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POST-GAMES PLANNING

A WORKBOOK FOR ATHLETES TO PLAN FOR
LIFE AFTER MAJOR GAMES OR CHAMPIONSHIPS



The inspiration for this workbook was a casual conversation in March 2019 between Kirsten Barnes and members of Game Plan. Kirsten is a double Olympic gold medalist in rowing and has extensive experience working with athletes and teams (read more about Kirsten’s post-Games story and some tools she uses with teams she works with on **page 10**). She was talking about how she encourages athletes to make their post-Olympic plan at least nine months ahead of time because with a plan in place they can relax and focus on sport, knowing they have a plan for what comes next, even if it’s just a few weeks off.

That idea of that type of planning is central to Game Plan. In fact, Game Plan was founded for that precise reason. Game Plan is Canada’s athlete wellness program that strives to support national team athletes to live better and more holistic lives. We know that an athlete with a “game plan” for success on and off the field of play is more likely to perform better in sport, stay in sport longer and have a smoother retirement, but we have been so focused on building world-leading programs and services to fill in an athlete’s plan, that we hadn’t been working on some of the overarching basics. In other words, we hadn’t built a tool for athletes and their Game Plan advisors, or mental performance consultants to build a game plan with. This workbook addresses that oversight. By developing this tool to help athletes and the teams around them make plans that are as concrete and effective as possible, we hope to improve performance and ease the tension many athletes experience after a major Games.

The Game Plan staff would like to thank the many members for the Game Plan team who provided feedback and suggestions for the workbook. We would also like to thank Kirsten Barnes for her inspiration and feedback, Karen MacNeill for her contribution about brain chemistry, and everyone else who helped bring this together. We would also like to thank our sport partners the Canadian Olympic Committee, Canadian Paralympic Committee, Sport Canada and the Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Sport Institute Network, and the support of our corporate partners: Deloitte, Morneau Shepell, the Smith School of Business at Queen’s University, and RBC.

Please don’t hesitate to write with comments, ideas or feedback to info@mygameplan.ca.

Thank you,

The Game Plan team

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POST-GAMES PLANNING: HOW TO WIN AT THE GAMES AND AT HOME

INTRODUCTION:

Game Plan isn't about an athlete staying in sport or leaving sport. Game Plan is about helping athletes take control of their lives by making a plan for success on and off the field of play.

What if we told you that you could spend an hour or two this week with a computer or a pen and paper and probably improve, certainly not hurt, your chances at the Olympic or Paralympic Games? Would you do it?

Game Plan was started in part because an athlete at the Vancouver Olympics was in tears the night before their final. They weren't upset because of their nerves. They were upset because they didn't know what they were going to do the Monday after the Games. Do you think that's a good state to be in before your Olympic or Paralympic final or World Championship game?

The Game Plan team has talked to hundreds of athletes about what they are doing outside of sport to help them prepare for life after sport. Many athletes haven't really thought about it or will think about what comes after sport only near the end of the careers. They are making a critical mistake that could be hurting their athletic careers and their transition to life after sport.

It's important to remember that Game Plan isn't about staying in sport or leaving sport. Game Plan is about making a plan for success on and off the field of play. In other words, *preparing for what you'll do after the Games and outside of sport in general is crucial for your current well-being regardless of whether or not you're leaving high-performance sport.*

POST-GAMES BLUES:

Preparation isn't only about performing better in competition. We know many athletes suffer from "post-Games blues." The cause is often related to an athlete having been focused on one big goal for years and suddenly, regardless of whether or not it is achieved, that goal is gone. What's next, whether it's more sports or a career outside of sport, can seem dull compared with the rush of a major games.

Of course, there's more to it than that, and everyone's experience is different, but the good news is there are steps that should help most people avoid the worst of the post-Games blues.

Many athletes are excited about the prospect of doing nothing immediately after the Games. They don't want to be focused on something. They think an empty schedule will be a release of pressure and stress. But while that may be true for some, we've seen that too much free time can lead to negative experiences. For one, during the Olympics you get a swell of "happy hormones" — dopamine, serotonin and endorphins. This biochemical high can come crashing down after the Games, leaving you feeling a deep sense of sadness or depressed. In addition, after months and years of having your schedule programmed to the utmost degree, suddenly being faced with a lack of structure can be overwhelming. Having too much empty space in your calendar without a clear goal can lead to negative mental health outcomes, feelings of stress, anxiety and depression. Of course, athletes do need a break after a Games, so our goal is to help you find a middle ground.

Our own research from the Pyeongchang and Rio Games shows that athletes with a game plan (a plan for success on and off the field of play) find themselves better able to focus when competing. Research from Australia following the Sydney Olympics found that athletes without a plan followed a pattern: by about a month after the Games, they felt unhappy. The hype was over, and they felt lost, disconnected and listless. Their community was gone. After about three months, they began to cope with that emptiness by loading their schedules to unmanageable levels. They tried everything in hyperspeed. Initially, this made them feel better, like they were doing something constructive, but of course that didn't last. After about a year, they had finally made their schedules manageable and found stasis.

We're trying to shortcut this process to make it easier for you find post-Games balance while helping you be your best at the Games.

INSTRUCTIONS:

When you think about the week, month, and months or years after the Games, you don't need to be anxious. There are simple, concrete steps you can take this week or this month or anytime really (although we suggest you do it before January 1 at the latest so you get it out of the way and are you can focus on training) that will help calm those butterflies in your gut so you can focus on being your best on and off the field of play.

We've created a simple workbook for you based on Game Plan's five pillars: health, community, career, education and skill development. It shouldn't take more than an hour or two to fill in properly.

We've created this workbook so you can do it on your own if you have to, but ideally you will fill it out with your Game Plan advisor or your mental performance consultant.

Basically, you will create a training plan for your life after the Games. You fill in what you're going to do, when and with whom, then find someone you trust who will keep you accountable to it. Put it somewhere safe, but accessible if you need it, until the Games are over. That way, if you feel stressed about what's going to happen the Monday after the Games, you don't need to worry — you can remind yourself you have a plan.

As you're filling it out, remember that these five pillars exist on a spectrum. They overlap all the time. So don't worry if some names, tasks or ideas spill over into multiple pillars. Each section includes prompting questions, room to write answers and other resources you can use. Remember, this workbook is best filled out with your Game Plan advisor.

HEALTH:

Physical: Detraining after a Games is crucial. Stopping cold turkey can have serious negative health effects, both physical and mental. Add a tendency for athletes to party post-Games, and your health can suffer. So, it's important to have a plan for detraining. Research shows that athletes should decrease their training load carefully. If you're going to retire or take a few months off, talk to your coach and your strength and conditioning coach or other members of your integrated sports team (IST).

■ What exercise will you commit to doing other than your sport?

EXERCISE:			
WHEN?	WHERE?	HOW?	WITH WHOM?

EXERCISE:			
WHEN?	WHERE?	HOW?	WITH WHOM?

EXERCISE:			
WHEN?	WHERE?	HOW?	WITH WHOM?

EXERCISE:			
WHEN?	WHERE?	HOW?	WITH WHOM?

MENTAL HEALTH:

Mental: Mental health and physical health are inextricably related. Just as important as keeping your body healthy, you need to keep your mind healthy. As discussed above, coming home to nothing but a few weeks of parties can sound great, but in reality it can be emotionally draining. It doesn't matter if you won gold or not. The excitement ends, and an empty schedule stretching on for months for someone used to having every minute planned is a bad idea. The emotions athletes feel post-Games, whether positive or negative, can also change how an athlete's brain typically works, which can make tasks or challenges that used to be simple seem overwhelming.

In this section, we encourage you to identify the strategies you'll use to be mentally healthy and where to turn if you're not feeling great. See Kirsten Barnes' **Post-Games transition** story on page 10, and reflect on the stages of transition while answering these questions.

■ If I feel sad or feel like I'm not behaving normally, who/what are my resources?

■ What self-care strategy do I want to try? (e.g., mindfulness, gratitude journal)

■ **How can I make it happen? With whom and where?**

TOOLS:

Game Plan resources:

- Game Plan advisor _____
- Mental performance consultant _____
- Mental health guide (see appendix) _____
- Selfcare worksheet (see appendix) _____
- Game Plan’s health series webinars _____
- Coach, IST staff at your Canada Sports _____
Institute or Centre or at your national program _____

Gratitude journal: The research behind positive psychology has shown that recognizing the positive things in our lives can have a profound effect on our attitudes, feelings of self-worth and successes. A great habit for any athlete (or anyone) is to keep a gratitude journal. Every day, write down three things you’re grateful for. They don’t have to be profound: “I’m grateful that on my way to practice I walked by a rose bush in bloom and took a second to smell the flowers.” Or, “I’m grateful that my roommate made dinner tonight even though it was overcooked spaghetti. I was tired, and it filled me up and saved me from ordering pizza.” Just notice the good things and write them down.

POST-GAMES TRANSITION

*Written by Kirsten Barnes for the Canadian team after the 2014 Rugby World Cup.
Edited in 2019 for use by Game Plan.*

A major games is an amazing experience. For an athlete, coach or member of support staff experiencing a big event such as this, both the build-up and the event itself is a hugely charged and exciting time. Often, a period of time following these big events (World Cups, World Championships or Paralympics and Olympics) can be one of mixed emotions. So much time is spent preparing, physically, mentally and emotionally for major events, but often we forget about the period of time following the event and the impact the post-event can have.

Regardless of what your longer-term plans are for sport (whether you are retiring, taking a break, continuing with training following a short break or returning to your daily work life as staff), you are bound to feel all sorts of emotions in the days, weeks and even months following the competition. This is often referred to as the “post-Games blues.”

From a personal perspective, returning home following the 1992 Olympics, I couldn't have been happier. However, I recall how emotional the months following those Games were — one minute feeling thrilled and incredibly satisfied with everything that happened, and then the next minute, quite inexplicably, feeling lonely, bursting into tears and wondering what on earth just happened, what do I do now, who can I turn to for support?

Fortunately, I learned I wasn't going crazy and that in fact this was quite normal. However, while this was comforting to know, I hadn't prepared myself for those post-Games feelings, and they

took me by surprise. We will all experience the time after a major event in our own different and unique way, but being aware and prepared for the emotions that may arise is the first step in being effective in your coping and appreciating what you have been a part of.

The time following a major event may be a time of recovery, small change or full transition. It is a natural and obvious time to reflect on what has happened and where you would like to go in the future.

Here are two frameworks that may help you reflect on how you may be feeling now or may feel in the near future. These frameworks work together. You will probably experience some version of the first framework. The second framework is to help you plan for your future.

FRAMEWORK 1: EMOTIONAL TRANSITION

The emotional transition immediately following a major competition can be likened to a grieving process. Regardless of achievement or experience, anyone can go through the six stages of SADRAR:

- 1) feelings of shock** (I can't believe that just happened')
- 2) anger** ('it's not fair', 'all that effort wasted')
- 3) denial** ('I don't care')
- 4) resistance** ('I don't need your help or advice')
- 5) acceptance** ('It is time to move on')
- 6) renewed Action** ('This is what I want to do now')

This framework may help to explain the stages your feelings go through following the event. Although I have given negative examples for

SADRAR, even after a successful experience you can still experience these discrete stages.

As you complete this workbook and work with your Game Plan advisor, mental performance consultant or sport psychologist, remember that these are generally normal stages of transition. But it's worth planning for how you will cope or manage these emotions.

FRAMEWORK 2: ACTIVE TRANSITION

This second framework is a more action-oriented and longer-term transition process. It may begin a month or so after a major competition.

TAKE STOCK
Reflect on what has happened. What was great about it? Identify any changes to make.
EXPECTATIONS
What do you expect from yourself and what do others (coaches, teammates family, friends) expect of you? What impact does this have on you?
SELF -AWARENESS
Based on what is important to you, your personal values and your strengths, what do you want to do?
FUTURE VISION
Create your own positive and compelling view of the future.
GOALS AND ACTIONS
Identify your goals and actions to support your vision.
REVIEW
Evaluate your progress against your goals, and review the overall impact after 3–6 months.

Adapted from the Coaching Psychologist, Vol 3, No. 2 August 2007

There is no immediate answer or instant remedy to manage this time if you are feeling a bit low. But a huge step in the process is being self-aware and knowing there are people and tools available to help guide you through this period of time. Seek support from the people around you. Those who were there before the major event are still there now — family, friends, partners, coaches, support staff and Game Plan advisors. Talk to these people.

Also, make time to do some of the things you may have put on hold over the past few months or years. Take time to relax, switch off in your own way and recharge your batteries. Make time to explore all your options for your future if this is a turning point for you.

I want to emphasize that this time is unique to everyone. Not everyone will be feeling down and going through what I have suggested. But I know it happens, and I want you to know there are people around for support.

Remember, the Canadian Sport Institutes and Centres across the country have Game Plan advisors available to help with any type of transition questions you might have or to support you in the area of personal and professional development. Check out the Game Plan website, mygameplan.ca, for more resources.

I hope you are in a great place, and while you may have some bittersweet feelings after the event, that's OK. I hope you are happy with how you competed.

Kirsten Barnes, PhD, Mental Performance Consultant

COMMUNITY (NETWORK):

You've been part of a team for years now. Even if you're in an individual sport, you've had a community of training partners, coaches, therapists and staff helping you. After a Games, those people are gone, at least for a while.

What makes things harder is that while you've been so close with your sport community, your other social groups have grown and changed. It's common for athletes to return home after a Games, especially if they've been training away from their hometown, to find that they don't have the same support network they did when they left home a few years earlier. Friends change, get married, have kids and develop new friendships. Most probably have jobs that keep them busy during the day when you, the athlete, have nothing but time.

In this section, we ask you to write down the names of people who are a positive influence on you — who don't drain you of energy, but rather fill you up.

We also encourage you to figure out who you can help. Giving back will make you feel good. Maybe you'll arrange to talk to your old elementary or high school, or a bunch of schools in your community, about your experience. **(Hint: don't feel silly scheduling these months before the Games. It doesn't matter if you did "well" or not. The fact that you've tried your hardest at something is all that really matters to non-athletes. Only a few people are lucky enough to experience what you have, and you should be proud to talk about that. You've earned it!)** Or maybe you can coach at your old club for a few months.

■ Who are my champions: My personal board of directors who will keep me accountable but support me too?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

■ Who fills up my happiness and who drains?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

■ Who or what drains it?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

■ What can I do to spend more time with positive influences?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

■ Who in my hometown will support me? (Many athletes leave home for years, and when they come after a Games, they find they don't fit in.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

■ Who can I help or give back?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

TOOLS:

Game Plan resources:

- Game Plan advisor _____
- Mentorship program _____
- YouToi2.0 _____



CAREER:

For athletes who are retiring, the idea of having a career can be a huge stress. But it doesn't have to be. We hear from many athletes that they aren't sure they know what they want to do — that they don't know what their next passion is, what their purpose is, what their values are, what their career will be. The truth is, almost no one does.

Athletes leaving sport and starting the next phase in their life need to take a deep breath. Ideally you would've been working with a Game Plan advisor for years now, taking advantage of our various programs and services meant to help you answer some of those questions, but even if you haven't, don't panic. It may seem like this is the most important decision of your life, but it probably isn't. You don't need to find a forever career. You just need to try something. **(Hint: read David Epstein's book *Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World*. In it, he shows how having diverse experiences can lead to a more successful career.)**

Even if you're not planning to retire, this section is still important. The year after a Games is the perfect chance to make a four-year Game Plan for success on and off the field of play. Knowing that you have an idea of what you're working toward outside of sport could help reduce stress and give you something else to focus on when you need a mental break from sport.

In this section, we ask you to think about who can help you answer some of these questions and what steps you'll take to ease the stress. **(Hint: this section is an excellent place to connect with your Game Plan advisor.)**

■ Who can I talk to about my future?

■ **What steps can I take to explore career options?**



■ **What interests do I have? Could they translate to a career? (Hint: ask your advisor for help if you can't see a connection between interests and a career)**



■ **What skills am I strong in that would suit a job well and could be an asset to an employer?**

■ **What do I value most about a work environment (e.g., teamwork, creativity, variety)?**

■ **If I already have a career, how can I use it to ease my transition?**

■ **What are the gaps in my toolkit and how can I fill them?**

TOOLS:

Game Plan resources:

- Game Plan advisor _____
- Employer network _____
- Networking events _____
- Game Plan Day in Canada _____

EDUCATION:

Education can be a tricky area for athletes. Starting or finishing a degree or diploma can seem like you're doing something and have a plan. But the reality is that many of your non-athletic peers finish school and ask themselves the same things athletes do when they leave sport: Is this what I want to do for the rest of my life? Should I go back to school?

Though starting, continuing or finishing school is important, you need to have some idea of what's next. In other words, make sure you've filled out the career section of this workbook too, because just like leaving sport can mean feeling lost and unsure, leaving school is also a major transition.

A critical mistake we see often is that athletes wait until *after* a Games or season to start thinking about school. The result is often a missed semester of school. You'll need to register months in advance for most programs. If you wait until after the competitive season to deal with this, you could easily wind up missing a semester because of missed deadlines. **(Hint: speak to your advisor about your plans. They have access to software that can help you identify what schools offer the programs you're interested, where the schools are, admissions requirements and key contacts.)**

In this section, we ask you to look at your educational plans to ensure they meet your longer-term goals. As always, asking yourself who can help is crucial to this process.

- **Do I know when I have to apply for school to ensure I can start when I want to? (Deadlines are often months in advance.)**

- **Am I enrolled in school? If so, what can I do to make sure I am able to thrive in school post-Games? If not, could I be and, if so, what will I do to get enrolled?**

■ **What will I do to get back into student mode?**

■ **If I am already in school, what resources are available to help me?**

■ **What supports are there for me if i need help?**

TOOLS:

Game Plan resources:

- Game Plan advisor _____
- Education network _____
- Gradeslam online tutoring _____

SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

As an athlete, you are exposed to opportunities and challenges that most people will never face. For example, you get to see the world and learn how to manage stress and the media. You develop skills throughout your sports career that are incredibly valuable to potential employers.

In this section, we ask you to self-reflect on the skills you have developed and how you could develop further skills.

■ What sets me apart from other people, given the experiences I've had in sport?

■ What do I want to learn so I can thrive post-sport or even in sport?

■ Where can I learn these skills?

■ **Who can help me apply them?**

■ **What am I missing and who can help?**

■ **When will I do these things:**

TOOLS:

Game Plan resources:

- Game Plan advisor
- Webinars _____
- _____

NEXT STEPS:

1. Fill in your calendar with the activities you have decided on in this workbook and set reminders for yourself. (Just ensure you're not getting a reminder while you're at the Games!) Include the specific ways on specific days that you will make this workbook come to life, such as relaxing, exercise, spending time with friends and family, embarking on plans for education, volunteering and work. Remember, your Game Plan advisor is here to help you with this.
2. If you're comfortable doing it, share your workbook with someone you trust who can keep you accountable.
3. Schedule a meeting with your Game Plan advisor for after the Games.
4. Save your workbook somewhere safe where you can access it easily when you need it.
5. Do what you need to do to be your best. If that means putting aside any concerns about what's after the Games for now, do it. If you want to take a course or work on some skills with Game Plan, do that. There's no right or wrong. It's about figuring out what will work for you.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

APPENDIX:

- Selfcare worksheet

ATHLETE SELF-CARE



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INTRODUCTION: This worksheet was developed by Game Plan and the Canadian Centre for Mental Health and Sport. We recommend you fill it out with your Game Plan advisor or mental performance consultant. This worksheet was developed by Game Plan and the Canadian Centre for Mental Health in Sport. We recommend you fill it out with your Game Plan advisor or mental performance consultant. Being honest with yourself is the first step in creating a reliable self-care plan.

IMPORTANT: This is not a replacement for mental health support. If you think you may need to speak to a mental health professional, don't wait. Game Plan eligible athletes receive free support through Morneau Shepell – the number is at the bottom of this page. Visit mygameplan.ca to learn more or ask your advisor or someone you trust where to go for help.”

SECTION A

HOW I CURRENTLY COPE

Examining your own habits is an important first step in developing a self-care plan. How do you typically deal with life's demands? Can you identify when you need to take a break?

When faced with challenges, we can use either positive coping strategies or negative coping strategies. Below are a few examples of each. *Which strategies do you use?*

Self-care is the practice of taking an active role in preserving or improving one's health and well-being through lifestyle design and daily choices. Self-care extends beyond your basic physical needs. You need to consider your psychological, emotional, spiritual, social, financial, and academic well-being, all topics that fit within Game Plan's five pillars.

POSITIVE COPING STRATEGIES	NEGATIVE COPING STRATEGIES
• Deep breathing	• Yelling / acting aggressively
• Stretching	• Training more
• Meditation	• Overeating / skipping meals
• Listening to music	• Drinking alcohol
• Going for a walk	• Procrastinating
• Reading	• Scrolling through social media
• Taking a bath	• Avoiding the situation / person
• Socializing with friends	• Biting fingernails
• Engaging in a hobby	• Using drugs or smoking
• Being in nature	• Withdrawing from friends / family
• Other: _____	• Other: _____

The 24h Morneau Shepell mental health hotline 1-844-240-2990

* Adapted from Homewood Health (2016) Self-Care Starter Kit and materials developed by the University of Houston Graduate School of Social Work, Reiser & Butler (N.D.).



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*Need help thinking of self-care activities? Here's a short list. Which ones that resonate most for you?
Are there other things you like to do that aren't on this list?*

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make a gratitude list | <input type="checkbox"/> Dance, sing, play an instrument | <input type="checkbox"/> Cook, bake |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to music | <input type="checkbox"/> Make art | <input type="checkbox"/> Read/watch something funny |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Practice yoga | <input type="checkbox"/> Meditate | <input type="checkbox"/> Do a random act of kindness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take a nap | <input type="checkbox"/> Go for a walk or hike | <input type="checkbox"/> Deep breathing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hangout with friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Play with your pet | <input type="checkbox"/> Spend time with family |

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SECTION B

MY SELF-CARE NEEDS

We are all faced with unique challenges and no two people have the same self-care needs.

Take a moment to consider what you value (*what are you moving towards in sport and life?*) and need in your everyday life (daily self-care needs) versus what you value and need in the event of a crisis (emergency self-care needs). Remember that self-care extends far beyond your basic physical needs: consider your psychological, emotional, spiritual, social, financial, and academic well-being.

DAILY SELF-CARE

	WHAT I CURRENTLY DO:	PRACTICES TO TRY:
<p>Mind (e.g., disconnect from electronic devices, journaling, make a budget, make a to-do list, seeking support from a counsellor, working on my mental game, make my bed every morning)</p>		
<p>Body (e.g., eat regular and healthy meals, good sleep hygiene, go to the doctor/physiotherapist regularly, stretch after practice/competition, cross train, stay hydrated)</p>		
<p>Emotions (e.g., celebrate my “wins”, use positive affirmations, be mindful of social media use, acknowledge my emotions through journaling, engage in activities that bring me joy)</p>		

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SPORT



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SANTÉ MENTALE ET DU SPORT

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	WHAT I CURRENTLY DO:	PRACTICES TO TRY:
<p>Social/Spirit (e.g., spend time with family, ask for support from friends/family, cultivate relationships outside of sport, regular check-ins with a teammate or coach)</p>		
<p>School (e.g., make a study schedule, use a calendar, do school work in a quiet space, take mental breaks, study in a group, engage in school community, seek extra help from my teachers)</p>		
<p>Sport (e.g., pre-game meal, visualize success, listen to pump-up music, take a nap, spend time alone, spend time with teammates, review plays/gameplan)</p>		



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EMERGENCY SELF-CARE

When you are faced with a crisis, you likely won't have time to create a coping strategy. Take time to develop a plan in advance so it's there when you need it. Try completing the following table to help identify your unique self-care needs during times of distress.

<p>SIGNS IT'S COMING: What sort of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours might indicate that you are in distress?</p>	
---	--

SELF-CARE TOOL	HELPFUL (WHAT TO DO)	HARMFUL (WHAT TO AVOID)
<p>Relaxation/Staying Calm Which activities help you relax? Which activities make you more irritated or frustrated?</p>		
<p>Self-Talk Helpful self-talk may include "I am capable" / "I can do this". Harmful self-talk may include "I can't handle this" / I deserve this".</p>		
<p>Social Support Who can you reach out to for support? Are there people you should avoid during times of distress?</p>		
<p>Mood / Emotions Which activities uplift your mood (e.g., watching a comedian)? What should you avoid when you're feeling down (e.g., staying in bed, going to parties)</p>		



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SECTION C

MY SELF-CARE PLAN

Once you've created your self-care plan, look at it regularly. It takes time to form good habits – add self-care time to your calendar in the same way you prioritize practices, competition, and weight training. Make a commitment to yourself to practice your self-care routine as often as possible – you're worth it.

MY DAILY SELF-CARE PLAN					
LIST YOUR "GO-TO" PRACTICES FOR EACH CATEGORY					
MIND	BODY	EMOTIONS	SOCIAL/SPIRIT	SCHOOL	SPORT
MY TOP THREE POSITIVE COPING STRATEGIES					
1.	2.		3.		
IN A CRISIS					
HELPFUL (TO DO)			HARMFUL (TO AVOID)		
MY "GO-TO" PERSON:					



ATHLETE SELF-CARE



GAME PLAN
PLAN DE MATCH
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NOTES

CANADIAN NATIONAL TEAM ATHLETE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS GUIDE

10 MENTAL HEALTH WARNING SIGNS*

- 1 **Feeling very sad or withdrawn** for more than two weeks.
- 2 **Extreme difficulty in concentrating** or staying still.
- 3 Severe **out-of-control**, risk-taking behaviors.
- 4 Sudden **overwhelming fear** for no reason and/or **intense worries** or fears that get in the way of daily activities.
- 5 **Not eating**, throwing up or using laxatives to lose weight; **significant weight loss or weight gain**.
- 6 Seeing, hearing or believing things **that others aren't experiencing**.
- 7 Repeatedly using **drugs or alcohol**.
- 8 **Drastic changes** in mood, behavior, personality or sleeping habits.
- 9 Thoughts plans, and/or attempts of **self-harm or suicide**.
- 10 Recurring thoughts, dreams, or distressing memories about a **stressful or traumatic event**.

WHAT YOU CAN DO?

IF IT'S A CRISIS, GO TO YOUR NEAREST EMERGENCY ROOM OR CALL:

- **911**
- The 24h mental health crisis line
1-866-996-0991 | crisisline.ca
- The 24h Morneau Shepell hotline
1-844-240-2990

IF IT'S NON-URGENT, CONTACT:

- **Your team doctor**
Available as part of the Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Sport Institute Network (COPSIN)
- The 24h Morneau Shepell hotline
1-844-240-2990
- **Your Game Plan Advisor**
mygameplan.ca
- **The Canadian Centre for Mental Health and Sport (CCMHS)**
ccmhs-ccsms.ca/self-referral-form
 - 613-454-1409 ext. 2090
 - info@ccmhs-ccsms.ca
- **Your COPSIN Mental Performance Lead**
- **Your Mental Performance Consultant**
cspa-acps.com/professional-members

Always remember: You know yourself, so even if you feel a little off, be proactive and talk to someone.



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*National Alliance on Mental Illness



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