



Strong Minds

Time Taken:
20 Minutes



Objectives

This section will introduce participants to the topic of Strong Minds.

Recognising
Signs of Stress

3

Emotional
Health

2

What is
Strong Minds?

1

**What will
we learn?**

4

Strong Minds
Strategies

5

Task Time

Step 1

What is Strong Minds?

Tell participants that today's topic is strong minds.

Strong minds is focused on developing coping skills and ways to keep well under stress, such as thinking positive thoughts, releasing stress and connecting with others.

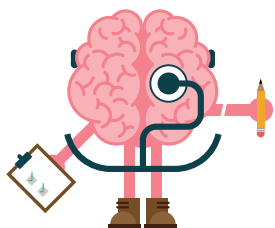
Sometimes in daily life or during competition our emotions can take over. Today we will learn tips to help us positively manage our thoughts and feelings at these times.



Step 2

Emotional Health

- Emotional health is an important part of overall health.
- Health isn't just physical, it is about having an optimistic approach and being able to enjoy life.
- It is being able to handle challenges in your life.
- Emotional health is about the ability to accept, understand and express our feelings.
- It allows us to be in control of our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.





Emotional Health

A person who is 'stressed out' is usually feeling strong emotions (like sadness, worry or feeling mad). These can be really uncomfortable.




Stress can also make our body really tense – making it harder to feel calm and relaxed.

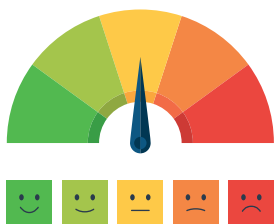
For a lot of us, we have to calm our bodies before we can calm our feelings.

Step 3

Recognising Signs of Stress









Ask the athletes to write or draw on a post it note one thing that causes them stress e.g. meeting new people, public speaking or getting ready to compete.

-  Explain that there are many different things that can cause stress. Stress can be good or bad but how we deal with it is important.
-  Ask the athletes to share their post it notes and discuss the signs of stress as a group.
-  Notice that different things cause stress for different people.











Ask the athletes how they feel when they experience the stressors on their post it notes. Stress signs can be emotional or physical, here are some examples to discuss.

Emotional signs

-  Becoming easily upset or mad.
-  Feeling overwhelmed.
-  Having difficulty relaxing.
-  Feeling bad about yourself (low self-esteem).
-  Avoiding others.
-  Inability to focus.
-  Poor judgement/decision making.
-  Worrying a lot.

Physical signs

-  Low energy.
-  Headaches.
-  Upset stomach.
-  Tense muscles.
-  Chest pain and rapid heartbeat.
-  Trouble sleeping.
-  Nervousness and shaking.
-  Aches and pains.

Step 4

Strong Minds Strategies

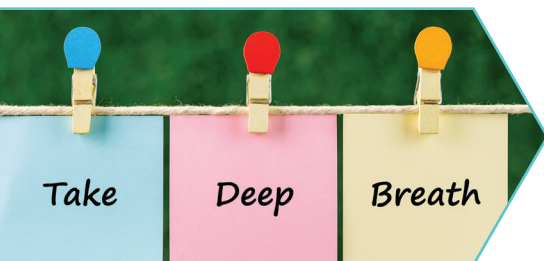
We are now going to go over some strategies that can be used in daily life or can be practiced with teammates.



Stress and You: A stress ball is one way to get rid of stressful feelings. Squeeze the ball slowly for 3 seconds, hold, then slowly release the ball for 3 seconds. Repeat 10 times.



Strong Messages: Sometimes it's helpful to have a written list of encouraging words to read or look at – like an individual pep-talk to yourself. Take a moment to write down (or say out loud) a few things you could say to yourself to stay positive and focused.



Strong Breathing: Deep breathing is a very common tool to help people feel more relaxed. Take a slow breath in through your nose (3-5 seconds), hold your breath (1-2 seconds), and slowly breathe out (3-5 seconds). Repeat 5 to 10 times.



Strong Stretching: Stretching is not only good for our physical health, but also for our emotional health. Some stretches can help us to feel more relaxed.






Strong Supporting: People can really be helpful to us when we are feeling stressed or upset. Talking to friends and family can help put worries at ease. Take a moment to think about who you can rely on to be supportive. It is also important to remember that being kind to others and showing support helps reduce your stress.

Step 5

Task Time

Strong Minds Plan

-  This weeks task is for everyone to take home their own strong minds plan.
-  Ask participants to fill in the different plan sections, they can write or draw their ideas.
-  Use the picture posters to encourage athletes to select their favourite strategies to make the plan individual for them.

Strong Minds Template

<p>Things that cause me stress.</p>	<p>Signs that I am stressed.</p>
<p>Strong minds strategies for me.</p>	<p>My strong supporting person is:</p>

Strong Minds Example

<p>Things that cause me stress.</p> <p><i>I get anxious before away football matches.</i></p>	<p>Signs that I am stressed.</p> <p><i>I get a sick feeling in my stomach and can feel my heart beating faster.</i></p>
<p>Strong minds strategies for me.</p> <p><i>Deep breathing.</i></p> <p><i>Stretching before the game.</i></p> <p><i>Repeating positive quotes in my head.</i></p>	<p>My strong supporting person is:</p> <p><i>My mum - she provides me with a positive message in my kit bag.</i></p> <p><i>My coach - he does stretches with the team before the game which helps put my nerves at ease.</i></p>