual training sessions with coach)

### WELL-BEING INTERVENTIONS

- Suspected sub-clinical issues → first line MH support providers (= coaches, educational dept, performance staff...)
- Suspected clinical issues → internal clinical psychologist or advice to seek out on own responsibility)
- No financial or tangible support is provided for trajectory with external clinical psychologist
- Lifestyle interventions are offered on topics such as sleep quality, nutrition, hygiene, code of conduct...

### INTERDISCIPLINARY COOPERATION

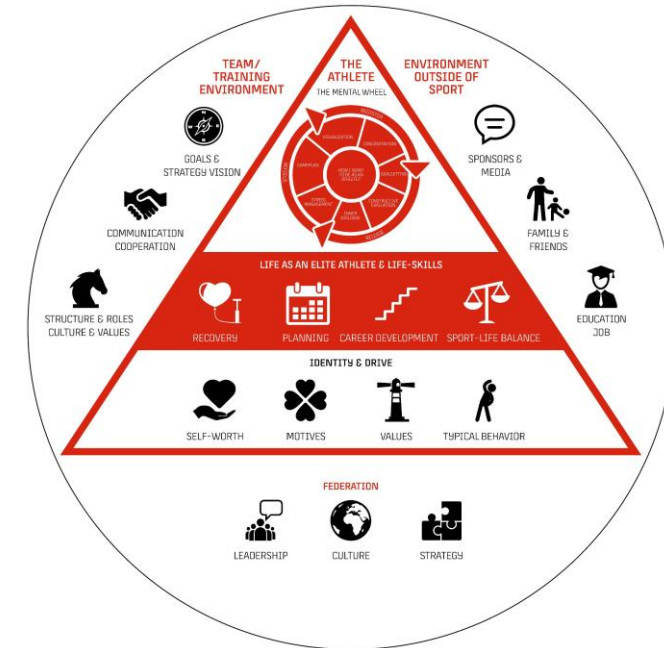
- **INSIDE RSCA:** 1. Coaches = first line to detect changes in mood or well-being. Educated in high-performance attitudes by sport psychologist  
2. Educational coordinators = daily informal contact with all players. Will follow up when specific signals are received (e.g., during daily interdisciplinary meetings with coaches...) 3. one day/week a sport psychologist is available for workshops and/or individual meetings
- **OUTSIDE RSCA:** Formal partnership with 8 schools: our Clinical sport psychologist provides a training for teachers to recognize and detect the first signs of mental health issues. They become also our first line MH Support providers.

# WELL-BEING & MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION INITIATIVES and ACTIONS

## TEAM DANMARK



- ❑ **Setting the scene** – focus on well-being in elite sport environments through communication, new survey, description of ethical codex, research, implementation of a *whistle blower*, a new mental Health model, and a network for well-being.
- ❑ **Level of athletes:** Focus on Dual Career, screening, sports psychology, create meaningful lives, OL blues project, eating disorder survey, holistic plan for athletes, life skills, and mentor programs.
- ❑ **Education of leadership in sport** - Team Danmark's national coach and head of federation educations with a focus on value-based leadership.
- ❑ **Federation level:** Appointment of responsible persons for well-being and a overarching focus on prevention of mental health problems among elite athletes.



Source: Diment et al., 2020  
<https://doi.org/10.7146/sjsep.v2i0.115660>



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