

Mental Health in Coaches

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There is growing recognition that not only elite athletes, but coaches who work within high-performance sport may be susceptible to mental health symptoms and disorders. Indeed, elite coaches are increasingly regarded as 'performers' in their own right and may be subject to similar stressors as the athletes they coach in relation to performance expectations and public scrutiny. Additional factors that may influence their mental health include organisational demands (e.g. job insecurity and excessive workloads associated with team/athlete development, technical and strategic planning, and reporting to management) and personal stressors, such as travel away from home, social isolation and relational conflict. Given these contextual stressors and demands, evidence-based supports that are tailored to elite coaching are needed to promote mental health and respond effectively to mental health needs.

This presentation draws on the findings from a recently completed suite of research on elite coach mental health to inform a systems-level approach to guide help-seeking and early intervention. Using an ecological systems framework, key factors influencing coach mental health across individual, interpersonal, organisational and societal levels will be examined. Since organisational demands appear to be key drivers of coach mental ill-health, core recommendations are provided to guide organisations in best supporting their coaching staff.