



Project Brief





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Project Brief

Mental health is significant especially when dealing with the younger generation. Only 10% of all college athletes with known mental health conditions seek care from a mental health professional. Overall, 60% of college students reported experiencing one or more mental health challenges. To save the future, we must provide them with solid guidance and support, especially for college students. Everyone knows life can get hectic when you are a college student, especially when you are out of state and doing extracurricular activities. As a step closer to healthy living among the younger generation, Athletic Mental Health begins with reaching out to college student-athletes who are current, upcoming, and past. We also provide support and information for individuals who are outside of sports.

We empower college student-athletes to prioritize their mental well-being while balancing academics and their sport by offering numerous mental health resources, tips, and support systems. Athletic Mental Health is a website that allows college student-athletes to become comfortable and confident. The website provides an environment for individuals to not only network through the ambassadors section but also use the discussion section to speak amongst each other.

There are also testimonials from professionals in both video form and text. To make the website more interactive students can do monthly and weekly challenges, such as writing affirmations and changing their daily routines.

Therefore, take your mental well-being seriously with Athletic Mental Health in an interactive way!



DEFINITION, JUSTIFICATION + EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

Definition: Athletic Mental Health is a website that aims to empower college student-athletes to prioritize their mental well-being while balancing academics and their sport by offering numerous mental health resources, tips, and support systems.

Purpose Statement: Provides efficient and effective support for positive mental health among college athletes, empowering them to thrive on and off the field.

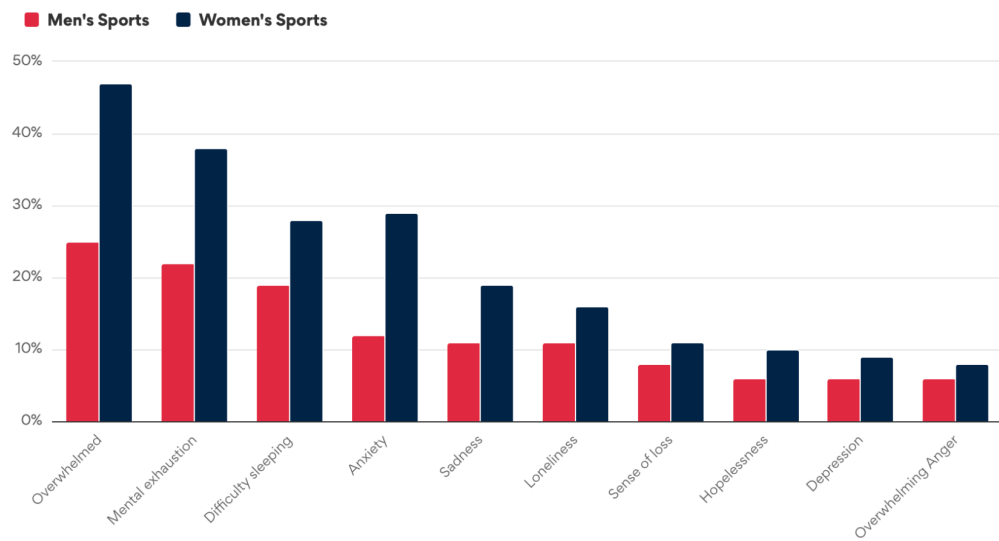
Problem: Currently, there are no reliable websites that are geared toward student-athletes on a collegiate level. While conducting interviews multiple college athletes stated that they felt the lack of support and resources when it came down to understanding their mental health. The only information available are websites that are geared towards the general public and it is often hard to find reliable advice or the information they need in general. Resources from [Nea.org](https://www.nea.org) a Healthy Minds survey, stated that 44% of students reported symptoms of depression, 37% stated that they experience anxiety and 15% said they were considering suicide. Suicide is also the third leading cause of death among college student-athletes.

The NCAA stated that a study found that female student-athletes had a **3.38** times greater likelihood of experiencing clinically significant depression than male student-athletes. Only 10% of all student-athletes with known mental health conditions seek help from a mental health professional. Furthermore, about 25% of elite athletes experience disordered eating, burnout, depression, or anxiety. (according to [jhunewsletter.com](https://www.jhunewsletter.com)) Also, a study shows that 43% of undergraduate student-athletes at a single university experience symptoms of poor mental health during their athletic career. Athletes are also twice as likely to experience mental health symptoms compared to non-athletes and often only 10% of athletes seek help. According to

www.bestcolleges.com, nearly half of women’s athletes said they felt overwhelmed constantly or almost every day. Another concern includes how the athlete manages academics and their sport.

Below is a graph developed by the NCAA that reflects the different mental health concerns among student-athletes, along with the following factors:

College Athletes Who Experienced Mental Health Concerns "Constantly" or "Most Every Day"



Source: NCAA^[4]



Solution: As college student athletes gain more attention and social media becomes stronger each year, it is important to prioritize their mental health as their popularity increases. Athletic Mental Health is a website that provides knowledge, comfort, and stability for not only student-athletes but also the general public.

Comprehensive Research Report:

NCAA:

A screenshot of the NCAA Sport Science Institute website's 'Mental Health Educational Resources' page. The page has a dark blue header with the NCAA logo on the left and navigation links for 'STUDENT-ATHLETES', 'DIVISION I', 'DIVISION II', 'DIVISION III', 'MEDIA CENTER', and 'MEMBERSHIP'. Below the header, the text 'SPORT SCIENCE INSTITUTE' is displayed, followed by a search bar and additional navigation links for 'COVID-19', 'Health and Safety Topics', 'Programs', 'Key Publications', and 'About the SSI'. The main content area is titled 'Mental Health Educational Resources' and includes a brief description of the SSI's role. Below this, a note states: 'Located on this page are materials and resources related to the mental health and wellness of college athletes.' The page is organized into four columns of resource boxes: 'Mental Health Fact Sheets' (listing Anxiety Awareness, Depression Awareness, Eating Disorder Awareness, Risk of Suicide, Sport Psychologist, and Your Words Matter); 'Checklists and Toolkits' (listing Mental Health Interdisciplinary Team Planner, Mental Health Campuswide Assessment Checklist, and Mental Health Workshop Planning Kit); 'Videos and Education Modules' (listing NCAA Coaches Assist for Empathic Responses and Student-Athlete Mental Health Perspectives); and 'Campus Resources' (listing Campus Stakeholders' Guide for Student-Athlete Mental Health, Mental Health Best Practices, Mental Health Best Practices Self-Assessment Worksheet, Managing Student-Athlete Mental Health Issues, Mental Health Referral Decision Tree Worksheet, Mind, Body and Sport, and Sports Medicine Handbook).

<https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2016/8/4/mental-health-educational-resources.aspx>

The birth of Athletic Mental Health came from strong influencers who are also popular websites that are geared towards athletes such as NCAA and Athletes For Hope. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) provides a strong connection towards college athletes. During this research, I have collected multiple features to consider within the website and how effective each feature will be. Due to Athletic Mental Health being an interactive site, I have adopted the feature of “Videos and Education Modules” that is located on NCAA. This section included a short video of student-athletes discussing the importance of having mental and physical well-being. Along with explaining how coaches and campuses can help their students.

- Athletic Mental Health provides a testimonial section in video form. These testimonials are from the hearts of Mental Health advocates who are on the professional level. Since athletes do not often speak up for help, I believe that showing professionals explaining their mental health journey will inspire college



athletes to do the same. This section will also include videos of college student-athletes who can relate to mental health challenges during their time as a student and beyond.

- Athletic Mental Health provides a “Resources & Tips” section which was inspired by the Campus resources and mental health fact sheets hosted on NCAA. These were inspiring because I enjoyed the concept of giving the users different resources that will help individuals on campus facing mental health issues and then the mental health fact sheets provide more details about the different mental health awarenesses. (Anxiety, Depression, Suicide, etc.). The Resources & Tips section displays different resource centers and tips that will guarantee great support for the athletes mental health. The Mental Health 411 pages and subpages hosted on Athletic Mental Health will give the user enough information that will allow them to become aware of their feelings. This section is also built for the general public.

Athletes For Hope:

Established in May 2021 due to the growing demand from our athlete network, the **Whole Being Athlete Program** unites and empowers athletes of all levels and backgrounds to work together and reduce the stigma of mental health in and out of sports. The core pillars of the program include:



EDUCATION

To access our Mental Health Resource Hub and other educational materials, click [here](#).



STORYTELLING

To read athlete mental health stories, click [here](#).



CONVENING

To view our recent or upcoming events, click [here](#).



ADVOCACY

To get involved in our Mental Health Work, click [here](#).

<https://www.athletesforhope.org/what-we-do/afh-mental-health/>

This website is another organization that provides similar purposes and features that Athletic Mental Health is striving for. Although this website is not focused on mental health, it is focused on strictly athletes. Unlike the NCAA, this organization takes a more emotional turn for athletes. Their motive is “**Educating** athletes on their potential to make a positive impact on the



world, **connecting** them with the causes they care about & **inspiring** others to do the same.” This inspired the definition of Athletic Mental Health, as stated earlier the website aims to empower college student-athletes to prioritize their mental well-being while balancing academics and their sport by offering numerous mental health resources, tips, and support systems.

- After extensive research on this website, it gave me a strong foundation of focus when developing Athletic Mental Health. Under the mental health tab, there were various choices for the user to select. They also can view the program ambassadors tab. With this inspiration, the Athletic Mental Health site provides the opportunity for individuals to get involved by becoming ambassadors, sharing testimonies through discussion posts, and finding reliable resources. The layout of Athletic Mental Health was inspired by the mental health section. For example, Athletes For Hope has an education section about Mental Health and separate sections that include testimonials and ways for their users to get involved. This gave me the idea to make the Mental Health 411 section, subpages, and the discussion separate.



Client Intro:

There is no specific client however, the website is targeted to those who are college student-athletes from freshman to senior year, including graduate school. There is also a section for the general public to discover different ways they can help someone who is dealing with Mental Health.

Technology:

The Athletic Mental Health will be hosted on a WordPress website. This decision has been made due to the amount of time students spend searching the web rather than using an app. Throughout a student's college career according to [Pew Research Center](#), 86% of college students use the Internet. Therefore, Athletic Mental Health would be effective in the sense that individuals are always surfing the net. The internet is extremely important for athletes because that is how they build their reputation and network. This will allow Athletic Mental Health to be advertised to the targeted audience more efficiently.

Features:

- **Resources/Tips** - A resource section will help promote different resource centers that the user can search near them. Within this section, will be tips that can assist with making college and life in general easier.
- **Emergency Hotline**- Will also be displayed just in case someone is in dire need of assistance and does not feel like going through the entire website.
- **Daily Challenges** - Users will be able to participate in a 30-day journal challenge or weekly affirmations.
- **Testimonials**- Allow the user to watch professional and college athletes tell their stories.
- **Discussions**- This will be a support group section where the user can chime in on different discussions throughout the week, such as any accomplishments, big events coming up, and being able to network with other individuals.
- **Ambassadors**- Users who show leadership and are willing to share their stories, will be able to sign up to become a member as long as they fulfill the requirements.



- **Mental Guidance-** Allows users to select their mood and upon selection, they can view the symptoms, causes, and how to overcome that specific feeling.

Milestones for Alpha, Beta, and 1.0

- **Alpha:** The website will include a basic layout with the potential brand colors, typography, images, and content. As the percentage increases with this process, the website will have a few features, such as the discussion and daily challenges section. There will also be a set layout that will allow the users to easily navigate through the website. By the time Athletic Mental Health reaches the 100% mark of the Alpha phase, it will have the features and functions that fit the purpose of the website along with it being aesthetically pleasing.
- **Beta:** This will be a more detailed website with the majority of its solid official functions and features. During this phase, the official logo will be developed along with the implementation of the branding guide and style. During each phase of Beta, there will be additional functions and features. Along with changing the aesthetics and content of the website if necessary.
- **1.0:** This will reveal the official website of Athletic Mental Health with all functions, typography, and images that will fulfill the needs of its users. User testing will also be included within this phase to develop a satisfying solution for college student-athletes.



Market Justification

- As stated earlier, Athletic Mental Health assists with reaching out to college student-athletes who are current, upcoming, and past who feel like they do not have a voice. What sets this website apart from the others is how interactive and easily accessible it is. Through heavy research I have found several sites that were dedicated to athletes however there were multiple that were not centered around Mental Health. The Athletic Mental Health is mainly focused on the enhancement of mental health within the athletic community. This allows us to be ahead of our athletic competitors because we are able to fulfill the user in a quick and easy way. For instance, those individuals who use popular athletic resources such as the [NCAA](#) would have to use the search engine to find mental health resources. The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics ([NAIA](#)) website has the mental health section hidden underneath a tab. Since Athletic Mental Health is a website for specifically helping individuals who seek guidance and support, this site would be more beneficial for them than the others.

Developing a mental health website meant more than just searching for competitors that are dedicated to student-athletes. Therefore, I had to do a deeper search and go beyond athletics. I looked into different mental health resources that are dedicated to students to see if there was a variety of different groups, such as student-athletes, international, or online students. Every mental health website that I have researched involving students, did not separate them in any which way. I have also found a lack of interaction within most sites, such as [acha.org](#) and [college-educated](#). Even though the websites are intriguing to look at with lots of great information dedicated towards mental health, the lack of interaction can potentially lose a user because they would skim through the text. As for Athletic Mental Health users, they will be able to interact in discussions, participate in daily challenges, watch videos, and join the ambassador team. Since this world is becoming more digital it is important to keep your users entertained.

Consumer Research

- Gender: All
- Race: All
- Age: 18+
- Education: College Level (including graduate school)
- Wants: Boost Confidence, Feel important and heard
- Needs: Guidance, encouragement and support through mental health as a college athlete

Personas:

Trey

Age: 21

Major: Criminal Justice

Classification: Senior

Campus Involvement:

- Football Player
- Senior Class President
- Fraternity

Goals/Interest:

Keep a high GPA, be a great leader, and perform well in football without being completely stressed out

Technology/Social Media Usage:

He uses his laptop to surf the internet to keep track of playing eligibility, classwork, and his fraternity and SGA meetings.



Athletic Mental Health Website:

Due to his heavy workload and extracurricular activities, Trey becomes overwhelmed and stressed because he can never find time for himself outside of school. He visits Athletic Mental and looks through resources and tips that can help him remain calm and to help him even more he goes through the program list and begins one of the 30-day relaxation challenges that encourages him to take time out for himself. At the end of the experience, Trey is more relaxed and in control of his emotions and learns that it is okay to take breaks between big events throughout your life, (especially as a senior).

Kristina

Age: 18

Major: Nursing

Classification: Freshman (Out-of-State)

Campus Involvement:

- Cheerleader
- Soccer

Goals/Interest:

Balance two sports while juggling five classes and getting comfortable being far away from home for the first time.

Technology/Social Media Usage:

Uses her laptop to do her online class and homework for the rest of her courses and make sure everything is squared away with financial aid and her sports teams



Athletic Mental Health Website:

Kristina's soccer coach and counselor recommended Athletic Mental Health so that she can feel more comfortable being away from home and handling sports with multiple classes. While on Athletic Mental Health, she finds usage within the daily challenges section where she began the affirmation challenge to keep reminding herself how strong and confident she is. She also joined in on the discussion section and found people who were actually from the same state as her! Kristina is now able to network with others and begin her fun stress-free journey as a college student.



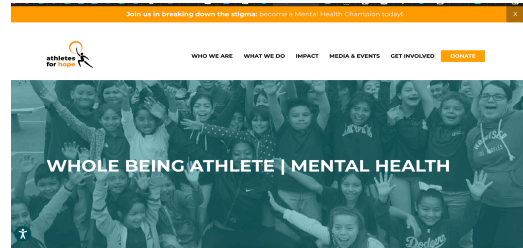
Product Comparison

This is a very highly saturated market as Mental Health is an important topic, especially in the younger generation. Through research, I noticed that the majority of websites list different resources that send users to other sites that can help them further along the way. A lot of websites also hide the mental health section within tabs or you would have to search it in the engine that is hosted on that selected website. For instance, as stated earlier sites like NCAA and NAIA are great examples of having to search for mental health and finding it as a subpage. Those websites are important to know because they are used a lot by athletes when it comes down to the rules and regulations of their sport. There are even some sites such as [Athlete Mind Matter](#), that allow you to subscribe to newsletters. Then you have the mental health websites that give you exactly what you are looking for even if it's in a foundation form and geared towards the general public such as [The Jed Foundation](#), [Athletes For Hope](#), and [Students Against Depression](#).

Athletic Mental Health is the website where users do not have to worry about paying anything however they are open to donating. It is interactive where the users are able to network with other individuals who need support and guidance through the discussion section. The website is easily accessible for all ages and will allow others to have the opportunity to become ambassadors by registering and fulfilling the requirements.

Athletes for Hope

Description:



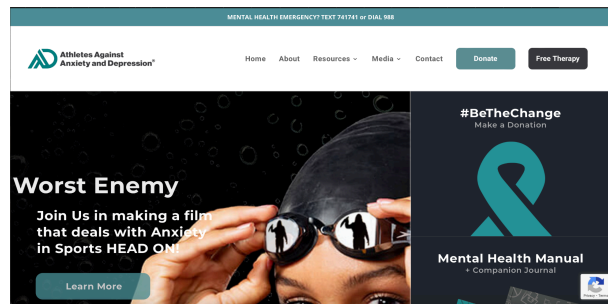
A non-profit that aims to educate, encourage, and assist athletes in their efforts to engage with community and charitable causes, to increase public awareness of and support for those efforts, and to inspire others to do the same.

- Web Traffic - 1.8k unique visitors
- Founded - 2006
- Keywords/Search Terms - “Mental Health for Athletes”, “Mental Health in student-athletes”, “Mental health Organizations athletes”, “College athlete Mental Health Website”
- Appearance, Design, Features- Easily accessible, donation opportunity, event section, sponsoring and getting involved.
- Distribution Methods- Newsletter, Website, and Social Media
- Revenue - \$1,539,000 (2022)
- Has great opportunities for more than just Mental Health
- <https://www.athletesforhope.org/>

Athletes Against Anxiety

Against Depression (aaadfoundation.org)

Description:

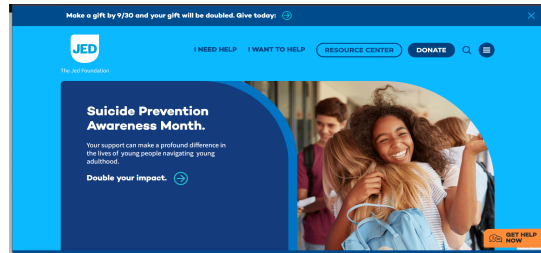


The Athletes Against Anxiety and Depression Foundation is dedicated to providing resources to anyone who suffers from a mental health battle.

- Keywords/Search Terms - “College athlete Mental Health Website”
- Appearance, Design, Features- Easily accessible, donation opportunity, free therapy, podcast, and videos including seminars (emergency mental health line displayed at the top of the page)
- Distribution Methods- Website and Social Media
- Founder uses their personal experience to connect with the audience
- <https://aaadfoundation.org/>

The JED Foundation

Description:



nonprofit that protects emotional health and prevents suicide for our nation’s teens and young adults, giving them the skills and support they need to thrive today...and tomorrow.

- Keywords/Search Terms - “College athlete Mental Health Website”, “Athlete Mental Health Organizations”, “Mental Health resources”
- Appearance, Design, Features- Easily accessible, donation opportunity, resource center, the option to seek help or learn to help others
- Distribution Methods- Website and Social Media; LinkedIn
- Founder uses their personal experience to connect with the audience
- <https://jedfoundation.org/>