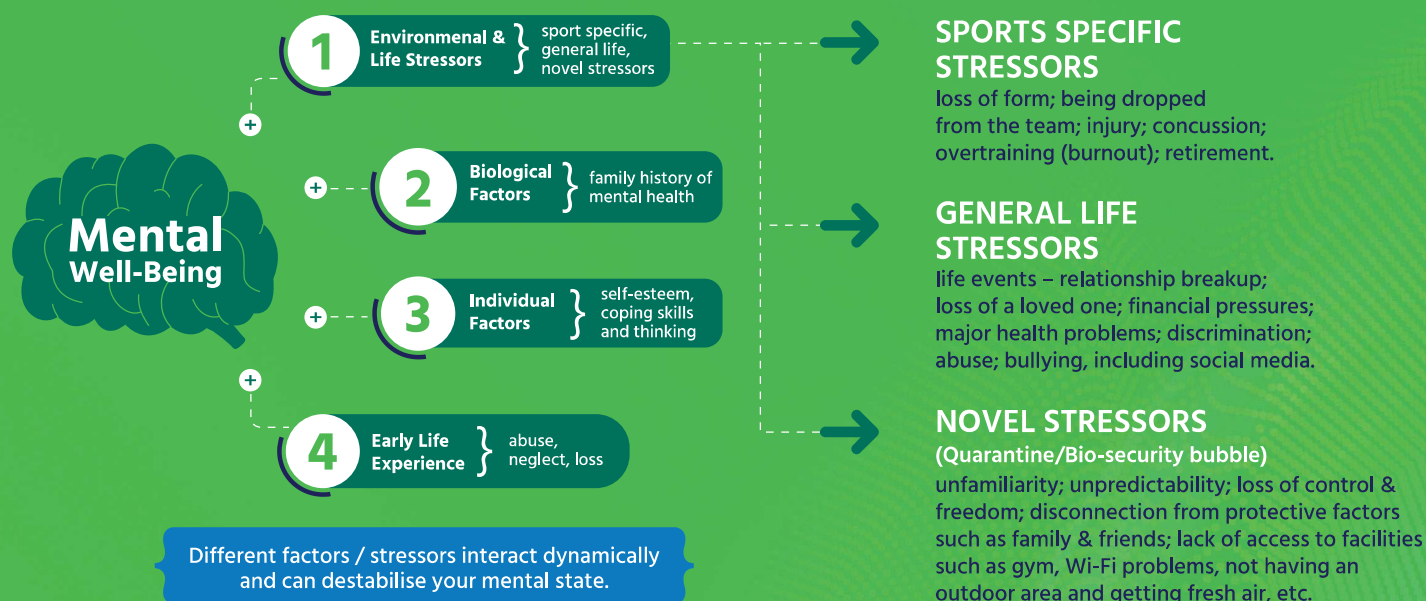


Good mental health means the ability to manage life and reasonably deal with challenges that life inevitably throws at us from time to time.

Mental health issues affect how we think, feel, and behave. It is **normal** to feel sad, lonely, disappointed, or confused at times. That is part of being human. You could also just be having a bad week. But if these feelings **persist**, and it interferes with the ability to lead and enjoy everyday life then it's time to talk to someone or get professional help.



What are the stressors to your mental well-being?



How can you prepare against these stressors?

ACTION PLAN



- **Identify the stressors to your mental well-being.** If you are going into a bio-security bubble, you might find it difficult being disconnected from your family.
- **Identify what you can and cannot control.** For example, you cannot control the fact that you are disconnected from your family but you can control how you deal with it / how you can connect with them in other ways.
- **Identify what coping mechanisms are best suited to you.** For example, you can make sure you and your family are set up for communicating remotely.

Once you have identified what your possible stressors may be and have an action plan, you will be better prepared if you were to encounter them.

How can you help others?



→ People may not always reveal if their thoughts or feelings are troubling them. If someone you know seems different to their normal self and you recognise the signs & symptoms of mental health issues, **reach out and start a conversation**.



→ Starting a conversation with someone on mental wellbeing isn't always easy. Take care in choosing a **good time and place to talk**, and in creating a **safe space** for the person to talk **without judgment or criticism**. Make sure you **actively listen without interrupting or giving advice**.

A person may be **reluctant at first**, but you can encourage them by asking more questions or sharing your thoughts or experience if you have any. If they resist in opening up to you, **respect their wishes**.

Common Signs & Symptoms

Do you feel that something isn't 'quite right'? Are you:



feeling anxious or worried



feeling depressed or unhappy



feeling very irritable



having emotional outbursts



sleeping a lot more or a lot less (insomnia)



gaining or losing weight rapidly



eating a lot more or less



using alcohol or drugs to cope



constantly feeling guilty or worthless



not wanting to see other people or withdrawing from life

If you are experiencing any of these for more than a few weeks, it's time to do something about it.

Management Strategies

On Your Own

What you can do on your own or while waiting to get help:

Short Term

Things you can do to help relieve distress in the short term:

- **Remove your stressor** – distance yourself from stressors that threaten your mental well-being. This may be **taking a break from news and social media which may be causing you distress**.
- Practice **mindfulness**, being aware of your thoughts and feelings without judgement. Being aware of the present and **focusing on your breathing** can help calm your mind. There are many mindfulness and breathing technique apps available.
- **Find what relaxes you**. For some, this may be listening to music, practicing yoga or expressing yourself through art such as drawing or writing poetry.
- **Write it out**. Clear your thoughts and feelings from your head by writing them down. Doing so can help put what you are going through into perspective, and it can also help you identify negative thoughts and behaviours. After you're done, you can choose to keep what you've written or simply throw it out.

Long Term

Things you can do that may not have an immediate effect but will help in the longer term:

- **Adopt a healthy lifestyle**. Good mental health is just as important as good physical health. Both are helped by a healthy lifestyle. This includes getting good sleep, eating a healthy and balanced diet, exercise regularly and establishing good structure & routine.
- **Practice mindfulness and relaxation techniques** such as breathing techniques and meditation even if you are not experiencing mental distress at the time.
- **Journaling**. Keeping a journal of your thoughts and feelings can help you keep track of any symptoms, and help you recognise what your stressors are. There are different journaling techniques which may be more suitable to your needs than others.

Reaching Out

You are not alone. If it's all getting too much, it's time to reach out.

Reach out to your immediate support network. If you are comfortable to do so:

- **Talk with a trusted family member or friends**. Sometimes reaching out can be the hardest step, but you may be surprised by your family/friend's willingness to listen and help.
- **Chat with your coach/team management or teammates if you are comfortable to do so**. Often your team is like your 'second family' and teammates are likely facing similar issues (such as being in a biosecurity bubble) and may share the same concerns/distress.

Remote support:

- Make **social connections** by joining clubs/groups with similar interests.
- Look for **phone or online counselling** services. Depending on where you are, counselling services may be available over the telephone or online. These services are typically available 24-hours, free, and anonymous.

Professional Help

Get optimal support from a mental health practitioner.

Consult the team psychologist / sports psychiatrist if available to you.

Otherwise, seeing your general practitioner or family doctor is a good first step towards professional help. If needed, your family doctor can refer you to a psychologist or psychiatrist for further treatment.

Athletes with a history of mental illness should regularly review their mental health and treatment with their medical practitioner.

For support, speak to your team medical representative or an independent expert.

For more information:



<https://olympics.com/athlete365/mentally-fit/>

IOC



<https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/mental-well-being-resources-for-the-public>

WHO

If it's urgent

If you or someone you know is thinking of self-harm or hurting others, get urgent help. Call your local emergency number.