

Sport and mental health: are there links?

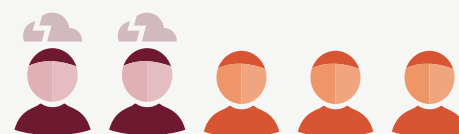
Sports play a central role in Australian culture, and this is reflected in the fact that a majority of young people participate in organised sport¹. Participation in sport can have direct benefits for physical and mental health by encouraging regular exercise². Community sporting clubs, associations and leagues also have the potential to provide indirect benefits toward mental health via the social support and resources they offer to their members. However, young people don't always look for help or speak up when they need it.



75%
of mental health
conditions emerge
by age 25



1 in 2 experience anxiety



2 in 5 experience depression

What does this mean for young Australians?



academic outcomes



unemployment



social supports



substance use

This means there is an obvious need to protect the mental health of young Australians. Given their high levels of sports participation, one way to ensure young people have access to support in all areas of their life is by incorporating basic mental health support into community sports³.

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics. Children's participation in cultural and leisure activities 4901.0. Canberra: Statistics AB; 2012.

2. Parnell D, Krustup P. Sport and health: Exploring the current state of play. New York, NY: Routledge; 2018.

3. McGorry PD, Purcell R, Hickie IB, Jorm AF. Investing in youth mental health is a best buy. *Medical Journal of Australia*. 2007;187(7):55.