

Managing Stress & Mental Health in High-Pressure Athletic Positions

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The Unique Pressure of the Administrator Role



Understanding Stress in Athletic Administration

What is Stress?

The body's natural response to demands or threats.
Can be positive (eustress) or negative (distress).



Common Stressors for Athletic Administrators:

- Time Constraints
- Parental Pressure
- Coach Management
- Budget Limitations
- Facility Issues
- Crisis Management
- Work-Life Imbalance

The Impact of Chronic Stress

Physical Impacts:

- Fatigue, headaches, muscle tension, digestive issues
- Increased susceptibility to illness
- Sleep disturbances

Mental & Emotional Impacts:

- Anxiety, irritability, feelings of overwhelm
- Difficulty concentrating, memory problems
- Burnout, cynicism, loss of passion
- Increased risk of depression

Professional Impacts:

- Decreased productivity and decision-making ability
- Strained relationships with colleagues, coaches, and parents
- Increased absenteeism or presenteeism (being present but unproductive)
- Potential for errors or oversight

Stress Strategy Brain Dump!



**TIME MANAGEMENT
& ORGANIZATION**



**SETTING
BOUNDARIES**



**SELF-
AWARENESS TOOLS**



**EFFECTIVE
COMMUNICATION**

Proactive Stress Management Strategies

Stress Management Skill Spotlight

➤ **The "Two-Minute Rule" for Time Management:** If a task takes less than two minutes, do it immediately. This prevents small tasks from piling up and becoming overwhelming.

Crafting a "No" Statement: Practice politely declining requests that don't align with your priorities or capacity. Example: "I appreciate you thinking of me, but I'm currently focused on [X] and won't be able to take that on."

▸ Prioritizing Time to Rejuvenate

Rejuvenating Not Selfish; It's Essential for Sustainability.



Physical Well-being:

Be active!
Get Sleep.
Eat Well.



Mental & Emotional Well-being:

Mindfulness & Meditation
Hobbies & Interests
Connect with Nature



Social Well-being

Find your team.
Connect with Peers.
Know Who to Call.



Seeking Support

- **When to Seek Support:** If stress or mental health concerns are impacting your daily functioning, relationships, or overall well-being.
- **Sources of Support:**
 - **Trusted Colleagues/Mentors:** Share experiences and gain insights.
 - **Family & Friends:** Lean on your personal support network.
 - **Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs):** Many school districts offer confidential counseling services.
 - **Mental Health Professionals:**
 - **Therapists/Counselors:** Provide strategies for coping, stress reduction, and addressing underlying issues.
 - **Psychiatrists:** Can diagnose and treat mental health conditions, including medication management if needed.
- **Remember:** Seeking help is a sign of strength, self-awareness, and prioritizing wellness!

Creating a Supportive Environment

Modeling:

- Prioritize your own well-being and openly discuss its importance (when appropriate).
- Model healthy boundaries and self-care practices.

Foster a Culture of Openness:

- Encourage coaches and staff to discuss challenges without fear of judgment.
- Promote a "team" approach to problem-solving.

Provide Resources:

- Share information about EAPs, mental health services, and wellness programs.
- Be aware of signs of distress in your staff and know how to connect them to support.

Recognize and Appreciate Efforts: Acknowledge the hard work and dedication of your team.



Resources

- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): www.nami.org
 - Education, advocacy, and support for individuals and families affected by mental illness
- Mental Health America (MHA): www.mhanational.org
 - Provides resources, information, and advocacy for mental health
- American School Counselor Association (ASCA): www.schoolcounselor.org
 - Resources often extend to staff well-being
- Your School District's Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Professional Athletic Administrator Organizations: (e.g., NIAAA, state athletic director associations) - often have wellness resources

Take-Away

Your well-being is foundational to your success and the success of your athletic program. Prioritize it, seek support when needed, and lead with compassion – for yourself and your team



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Thank you!