

Supporting Mental Health at Tove Valley FC

If a player has a mental health issue, it's important their club takes it seriously. For example, it's a good idea to talk to the player to find out what support they might need.

There are many types of mental health issue. An issue can happen suddenly, because of a specific event in someone's life, or it can build up gradually over time.

Common mental health issues include:

- stress (this is not classed as a medical condition but it can still have a serious impact on wellbeing)
- depression
- anxiety
- Less common ones include:
 - bipolar disorder
 - schizophrenia

Clubs have a 'duty of care'. This means they should do all they reasonably can to support their players' health, safety and wellbeing. This includes:

- making sure the environment is safe
- protecting player from discrimination
- carrying out risk assessments
- Discriminating against someone with a disability

A mental health issue can be considered a disability under the law if all of the following apply:

- it has a 'substantial adverse effect' on the life of an employee (for example, they regularly cannot focus on a task, or it takes them longer to do)
- it lasts at least 12 months, or is expected to
- it affects their ability to do their normal day-to-day activities (for example, interacting with people, following instructions or keeping to set working times)

A mental health issue can be considered a disability even if there are not symptoms all the time, or the symptoms are better at some times than at others.

If a player has a disability, clubs:

- must not discriminate against them because of their disability
- must consider making reasonable adjustments

It's a good idea to work with the player to make the right adjustments for them, even if the issue is not a disability. Often, simple changes to the person's arrangements or responsibilities could be enough.

Why talking openly about mental health is important

If players feel they can talk openly about mental health, problems are less likely to build up. This could lead to:

- less time away for a mental health issue
- improved morale in the club
- Creating a supportive environment

It's helpful if club create an environment where players feel able to talk openly about mental health.

For example:

- treating mental and physical health as equally important
- making sure players have regular contact with their coaches and are encouraged to talk about any problems they're having
- encouraging positive mental health, for example arranging mental health awareness training, workshops or appointing mental health 'champions' who player can talk to

Clubs can find out more about promoting positive mental health at work, including:

- understanding mental health
- creating a mental health strategy
- educating the whole team
- Supporting someone with signs of a mental health issue
- Find out how to support someone with signs of a mental health issue.
- Training and other support

You can get MHFA England training on understanding mental health issues in the workplace.

You can get help and information about mental health in the club from:

- Mindset Sport Trained Mental Health Support Officer:
 - Jack Bramley - Silver Licensed Officer

Please contact Jack directly or on clubchair@tovevalleyfc.co.uk