

# BEAT THE STIGMA



## FACT

Just like their non-athlete peers, many student-athletes face obstacles to mental well being, including depression and anxiety, but they are less likely than non-athlete peers to seek care for such issues.<sup>i</sup>

## 43%

of Virginia Student-Athletes utilized Sports Psychology services during the 2015 - 2016 academic year to support overall well being and enhance all around performance.<sup>ii</sup>

## BARRIERS TO STUDENT-ATHLETES RECEIVING HELP<sup>iii</sup>

- Too busy
- Perceived as a sign of weakness
- Fearful of asking for help or doubtful it will help
- Myth that participation/playtime will be limited
- “Toughness” and “Fearlessness” emphasized as key to athletic success
- Tendency to put off self-care
- Masculinity not associated with seeking help

## HOW CAN YOU REDUCE THE STIGMA?<sup>iv</sup>

### Change the Dialogue

- Pay attention to your language regarding mental wellness around your teammates and peers
- Emphasize that seeking help is a sign of strength and resilience as opposed to a sign of weakness
- Encourage friends and teammates to talk about issues and treat problems when they come up

### Use your Community

- Talk it out with coaches and athletic trainers
- Utilize SAMs and teammates as peer resources



## VIRGINIA STUDENT-ATHLETES SAY:

“Sports psych has been an extremely helpful tool for my athletic and personal development as they really are trained and helpful in both areas. I feel they have helped me deal with issues I’ve had as an athlete but also family, friend, and other personal issues. I think it is special having that outlet that is also so accessible.”

- Fourth Year Student-Athlete

“There is no shame in seeking help for things that are holding you back, instead I see it as the opposite. It is a sign of strength to reach out for help, and the people we have available to us are kind, professional and very good at what they do.”

- Fifth Year Student-Athlete

“As a student-athlete, you experience a lot of stress, from the intense time commitment and team dynamics to performing athletically and academically. Sports psychology gave me the tools to help manage these issues and find success in my time at the university.”

- Fourth Year Student-Athlete

“I’ve found sports psychology to be a supportive and confidential environment where I can openly discuss my concerns, challenges, and strategies for competing. It’s helped me become a better athlete and a more balanced person.”

- Third Year Student-Athlete

## HELP IS AVAILABLE AT NO COST

### Sports Psychology in the McCue Center

- Jason Freeman: jf4z@virginia.edu,
- Karen Egan: kpe4q@virginia.edu,

### CAPS Counseling and Psychological Services

- Student Health Center, 400 Brandon Avenue
- Daytime: 434-243-5150 and After Hours Crisis: 434-972-7004

### Maxine Platzer Lynn Women’s Center at UVA

- 1400 University Avenue, 434-982-2252

### Athletes Connected Videos (University of Michigan)

- [athletesconnected.umich.edu/videos](https://athletesconnected.umich.edu/videos)

<sup>i</sup> Davoren, A. K., & Hwang, S. (2014, October 8). Mind, Body and Sport: Depression and anxiety prevalence in student-athletes. In NCAA.

<sup>ii</sup> Egan, K. (2017, March 2). Personal Interview.

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid

