

TIPSHEET

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

As a leader or administrator in sport, you may be called upon to assist an individual who is experiencing a mental health crisis or seeking guidance on how to support someone else.

The purpose of this **Mental Health First Aid Tipsheet** is to provide you with some helpful information on supporting someone experiencing a mental health crisis.

This Tipsheet is not a comprehensive guide on delivering mental health first aid. It is limited to sharing the overarching principles and some tips for applying best practice to supporting individuals experiencing a mental health crisis.



WHAT IS A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS?

A mental health crisis is a situation where an individual's emotional, psychological, or behavioural state puts them, or others, at risk and typically requires immediate or urgent attention.

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?

Mental health first aid is the initial support provided to someone who may be developing a mental health issue or experiencing a mental health crisis, until appropriate professional help is received, or the crisis resolves.

PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

The core principles of supporting someone during a mental health crisis are:

- 1 Provide support until professional help arrives or the crisis resolves.
- 2 Encourage professional help-seeking behaviours such as talking to a GP, calling a helpline or seeing a mental health professional; and
- 3 Support in a way that:
 - Demonstrates sensitivity, compassion, and a non-judgmental attitude; and
 - Respects diversity, retains dignity, and maintains confidentiality.

Select the links below to view a short animation if you want to learn more about effectively responding to some of the most common mental health crisis situations.

- [Suicidal thought and behaviours](#)
- [Panic attacks](#)
- [Aggressive behaviours](#)
- [Psychosis](#)

REMINDER

At no time should you or your sporting organisation staff be expected to provide mental health advice beyond your/their qualification and expertise. Your role is to direct members, colleagues and volunteers to seek professional support – not solve any issues yourself.

HELPFUL HINTS

- When responding to a Critical Incident – check out the [True Sport Critical Incident eToolkit for Mental Health and Wellbeing](#) for information on how to support your members following a critical incident that may impact the mental health and wellbeing of your sports community.
- This Tipsheet is not a comprehensive guide on delivering mental health first aid. It is limited to sharing the overarching principles and some tips for applying best practice to supporting individuals experiencing a mental health crisis.
- For more information on obtaining a formal mental health first aid qualification there is a course facilitated by Mental Health First Aid Australia and various providers. More information can be found online at [Mental Health First Aid Australia](#) or on the [True Sport – Community Links](#) webpage.

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In an Emergency Dial 000
For support call Lifeline 13 11 14
or visit [True Sport – Community Links](#) for more services.