



### Best Practice #2: Procedures for Identification of Student-Athletes with Mental Health Symptoms and Disorders, Including Mental Health Screening Tools

**Recommendation:** Screening for mental health symptoms and disorders is one important way to identify student-athletes who may benefit from therapeutic support. Best practices promote using an empirically validated screening tool to evaluate all student-athletes for psychological distress at least once annually. Screening tools should be used in consultation with the primary athletics health care provider and/or licensed mental health provider.

**NCAA Mental Health Best Practices:** [Understanding and Supporting Student-Athlete Mental Health SECOND EDITION An Inter-Association Consensus Document Copyright 2016, Revised 2020, Updated 2024](#)

*\*\*Schools are legislatively required to make mental health services and resources available to their student-athletes consistent with NCAA 2024 Best Practices.*

**Solution:** The CCAPS-Screen is an all-in-one screening instrument that assesses eight of the most common areas of distress experienced by college students and varsity athletes. It evaluates all of the areas of distress recommended by the 2024 NCAA Best Practices. As the leader in efficiency and accuracy, the CCAPS-Screen allows for student-athletes to complete the screen in only a few minutes while still meeting all nine core components recommended by the NCAA 2024 Best Practices. Most importantly, the administration of the CCAPS-Screen is flexible and can be customized to meet your needs, including a-synchronously or in-person.

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#### CCAPS-SCREEN

#### CORE COMPONENTS OF NCAA BEST PRACTICE #2

✓	Screening tools used in consultation with primary athletics health care provider and/ or licensed mental health provider.
✓	Use validated screening tools.
✓	Screen for psychological distress.
✓	Screen all student-athletes at least once annually.
✓	Screen for specific mental health disorders and risk factors.
✓	Consider populations in which screening tools have been validated.
✓	Work with student-athletes to foster trust.
✓	Address mental health literacy.
✓	Considerations for continuous improvement strategies.



**Core Component #1: Screening tools used in consultation with primary athletics health care provider and/ or licensed mental health provider.**

The CCAPS-Screen is a 36-item version of the CCAPS (34 or 62-item), which is the most widely used tool for assessing mental health distress in college students. Since the CCAPS is routinely used at over 800 counseling centers nationwide, clinicians are already familiar with the CCAPS-Screen subscales, which enables smooth consultation between athletic departments and college counseling centers.

**Core Component #2: Use validated screening tools.**

Derived from the CCAPS, the CCAPS-Screen is a validated and empirically supported tool that quickly evaluates eight areas of distress in one instrument. During the 2023-2024 academic year, 200+ college counseling centers implemented the CCAPS-Screen with a non-clinical student population, such as in collaboration with an athletic department to screen athletes. Overall, 600+ sports teams/40,000+ athletes were evaluated using the CCAPS-Screen.

**Core Component #3: Screen for psychological distress.**

The CCAPS-Screen is a short, 36-item questionnaire that measures the following eight areas of distress: Depression, Generalized Anxiety, Social Anxiety, Academic Distress, Eating Concerns, Frustration, Alcohol Use, and Suicidal Thoughts.

**Core Component #4: Screen all student-athletes at least once annually.**

Administration of the CCAPS-Screen is flexible and allows athletic departments to screen students in ways that suit their needs. Athletes can take the assessment on a university device with a professional present or receive a link to complete it remotely on their own device. Professionals who screen varsity athletes can access both the raw responses and aggregate profile reports online.

**Core Component #5: Screen for specific mental health disorders and risk factors.**

Based on the varsity athlete's individual responses, CCAPS-Screen profile report scores all eight areas of distress as low (minimal to no distress), moderate (further evaluation recommended if problematic), or elevated (similar to students in treatment, further evaluation recommended). If a varsity athlete indicates experiencing any thoughts of ending their life, this is highlighted on the profile report. Based on their results, guidance is given regarding consulting with a mental health professional about areas of elevation.

**Core Component #6: Consider populations in which screening tools have been validated.**

The CCAPS-Screen, derived from the CCAPS, is normed on over 388,000 college students receiving mental health treatment. The normative group includes varsity athletes as well as students with diverse racial, sexual orientation, gender, and religious identities. It is the only mental health screening instrument exclusively normed on a clinical college student population.

### **Core Component #7: Work with student-athletes to foster trust.**

An initial 2018 pilot of 30 counseling centers revealed that using the CCAPS-Screen with varsity athletes promoted a strong relationship between the counseling center and athletic department. This collaborative foundation fostered trust amongst athletes who felt the athletic department and the counseling centers were core, united support systems. Similar feedback has been repeatedly received since the CCAPS-Screen was officially released in October of 2019.

### **Core Component #8: Address mental health literacy.**

The CCAPS-Screen profile report offers an easily digestible summary of each varsity athlete's mental health symptoms. The summary informs the athlete and their support systems about the specific symptoms of various mental health problems, as well as the overall level (low, moderate, elevated) of symptoms experienced by the student. Additionally, the profile report includes a customizable section where administrators can input recommended resources for athletes. These resources typically range from emergency care options to local mental health support services for athletes who need further evaluation or support. Although all reports need administrator review for tailored referrals, the advertisement of accessible mental health resources on the report is crucial in acquainting students and their support systems with available services.

### **Core Component #9: Considerations for continuous improvement strategies.**

There are options to run data reports that outline the aggregate results of multiple screens. These combined reports drive ongoing improvements in the mental health screening process to meet student-athlete and institution needs. For example, categorizing different sporting teams into separate screening groups (portals) offers the ability to compare data across teams for a single point in time as well as longitudinally.

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#### **During the 23-24 academic year:**

- 200+ college counseling centers implemented the CCAPS-Screen with a non-clinical student population, such as in collaboration with an athletic department to screen athletes.
- 600+ sports teams were evaluated using the CCAPS-Screen.
- 40,000+ athletes completed a CCAPS-Screen.

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**Registration:** <https://ccmh.psu.edu/join>

**Cost:** \$550\*\*

\*\*Athletic Departments can purchase their own CCAPS-Screen instance for in-house use separate from the counseling center (Non-Clinical CCMH Membership \$550/annually).

*College Counseling Centers have access to the CCAPS-Screen via their current Clinical CCMH Membership.*

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