



Building a Culture of Mental Well-Being Into Your Club or League



About



Soccer Resilience believes the psychological elements of the player, coach, parent and sport are vital and advises coaches and clubs on how to increase their players' self-awareness, confidence, conquer setbacks and enhance performance. Their mission focuses on gaining a competitive edge in sports by transforming the mind to help elevate the well-being of athletes. Soccer Resilience provides world-class instructional and ongoing mental fitness training resources and support to leaders, players, coaches and parents of all levels, including organizations such as NWSL Players Association and SOCCER.COM.



Since its formation in 2009, TeamSnap has been single-mindedly focused on taking the work out of play. More than 25 million coaches, administrators, players and parents rely on TeamSnap's powerful and easy-to-use tools for communication, scheduling, payment collection and registration, organizing every sport and group activity in the world.

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The State of Mental Health in Youth Sports

1 in 3 teens

between the ages of 13 and 18 experience anxiety disorder

20% of teens

have experienced major depression by the time they are 18

7 in 10 youth athletes

struggled with mental health during the pandemic

9 out of 10 parents

say sports are important for supporting mental health in children and teens

52% of parents

surveyed said their children's mental health decreased during the pandemic

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There are critical windows in sports development that some young people missed during the pandemic. Some kids are going to be left behind. To the extent that we can, we need to pick those kids up and provide simple opportunities to get out and play with their friends and family to rediscover some joy in physical activity.

— Dr. Travis Dorsch, Utah State University, Families in Sport Lab

[Recommended Read: How 2020 Affected Youth Sports Report](#)

Benefits of Incorporating Mental Health in Your Club

Placing a strong emphasis on mental health and well-being at your youth sports club or league has benefits for both your athletes and your sports organization.

Strong mental fitness is linked to:

Enhanced athletic performance

- Athletes who are struggling with mental health are less likely to perform at their best

A competitive advantage for athletes on the field

- Mental fitness separates one athlete from another
- The ability to maintain a calm mind during competitive situations gives athletes an advantage during play



Creating an environment where mental health is valued helps to:

Build a transformative community

- Creates a culture where mental health is open, talked about and not a taboo topic
- It becomes okay for your athletes and coaches to say 'I'm stressed', 'I'm feeling anxious', 'I'm struggling with depression'
- Allows you to guide players and members to resources to help and have conversations that build connection
- Supporting wellbeing and resilience for your members is really a competitive advantage, especially with the ever-increasing uncertainty and complexity in the world today.

Differentiate your club

- If your club values mental well-being over competitive results, it will make your club stand out
- Your club goes beyond just athletic development; you can then help athletes sharpen their athletic skills while also developing their mental and emotional skills to prepare them for life
- Creates a unique selling proposition for your club and helps attract and retain more players



As a psychologist, the pandemic has affirmed for me that it's more important than ever to care for our own well-being. We can train our brains to be more resilient and comfortable with uncertainty. We can learn to be more compassionate with others. Doing so is critical for our mental health!

— Dr. Brad Miller, Psy.D., Founder, Soccer Resilience

How to Incorporate Mental Health Into Your Club

Buy in with yourself first - The first step is to buy in.

- Understanding and selling mental health and fitness to others begins with understanding it for yourself first.
- You have to commit to doing the work to learn about mental health and how to help yourself
- Begin educating yourself on mental health and why it's so important

Start the conversation

- Once you understand how important mental health is and how powerful this tool is in your life toolbox, start the conversation
- Be intentional about starting conversations with various members in your community and organization
- Normalize conversations about mental health

Offer resources

- Partner with an expert who has resources for mental health
 - Positive Coaching Alliance
 - Aspen Institute
 - Soccer Resilience
- Share seminars and workshops your coaches, parents and players can attend through [club management softwares, like TeamSnap](#)

- Spark a discussion by sharing stories of athletes who have shared their struggles with anxiety and depression to normalize the conversation regarding mental health
- Developing internal resources and taking a proactive approach will be one of the best things leaders can do to serve and support their members now, and in the future.
- Educate your members on daily practices they can do for five to 10 minutes a day that can dramatically change their lives for the better. Examples include breathing exercises, positive self-talk, visualization, self-care practices, self-affirmations, gratitude, etc.

Invest in it

- Build mental health into your budget
- Price out how much it will cost for outsourced services, trainings, education
- Make it preventative; educate your members on ways to improve mental health from the start and before one faces challenges. It's harder to learn the skills to improve your mental health when you already feel mentally impaired.

Model it

- Coaches are role models so everyone should practice what you preach.
- If you preach it but don't model it, it won't stick
- Develop a unified purpose
- The responsibility falls on everyone but must start with the leaders.



Every crisis creates unexpected problems. But, every crisis also creates unprecedented opportunities. Most people just see the problems, but the very best and most empathetic leaders address the problems while also seizing the opportunities. As someone once said, never let a good crisis go to waste. Often, the biggest opportunities for growth and progress are found in times of upheaval and uncertainty. The time is now to show your commitment to not only your players and coaches performance, but their overall health and well-being.

— Wells Thompson, Founder Soccer Resilience

Learn more about how [TeamSnap for Clubs & Leagues](#) can help you manage the communication, scheduling, registration and payment collection for your sports organization, all while simultaneously building a youth sports culture that values mental well-being with [Soccer Resilience](#).

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