



**Athletes strong for Mental Health**



## Parent roles in preseason conditioning

### How to prepare

For many sports, the change of seasons marks the beginning of preseason conditioning. Just like any transition in life, it's essential for parents and guardians to have intentional conversations with their young athletes about roles, responsibilities, and expectations during this period and beyond.

### Establishing expectations

Setting clear expectations and creating a shared calendar for workouts and scrimmages at home is a great first step to ensure everyone is on the same page. This minimizes the likelihood of miscommunications regarding drop-off and pick-up times. You can use a dry-erase calendar in the kitchen, a printed calendar on the fridge, or a shared digital calendar on a mobile device.

Engage in preseason conversations to align with your athlete on season goals, motivations, and potential stressors. This will help parents be better prepared for the upcoming months.

Maintain open lines of communication throughout the season. Listen to your athlete's feelings about tiredness, hunger, and their emotional state during workout sessions. Asking them to rate how they feel on a scale of 1-10 is an easy way to start these conversations.



### Check ins

Keep tabs on your athlete's health to prevent burnout and injuries. Understanding your athlete's baseline for workout recovery and mental health makes it easier to identify when something is amiss.

Be attentive to signs such as dehydration, reduced appetite, difficulty concentrating, increased agitation, or any other unusual symptoms or behaviors that indicate exhaustion.

Athletes Strong for Mental Health is presented by

**STIFEL**



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### Allowing adjustments

As athletes begin their season, various transitions occur, including changes in bedtime, early alarms, reduced free time, and increased meal sizes. These routine changes, combined with strenuous workouts and exposure to the sun, can lead to increased sensitivity and agitation in athletes. Parents should be mindful of these changes and provide support as needed.

### Preparations

After practice, a parent can gauge how the session went by observing their athlete's demeanor. If the athlete chooses to share their experiences, it's important for parents to realize that they've been chosen as a trusted adult. How parents react in these moments can influence future interactions regarding their athletic career.

Ask your athlete what they need from you at that moment. Be ready to listen and let them vent, offer advice if they ask for it, or provide reassurance if they're facing challenges



### Nonverbal support

Supporting your athlete doesn't always require words. Here are a few nonverbal ways to show your support:

- Have snacks and drinks ready for when your athlete needs to refuel. Proper nutrition plays a significant role in physical and mental health.
- Leave notes of encouragement, not related to performance, on your athlete's water bottle, in their training bag, or inside their shoe. These quiet gestures remind them that they are cared for and can set a positive tone for their workouts.

By following these steps, you can help your young athlete navigate preseason conditioning successfully while fostering a healthy and supportive environment.