



Supporting young people's wellbeing during physical activity sessions

This guide was co-produced with young people and includes information on how to support them during your sessions.



You're not expected to be an expert, but it's helpful to know how to check-in and how to signpost to information and support.



What is mental health?

Just like physical health, everybody has mental health and we need to take care of it. Everyone's mental health is on a spectrum and can range from good to poor. We all experience mental health differently too. Mental health problems aren't a sign of weakness.



Scan QR for more on:

- Mental health problems that young people experience – like depression, anxiety, eating problems.
- Symptoms young people experience – like anger, self-harm or panic attacks.



Remember, you're not expected to be a mental health expert.

Spotting signs

A range of factors can impact young people's mental health. There may not be an obvious reason and a young person may not know why they're feeling the way they do.



Focus on spotting changes in their behaviour, thoughts and feelings:

- Is the young person not enjoying activities they usually like?
- Do they appear tired or low in energy?
Or do they appear more energetic than normal?
- Is the young person quieter and more withdrawn? Or being louder than usual?

- Are they detached, restless or struggling to concentrate on the session?
- Have their appearance and/or habits changed recently?



Checking in

Use non-judgemental language and open questions:

- How have the last few days/weeks been for you?
- How have you been feeling?
- What's making you feel like that?
- You mention that you feel – could you tell me more about that?.....



Signposting to support

Listen before signposting.
Empower young people to choose how they access support by sharing options:

- Who's currently supporting you?
- What can I do to help / what would be helpful for you?
- Can I share some support options with you?

Local support services

Search these databases for a range of support services for young people in your local area.



Anna Freud
Youth
Wellbeing
Directory



Hub of
Hope
Database

Safeguarding

Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and rights.



In sport and physical activity settings, safeguarding means protecting people from harm by providing a safe and inclusive environment for them to play sport and be active.

CYP support services

Childline - 24hr helpline (0800 1111), email and online counselling service

The Mix - Online live chat and phone (0808 808 4994) counselling service

YoungMinds-24/7 text line (text YM to 85258)



Beat - Online chat service to support young people with eating problems



CAMHS

Young people may choose to speak to their GP, who can provide information or refer them to a specialist NHS service, such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Waiting times vary, so offer a range of other support options.



If it's an emergency

If a young person is experiencing a mental health crisis (i.e. they feel at breaking point) then they need urgent help.

Contact NHS 111 for medical advice or Samaritans (116 123) for emotional support. If they aren't safe, stay with them and call 999.



Following-up

It may take a young person time to seek help. Be patient.

Continue to show you care by checking-in and listening.

Simply saying, "I'm here if you want to talk" reminds a young person you're there if needed.



Supporting yourself

Supporting young people can be very rewarding. But, it can also be overwhelming. It's important that you look after your own wellbeing.

Explore how you can support yourself using the 5 ways to wellbeing:



Connect – put time aside to chat with another coach

Be active – go on a walk and reflect

Take notice – take a new route to your session

Learn – try a new skill

Give – take a break



Support for coaches



MindWise: Visit their website at mindwisemv.org

Samaritans: Call 116 123 (24/7)

Shout: Text 'SHOUT' 85258 (24/7)

Contact your GP or NHS 111





To find out more:
mind.org.uk/sport

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