



Mental Health and Wellbeing Support Guide

CAAC is here to support all members of its club. We aim to foster an environment where our members feel able to discuss issues in confidence and are aware of where they can go for help, both within and outside the club.

You are not alone. We all have mental health, just as we have physical health, and it is important to look after it. We encourage our members to talk about mental health issues.

There are lots of things we can do every day to support our mental wellbeing.

Sport and physical activity are a great outlet for the stresses of everyday life and provide participants with a clear focus to stay positive. The benefits of sport and physical activity are endless, but how exactly can it improve our mental wellbeing?





Here are five ways in which being physically active can improve your mental health:

(Source <https://sportfirst.sportscotland.org.uk/articles/improve-your-mental-health-with-sport/>)

IT MAKES YOU HAPPY

Physical activity comes with the release of endorphins – a chemical responsible for euphoria. Whether you are working out at the gym, playing a team sport, going for a run, or simply enjoying a nice walk, your body will trigger the release of endorphins to your brain, improving your mood.

IT SLOWS DOWN COGNITIVE DECLINE

Sport allows you to keep your cognitive skills sharp. It prompts you to practise critical thinking and decision making and improves your concentration. For people suffering from dementia, engaging in moderate-intensity physical activity can result in a slower development of the disease.

IT IMPROVES YOUR SLEEP

Regular exercise can drastically improve your sleep pattern and deepen your sleep. A good night's rest can affect your mood and create a positive outlook for the day ahead. So, sleep well and stay positive.

IT'S A CONFIDENCE BOOST

Engaging in sports can improve your confidence and social skills. By taking part in team sports you socialise in a relaxed and joyful environment, making it easier to meet new people and find common interests. And as your strength and physical condition improves with playing sport, so will your self-confidence, providing a good confidence boost.

IT LOWERS ANXIETY AND REDUCES STRESS

By becoming physically active you can simply distract your brain, allowing it to rest and move away from any negative thoughts. Exercise reduces stress hormone levels in our bodies, making it easier to relax and enjoy our time off.

With all those benefits, why wouldn't you take part in sport?



As well as sport and activity, there are other things we can do every day to support our wellbeing:
(Source: https://www.samh.org.uk/documents/5ways_Leaflet_digital.pdf)

CONNECT

Staying in touch with loved ones can make us feel happier and more secure; and often just having a chat can help to lift our mood.

- Arrange to meet up with friends you have seen in a while.

TAKE NOTICE

Whether you are spending time with friends or taking a moment for yourself; try to stop to take notice and be aware of the present.

- Spend time outdoors, enjoy the fresh air and notice what is around you.

LEARN

Learning enhances your self-esteem and confidence and can be a great way to meet new people.

- Take on a new challenge.
- Learn something new.

GIVE

Giving can be very rewarding.

- Volunteer your time for a cause you are passionate about.



Coronavirus – wellbeing and nutrition

Working in partnership with the **sportscotland institute of sport** experts, **scottishathletics** have shared a couple of key documents to help try and keep athletes, coaches and parents educated around issues such as nutrition and mental wellbeing.

(Source: <https://www.scottishathletics.org.uk/athletes/your-safety-and-welfare/coronavirus-wellbeing-and-nutrition/>)

In the institute of sport wellbeing document, there are details about:

- Hygiene
- Sleep
- Mental Stress
- Nutrition

[SIS factsheet1: Looking after wellbeing March 2020](#)

The **sportscotland institute of sport** nutritionists and dieticians have also produced a detailed fact sheet around your eating and hydration habits.

- Check out the full document above but here are a few important highlights:
- Eat a well-balanced diet that includes all major food groups.
- Boost your natural intake of vitamins and minerals by eating a wide range of fruit and veg.
- Keep well hydrated, keep your water bottle clean and do not share with others.
- Plan your meals and try to limit shopping outings by buying food for a few days to minimise unnecessary social contact.
- Use a meal planner and make a shopping list to help avoid buying unnecessary snacks and other items.
- If continuing to train, ensure adequate fuelling beforehand and immediate recovery after.

[SIS factsheet: Performance Nutrition COVID 19](#)

[sportscotland institute of sport – nutrition section](#)



Mental Health Training

It is important for coaches, and others involved in the sport, through education opportunities, to become more aware of mental health issues and consideration should be given to including the recognition of such issues and appropriate signposting. Further details on training courses are available [here](#).

Course Objectives:

- Have a greater awareness of common mental health disorders and their prevalence amongst sports people.
- Recognise some of the warning signs of common mental health disorders.
- Have an increased understanding of how the pressures of sport can impact on mental health.
- Understand the health benefits of participating in sport and physical activity.
- Know what to do if you are concerned about someone.
- Know how to promote mental wellbeing in sport.

(Source: <https://www.scottishathletics.org.uk/about/welfare/duty-care/mental-health-wellbeing/>)

Further Information

Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH)

www.samh.org.uk

See Me

www.seemescotland.org

Health in Mind

www.health-in-mind.org.uk

The content in this guidance is not designed to be an independent treatment model nor is it in place of professional advice. It is designed to provide initial support. Please consult your GP/clinician if you have any concerns or need further advice.