USA Swimming National Convention

Mind/Body Connection: Let’s Talk about Mental Health

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Hosted by Keenan Robinson

Getting help when needed without any stigma attached.

Allison –

* Not able to understand why she wasn’t ok. Life was good.
* Willing to give up all the medals just to be ok.
* Embarrassed to get help.
* People are able to mask their signs from others
* Need to remove the need/desire to mask.
* Can’t be told to seek treatment, you have to WANT to get better. Same as being told to work hard, you have to WANT to work hard.
* Social media often displays the very best and is an unrealistic picture of what is really going on.
* Using the platform of being an Olympian to be vulnerable and help others.
* Media coverage after failing to qualify was terrible and painful.
* When sets are hard, be there for each other.
* Talk to/with team mates, work has to be done anyway, be positive about it.

Transition Athlete –

* From one age group to another (physical vs mental and emotional maturity)
* Usually an athlete is ready physically for a transition before they are mentally and emotionally ready
* From swimmer to swammer – success = athlete is happy. What is the athlete’s identity?
* An athlete’s identity is a puzzle – each piece of their lives is a puzzle piece. The more time spent on each piece, the bigger that puzzle piece is.
* Allow time for the development of new interests and passions.
* Athletes need to nurture relationships in their lives. These relationships will be the support needed.
* Goals
* Value of goals is not in achieving the goal, but in having a goal to chase.
* Who an athlete becomes as a result of pursuing the goal is important.
* From top age group to senior (if not as fast)
* From age group to collegiate swimmer
* Help an athlete see transitions as doable challenges with support
* LTAD – Also available on the USA Swimming webpage
* ADM – USOC <https://www.usaswimming.org/news-landing-page/2017/02/20/american-development-model-for-swimming>

Allow Athlete to Express Anything, Any Problem –

* You don’t know what you don’t know
* Coaches recognize that stressors exist
* Ability to share without fixing is important
* Professional help should come from someone with sport specific experience
* Allow time to develop relationship with the therapist
* Choose male or female based on comfort
* Allow people to be who they are
* Coaches may need training to understand the problem