Signs and Symptoms of Increased Stress and Anxiety

- Physical (how one’s body feels)
  - Cold, clammy hands
  - Need to urinate frequently
  - Increased heart rate
  - Profuse sweating
  - Increased muscle tension
  - Butterflies in stomach
  - Nausea
  - Headache
  - Dry mouth
  - Difficulty sleeping

- Mental (one’s thoughts)
  - Inability to concentrate
  - Negative self-talk
  - Racing mind
  - Worrying about how others will view your performance
  - Focusing on having to perform perfectly
  - Obsessing about poor performances in the past

- Behavioral (one’s actions)
  - Talking rapidly
  - Hurrying
  - Fidgeting
  - Emotional outbursts
  - Consistently performing better in noncompetitive situations

Common Sources of Stress for Athletes

- Defeat
- Event importance
- Sport type—children/teens in individual sports tend to experience more stress
- Feeling overwhelmed by the demands of the sport
- Trying to prove yourself to coaches and teammates
- Injury

Stress/Anxiety and Performance

- All athletes, even the world’s best feel some stress and anxiety
- Too much stress and anxiety can prevent you from performing at your best
- Being under too much stress increases the risk for injury
Helping Your Child Manage Stress/Anxiety in Sports

Be Prepared
✓ Help your child stay on top of their schedule and tasks
✓ Encourage your child to continue practicing his/her skills
✓ Encourage your child to stay in physical shape
✓ Offer a balanced diet
✓ Make sure your child is getting adequate sleep
  ○ 9-11 hours for school age children
  ○ 8-10 hours for adolescents
✓ Take care of injuries immediately

Getting Perspective
✓ Help your child understand that loss is part of the game
✓ Help your child remember that sports is only one part of his/her life
✓ If stress/anxiety is high before competition, ask your child, “What’s the worst case scenario, and can you deal with it?”

Change Self-Talk
✓ The first step is helping your child pay attention to what they are thinking to themselves
✓ Encourage them to “change the channel” off of negative self-talk
✓ Help them engage in productive self-talk
  ○ “I’m going to give it my best.”
  ○ “I can do this.”
✓ Use examples of role models

Create a Positive Environment
✓ Decrease social comparisons
✓ Have a constructive attitude toward mistakes
✓ Remain positive and optimistic

Relaxation Techniques
✓ Slow deep breathing
✓ Stretching
✓ Journaling
✓ Listening to music

Understanding What You Have Control Over
✓ Help your child focus on what they have control over

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No Control</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How others will think about your performance</td>
<td>How much you prepare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much game time you’ll get</td>
<td>How much your practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winning</td>
<td>How much you sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fan/parent reactions</td>
<td>Your diet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making the team</td>
<td>How you warm up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving a scholarship</td>
<td>Your attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Your mental preparation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>