



ENGLISH
INSTITUTE
OF SPORT

TOP TIPS FOR NAVIGATING WINTER 2020

Here are some 'top tips' from the EIS Psycho-Social Team to help us continue to adapt to uncertain and changing circumstances over the next few months

MANAGING UNCERTAINTY



Uncertainty is often part of high performance sport, so it's something we're used to managing, even if the scale of uncertainty is slightly different at the moment.

Have open conversations about uncertainty, reflect collectively about the impact it is having, and be willing to revise decisions as new data and evidence emerge.

Discussing concerns about uncertainty helps us to focus on the present and have positive performance conversations. If concerns are not addressed, then there is the potential for them to surface in less helpful ways.

SHOW EMPATHY



Everyone will feel differently about this period at different times; therefore, it is important that we demonstrate empathy in listening to others' concerns, validate their feelings and help to normalize and accept them.

PROMOTE POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH



Be a role-model for prioritising self-care; know what you need to maintain positive mental health and commit to practicing this as a priority.

Be conscious of the four main approaches to promoting positive mental health (increased autonomy; connections to others; valuing and recognizing the 'whole person'; prioritising self-care) and how to achieve them in your current context.

IDENTIFY INDIVIDUAL & COLLECTIVE STRENGTHS



Get to know your own and your team's strengths & stressors, and make plans for how you can best support yourselves and each other. Consider the following to help with this:

1. Personality points, including strengths and positive performance behaviours
2. Triggers or stressors likely to be an issue for you or your teammates
3. Responses to stress (feelings, thoughts, behaviours)
4. Coping strategies when under pressure to maintain a positive and clear focus

STAY CONNECTED



Think about what you've learnt from lockdown; how can these lessons be put to good use during this winter period?

For example; what creative ways did you stay connected to fellow athletes, colleagues, friends, family and local community? Who helps you maintain perspective? Who keeps you motivated?

KNOW YOUR SOURCES OF SUPPORT



If you need some support during this time, as always, there are plenty of sources available:

- Each other (athletes and colleagues)
- Coaches and other support staff
- Performance Lifestyle & Psychology
- British Athletes Commission (for athletes; support@britishathletes.org)
- Employee assistance programmes (like Simply Health or Empathy) and HR (for staff)
- EIS Mental Health Expert Panel
- Togetherall (previously Big White Wall; togetherall.com/joinnow/uk sport)