



## RETURN TO ATHLETICS POST MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy:

- To allow for continued participation in athletics without sacrificing the mental well-being of the student athlete and to ensure that all sport staff, coaches, and fellow teammates are educated so that proper accommodations are made for the student athlete.
- To ensure that all student athletes have a transition back to sport that will allow for safe and successful continued treatment while integrating back to full participation.

**POLICY:** Ole Miss Health & Sports Performance will set forth procedures that ensure all student athletes that have underwent a mental health crisis will continue treatment while properly integrating back into their prospective sport. Continued treatment for the well-being of the athlete will be the top priority followed by return to class and return to sport.

**PROCEDURE:** A multi-disciplinary approach is the fundamental framework to ensure the athlete has optimal recovery and reintegration into their prospective sport. The multi-disciplinary team consists of: Medical Director, Team Athletic Trainer, Sports Psychologist, and Senior Associate Athletic Director, Parents / Guardian of the student athlete.

1. The Senior Associate Athletics Director will organize and hold a meeting with the established multi-disciplinary team to assign and discuss roles. A communication system is put in place among all care team members to ensure efficient communication.
2. The multi-disciplinary team is established and will meet with the student athlete and mental healthcare providers at the treating institution. If an onsite meeting cannot take place, a conference call with all team members will occur. The meeting or call will accomplish the following:
  - To determine key contact for the athlete.
    - The athlete will be provided all information needed to reach the contact and also will be provided a 24 hour number to call such as: National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (24 hours/day, 7 days/week): 800-273-TALK (8255) or our campus after hours hotline is 662-915-7234.
  - To establish a framework for the continuation of recovery (i.e. treatment days and times, need for IOP, transportation for appointments)



- To establish and layout a written agreement for the athlete to sign regarding maintaining patient privacy and athlete's agreement with determined plan of care.
  - Determine any release of information designees not established previously.
  - To establish social and social media restrictions (i.e. team meetings, Instagram, or twitter posts)
  - Other information determined essential by the reintegration team.
- 3. The multi-disciplinary team will work with Ole Miss Student Development / Academic Counselor to establish a best plan of care for return to academics. The sports psychologist will hold a meeting, if deemed necessary by Mental Health Team, to address the team as needed and following given consent. The intent of the meeting will be to address concerns that the team has regarding information they may already have and to advise them of any responsibility they may or may not have. This meeting can also be used to dispel any common myths. Counseling for anyone associated with athletics such as a team member, staff, or coach that witnessed the crisis will be offered to the individual.

The role of the Medical director will include but not be limited to:

- To communicate with the hospital staff / doctors
- To oversee entire treatment plan

The role of the athletic trainer will include but not be limited to:

- To communicate with the integration team and to establish a written return to play progression and ensure that the progression is carried out appropriately.
- To arrange or provide any transportation needed
- To communicate with sport coaches
  - With proper consent, to communicate with the coaches know the student athlete is okay, appointments are being kept, how treatment is progressing, training plan, and how the coaches may assist.

The role of the sports psychologist will include but not be limited too:

- To coordinate mental health care post-hospitalization.
- To arrange all counseling appointments and choose follow-up counselor.
- To communicate with the athletic trainer all appointments
- To hold an educational meeting with coaches, staff, and team members.



The role of the Senior Associate Athletic Director will include but not be limited to:

- To provide support and communicate when appropriate with athletics and campus administration.
- To communicate with parents / legal guardians when appropriate.
- To communicate with providers any insurance or business information to facilitate continued treatment.

The role of the key contact will include but not be limited to:

- To serve as a liaison to the student athlete.
- To serve as a liaison to the Medical Team.
- To provide updates to the parents when necessary

4. Progress reports will be provided by all treatment team personnel prior to all follow-up appointments with the Medical Director. It is the responsibility of each individual team member to provide reports to the Medical Director.

**Debrief and Plan for the Future:**

1. Schedule a meeting with athletic department staff initially involved with the crisis or emergency situation to debrief. This should include conversations around privacy and how to address questions posed about the student-athlete by others including teammates. A meeting should also be had with staff who will be involved moving forward. This can be handled in the same meeting should the same staff be involved or a different meeting if need be.
2. While maintaining confidentiality: identify the strengths of the intervention approach, what did not work with the intervention, and what improvements could be made to the departmental protocol for management of mental health crises.
3. Schedule a follow-up meeting with the student-athlete and the Ole Miss Multidisciplinary team to speak with him or her regarding the efficacy of the current treatment and whether or not changes need to be made moving forward to the student-athlete's care. This conversation may also include an individual (e.g., parent, family member, etc.) who the student-athlete would like to be involved in the process.
4. Inform the student-athlete that he or she may speak to the Health and Sport Performance staff at any time to discuss their mental health and overall well-being and potential changes to their treatment plan, if necessary.

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Resources:

REVIEWED/REVISED: Spring 2019



NCAA; Managing Student Athletes' Mental Health Issues (n.d.). Retrieved March 13, 2018, from <http://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/mental-health>

National Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. (n.d.). *Transitioning from psychiatric hospitalization to schools*. Retrieved from <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/hospital.pdf>

Students Returning to School After a Suicide Attempt (n.d.). Retrieved March 12, 2018, from <http://ubhc.rutgers.edu/tlc/guidelines/educators/SchoolAfterSuicideAttempt.html>