SFC MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY RESPONSE: A QUICK GUIDE

1. DETERMINE: EMERGENCY OR URGENT CONCERN?

Use the questions below to determine whether the situation may be a Mental Health Emergency. Refer to the **Mental Health Emergency Action Plan** for detailed procedures.

If the answer to any question is **YES**, treat the situation as a potential emergency:

- Is there an immediate or imminent risk that the individual may harm themselves?
- Are you concerned that the individual may harm someone else?
- Does the individual appear to be out of touch with reality?
- Has the individual made threats or indicated an intention to cause harm?
- Do you believe your safety, the safety of others, or the individual's safety is at risk?
- Could the individual harm themselves or someone else if they leave the premises?

When in doubt, prioritize safety and activate the emergency protocol.

2. ACTIVATE THE APPROPRIATE PROTOCOL

If it is a **Mental Health Emergency** (see Mental Health Emergency Action Plan for details):

a. **Stay calm.** Take a moment to regulate yourself before engaging with the individual.

b. **Engage the individual in a serious and supportive conversation about how they are feeling.** Always ensure that you are safe before approaching or engaging with the individual.

c. **Remain with the athlete until the Designated Team Lead arrives (if they are not already present).**
   - Depending on the circumstances, the *Designated Team Lead* may be different individuals. In most cases, this will be a coach or an SFC staff member who is present at the competition or training site and has been identified in advance.
   - The Designated Team Lead should accompany the individual to the hospital and liaise with hospital healthcare providers, the individual's emergency contact, and the SFC.

d. **Ask directly about suicide and thoughts of harming others.** Asking these questions does not increase the risk of suicide or violence.
    - "Are you thinking about harming yourself?"
    - "Are you having thoughts of suicide?"
    - "Do you have thoughts about harming other people?"

e. **Identify the individual's preferred emergency contact.**
    - Ask: "Who would you like me to contact for you?
    - Do not assume this is a family member. The individual may prefer a friend, teammate, partner, or another trusted person.
    - Contact that person, Be mindful of consent considerations.

f. **Call 911 when there is an immediate safety concern**, including when:
    - The individual is at imminent risk of suicide or harming someone else;
    - You are concerned that the individual's judgment is significantly impaired;
    - The individual cannot confirm that they have a plan to remain safe; or
    - You believe the individual may leave and place themselves or someone else at risk.

g. **Follow 911's instructions, including securing access to potential means of harm, where this can be done safely.**
    - Do not put yourself or others at risk while attempting to remove or secure potential means of harm.
    - Firearms may be voluntarily and temporarily surrendered to a trusted person, provided the person receiving the firearm holds a valid firearms licence, in accordance with the *Firearms Act*.

3. CONTACT THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (ERT)

Once immediate risk to the individual and others has been addressed, the Designated Team Lead should contact the *SFC Mental Health Emergency Response Team (ERT)* for guidance. Begin with the Primary Responder. If you are unable to make contact, proceed to the Secondary Responder, followed by the Tertiary Responder.

SFC MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM		
ROLE	**NAME**	**CONTACT INFORMATION**
Primary Responder	High Performance (HP) Technical Director, SFC Susan Verdier	sverdier@sfc-ftc.ca
Secondary Responder	CEO, SFC Terry Dillon	ceo@sfc-ftc.ca
Tertiary Responder	Director of Sport Development, SFC Lisa Roddie	members@sfc-ftc.ca
Consultative (Clinical) Responder	Mental Health Lead, SFC Dr. Zarina Giannone Licensed Psychologist (BC)	zarina@drzarinagiannone.com

The ERT can provide guidance on:

- Management of the situation
- Appropriate next steps and referrals
- Communication with relevant supports
- Follow-up care and monitoring
- Developing a plan for the member following the crisis

Tips for Managing Immediate Risk to Self & Others: A Four Step Model

1. **LOOK — What is happening? Who needs support?**
    - Stay calm and assess the situation.
    - Identify who needs support and who is best positioned to provide it.

2. **LISTEN — Keep them safe, calm, and heard.**
    - Move to a safe, quiet environment when possible.
    - Listen without judgment.
    - Reassure the individual that they are not alone.
    - Avoid overwhelming them with questions or empty reassurance.

3. **CONNECT — Link them with people and resources.**
    - Identify the individual's immediate needs.
    - Connect them with a trusted support person.
    - Develop a simple plan together.
    - In an emergency, contact emergency services when necessary.

4. **COPE — Help them recover, regain control, and move forward.**
    - Encourage healthy coping strategies, rest, hydration, and connection with trusted supports.
    - Arrange appropriate follow-up mental health support.
    - Consider a gradual return to normal activities or sport when appropriate.