

Mental Health in Women's Rugby

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Overview

01

Setting the scene: Realities of the female player journey

02

Different roles to support the player journey

03

Strategy direction and development programs bespoke for XV's & 7's

04

Wrap-around support delivery and facilitatory service for 7's

05

Framework and policies that support the additional issues affecting the mental health of female players

06

Closing remarks and Q&A

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Setting the scene

- Amateur
- Semi-professional
- Fully-professional
- Retired

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Realities of the female player

Amateur

- Pay to play
- Not paid to play
- Working full time job
- Takes annual leave to play/train or unpaid leave
- May have to leave job to fulfil rugby commitments.
- No time off
- Limited off pitch support physical.
- Mental emotional
- Family, cultural and societal pressure

Semi-professional

- Per diems or match Fee
- Works another part-time or full-time role
- Uses annual leave to play international fixtures campaigns
- Limited career options and progression
- School or College commitments
- Some off pitch support
- Time off limited
- Remote training/travel
- Commercial and media
- Family, cultural and societal pressure

Professional

- Main full-time paid employment
- Annual leave
- Full-time centralised / heavy camp based environment
- Wrap around ancillary and player association support
- Potential Relocation
- Commercial and media
- Family, cultural and societal pressure

Retired


- Limited after care
- Identity
- Financial
- New career path
- May continue domestic rugby
- Family, cultural and societal pressure

**Not limited to these lists.

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"Living contract to contract and relying heavily on skill and form can take its toll on one's mental health."

"I was depressed and I didn't know how to deal with it."


"I needed convincing to get help."

"The best thing I did as an athlete was accept I needed to talk."

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"The reason why I reached out to someone for help was because I was in a very dark place playing 7's. I lost family connections which I hold very close to me. It made me feel like I didn't want to get out of bed in the morning and my weight fluctuated massively. I used to think rugby was a place where I could be my self and happy, but during my time in 7's it turned into somewhere I didn't want to be.

I wanted to change all of this and wanted to move away from this depressive way of thinking. The RPA helpline literally helped me get out of this spiral I was in."

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Shared responsibility

- World Rugby
- Unions
- Player Associations
- International Rugby Players

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External
professional
mental health
agencies

- Government
- Funding agencies

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Summary: We all have a role to play

- Raise awareness and knowledge share
- Consider what policies or frameworks we have in place?
- What next?

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