



MHANYS SMHRTC Recognizes Student Athlete Mental Health Week

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The start of the school year brings a new season of sports and an opportunity for student athletes to hone their skills and be part of a team building experience. For most, the time and lessons learned playing sports at the local junior/high school or collegiate level will carry on throughout life in addition to the wins and losses. As we recognize Student Athlete Mental Health Week from October 5 to October 12, it's important we reinforce that mental health wellness begins off the field and is a part of overall health. To put into perspective, a study published in Health Psychology Research found 91% of 16 and 17 year old high school students experienced some level of stress attributed to sports.¹ Additionally, a National Collegiate Athletic Association survey found 44% of student-athletes feel extremely overwhelmed attributed to the following factors: academic work, planning for the future, financial worries, playing time, family worries, coach relationship and team environment.²

Fortunately, in New York, students are learning earlier about mental health and wellness thanks to the 2016 law requiring all public and private schools to include mental health education as part of the health curricula for grades K-12. To assist schools in complying with the law, and with funding provided by the Legislature and State, the Mental Health Association in New York State (MHANYS) established the School Mental Health Resource and Training Center (SMHRTC) and works closely with the State Education Department and Office of Mental Health. Since 2018, the SMHRTC has reached staff in nearly 80% of school districts with web-based resources, online and in-person trainings, and technical assistance for curriculum development to support student instruction. The SMHRTC also hosts special webinars and informational discussions on aspects of student mental health and wellness with leading experts. Coinciding with October's focus on student athlete mental health, the SMHRTC is hosting a special one-hour virtual Family Education: Why Mental Matters in Athletics on Wednesday, October 9, 2024, from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. It will also be hosting the Educator Cafe: Student Athlete Mental Health on Thursday, October 24, 2024 from 3:30 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. Registration can be found [here](#). Whether you are a teacher, aide, support staff, family member, or just a fan cheering in the stands, let's redouble our efforts to help empower our student athletes' mental health and wellness.

¹ healthpsychologyresearch.openmedicalpublishing.org/article/70167-prevalence-of-stress-amongst-high-school-athletes-v2

² ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/research/wellness/Dec2023RES_HW-MentalHealthRelease.pdf