

SUPPORTING YOUR ATHLETES' MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING AFTER A CONCUSSION

- ▶ After a concussion, athletes can experience physical symptoms, like headaches and dizziness, as well as psychological (that is, emotional and mental) symptoms like:



Anxiety

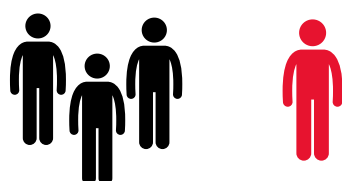
- ▶ A feeling of worry or nervousness, usually related to an imminent event or uncertain outcome



Following a concussion, athletes may feel anxious about missing playing time or about returning to play after their injury

Isolation

- ▶ A feeling of being separated from others or a sense of aloneness



Following a concussion, athletes may feel isolated from their team since they cannot engage in team activities like practices or games

Fear

- ▶ A feeling of worry about performing an activity or worry of missing out



Following concussion, athletes may fear:

- Losing their starting position
- Losing their athletic ability
- Returning to sport
- Getting another concussion

Did you know?

More than 25% of athletes reported feeling pressured to continue playing while experiencing concussion symptoms (Kroshus et al., 2015)

External pressure ▶ Direct or indirect influence of peers



Pressure from coaches, parents, and teammates may influence athletes to continue playing through a concussion or to return to sport while still experiencing symptoms

As a coach, what can you do to support your athletes?

- ✓ **Create** a list of contacts (for example, sport psychologists and mental performance consultants) who could help support your athletes' mental health and well-being.
- ✓ **Talk** to your team about concussions regularly throughout the season to ensure that they are familiar with the signs and symptoms of concussions and the return to sport protocol.
- ✓ **Develop** a psychologically safe environment by promoting trust and communication among team members.
- ✓ **Tell** your athletes that you are there for them and that their position on the team will be waiting for them when they can safely return to play.



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The University of Montreal's Sport Psychology Lab created this infographic with financial support from the Sport Information Resource Centre (SIRC) and the Government of Canada. Visit sirc.ca/concussion to learn more

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