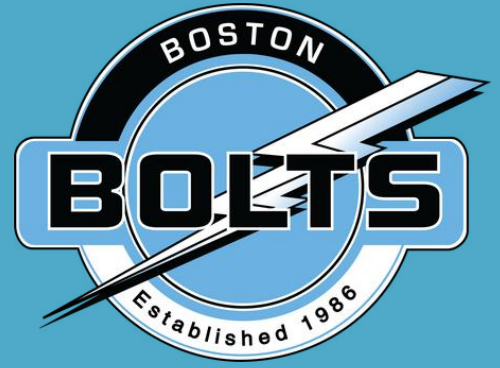


JULY 2024

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# CLUB MENTAL HEALTH PLAN



BOSTON BOLTS



Prepared by Danny Matharu  
The Soccer Mental Health Alliance



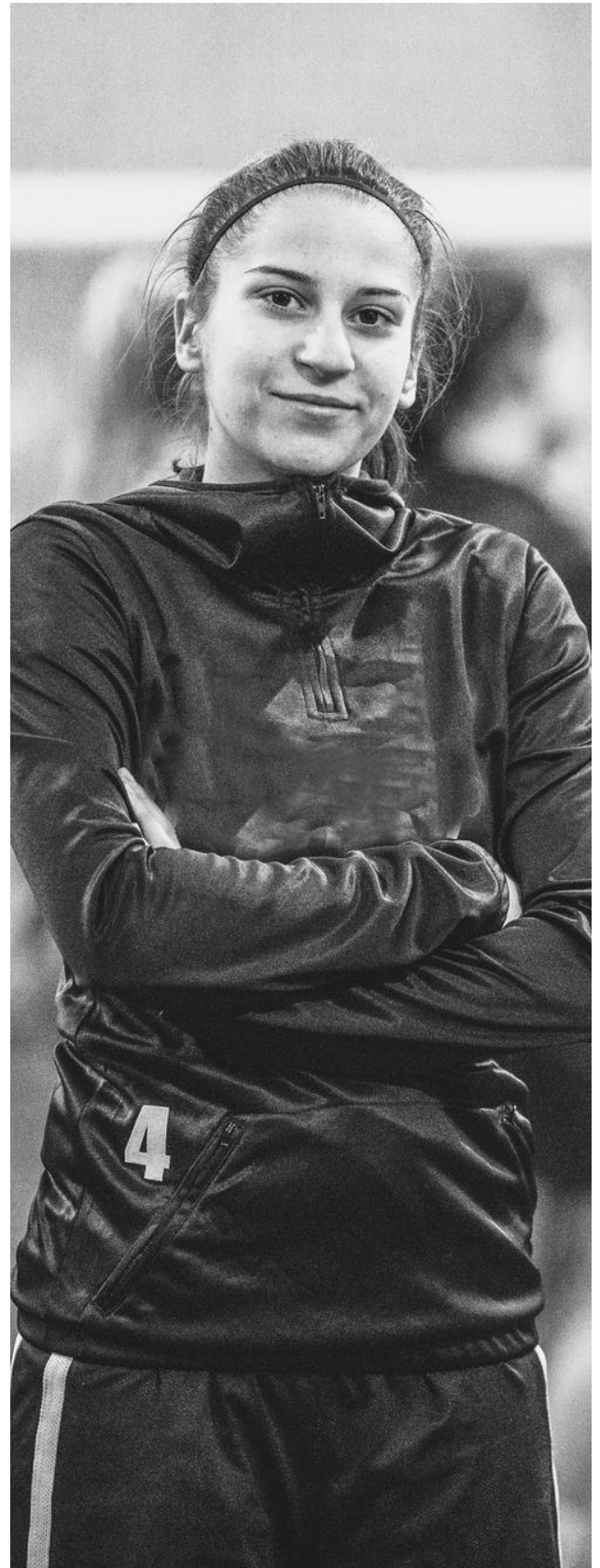
## ABOUT THE SOCCER MENTAL HEALTH ALLIANCE

At The Soccer Mental Health Alliance, we are dedicated to championing mental health in the world of grassroots Soccer. Our mission is to create an inclusive, supportive and empowered environment where players, spectators, communities, coaches, match officials and volunteers can thrive both on and off the field. We believe that mental health is a fundamental aspect of well-being that transcends boundaries and that everyone deserves access to the tools and resources necessary to nurture and strengthen their mental resilience.

Our commitment to mental health is rooted in the recognition that **1 in 5 people** will face mental health challenges each year and that mental health does not discriminate. We embrace the beautiful diversity within our community and we work tirelessly to ensure that our support tools reflect the vast array of experiences, backgrounds and perspectives that make grassroots Soccer such a vibrant and dynamic space.



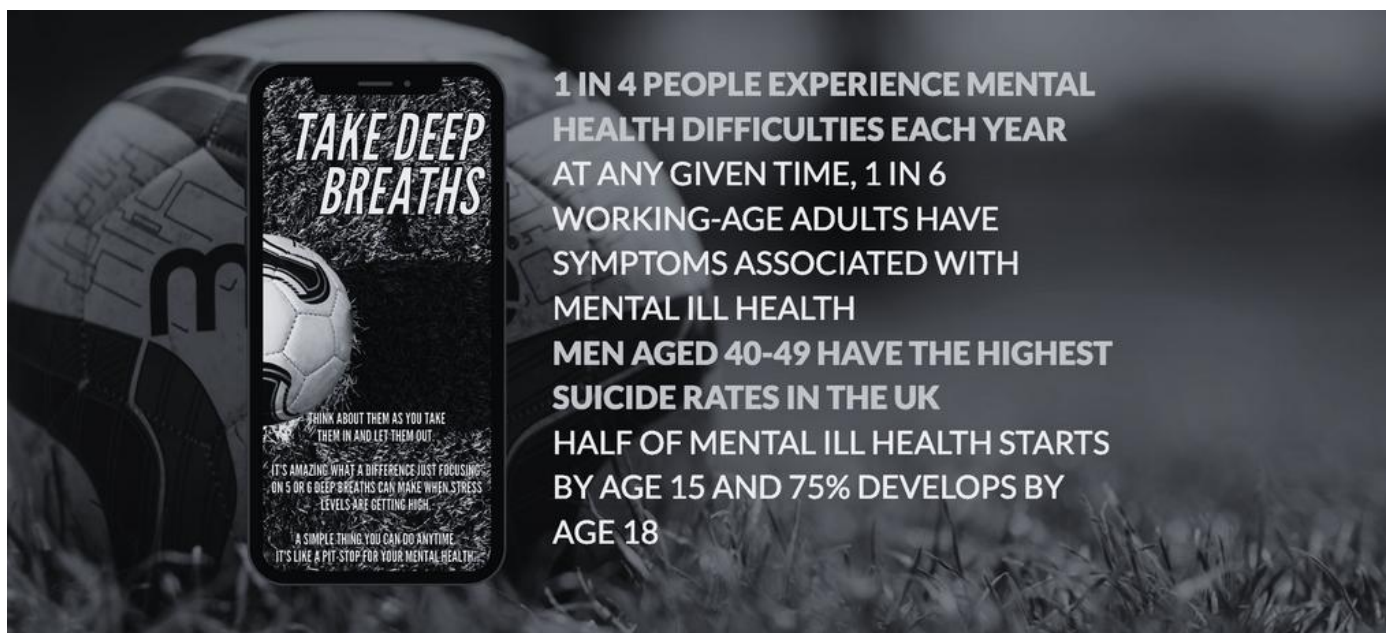
Danny Matharu  
Founder  
The Soccer Mental Health Alliance



# MENTAL HEALTH STATISTICS

1 in 5 of us will experience mental health difficulties each year and with this, it is important that we all take time to look after our mental health.

Mental health does not discriminate. Whatever your colour, gender, job title, income, religious persuasion or postcode, we all have mental health and it is just like our fingerprint - completely unique to us.



**1 IN 4 PEOPLE EXPERIENCE MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES EACH YEAR**  
**AT ANY GIVEN TIME, 1 IN 6 WORKING-AGE ADULTS HAVE SYMPTOMS ASSOCIATED WITH MENTAL ILL HEALTH**  
**MEN AGED 40-49 HAVE THE HIGHEST SUICIDE RATES IN THE UK**  
**HALF OF MENTAL ILL HEALTH STARTS BY AGE 15 AND 75% DEVELOPS BY AGE 18**

THINK ABOUT THEM AS YOU TAKE THEM IN AND LET THEM OUT  
 IT'S AMAZING WHAT A DIFFERENCE JUST FOCUSING ON 5 OR 6 DEEP BREATHS CAN MAKE WHEN STRESS LEVELS ARE GETTING HIGH  
 A SIMPLE THING YOU CAN DO ANYTIME  
 IT'S LIKE A PIT-STOP FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

## WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental health is defined not just in terms of the absence of a mental disorder but as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to their own community.

*(World Health Organisation)*

### The Mental Health Foundation states:

Good mental health is characterised by a person's ability to fulfil a number of key functions & activities, including:

- The ability to learn
- The ability to feel, express and manage a range of positive and negative emotions
- The ability to form and maintain good relationships with others
- The ability to cope with and manage change & uncertainty



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# WHY WE HAVE A MENTAL HEALTH PLAN

A grassroots soccer club should have a mental health plan for the whole club to work on as it provides numerous benefits for all stakeholders, including players, coaches, volunteers and family members/spectators. Mental health is as important as physical health and having a well-defined plan helps ensure the well-being of everyone involved. Here are some advantages of creating a mental health plan for all stakeholders:

## 1. IMPROVED PERFORMANCE:

Addressing mental health conditions can lead to improved performance on the field. Players who feel supported and have access to mental health resources are likely to be more focused, confident and resilient, ultimately contributing to the Club's success.

## 2. ENHANCED TEAM COHESION:

A mental health plan can help facilitate an environment where anyone connected to the Club feels comfortable discussing their mental well-being. This openness can lead to stronger relationships and better communication within the Club, ultimately improving Clubwork and the overall Club atmosphere.

## 3. REDUCED STIGMA:

Having a mental health plan demonstrates the Club's commitment to addressing mental health concerns and helping to reduce the stigma around mental health conditions. This can encourage more people to seek help when they need it, leading to a healthier and more supportive community.

## 4. INCREASED RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT:

A club that takes mental health seriously is likely to attract and retain players, coaches, volunteers and spectators who value a supportive and inclusive environment. This can lead to long-term stability and growth for the club.

## 5. HOLISTIC PLAYER DEVELOPMENT:

A mental health plan can help players develop coping mechanisms and mental resilience, which are essential life skills. This holistic approach to player development can benefit them beyond the soccer field, contributing to their personal and professional growth.

## 6. BETTER SUPPORT FOR EVERYONE:

Coaches, volunteers, match officials and parents/carers/families also face mental health challenges. A club-wide mental health plan ensures that they too have access to resources and support, promoting a healthier Club environment and an improved sense of overall cohesion.

## 7. GREATER COMMUNITY IMPACT:

By taking a proactive stance on mental health, our club can serve as a positive example within the community. This can help raise awareness and promote mental health support, ultimately benefiting the wider community.

## IN CONCLUSION

In conclusion, a mental health plan for our club provides a range of benefits for all stakeholders, from improved performance and Club cohesion to reduced stigma and greater community impact. Implementing such a plan is a valuable investment in the overall health and well-being of everyone involved with the club.



Steven Caulker - Ambassador for The Vault, speaks with England Manager, Gareth Southgate (video available in The Vault)  
Ex-Spurs, Liverpool, QPR, Southampton and England  
Founder & Director of Behind The White Lines: <https://behindthewhitelines.com/>

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# MENTAL HEALTH PLAN

## I. Introduction

The mental health and well-being of everyone in our Club are of utmost importance.

This Club Mental Health Plan aims to promote a positive, supportive and inclusive environment where players and all those connected to the Club in any capacity can thrive both on and off the field.

The plan addresses various aspects of mental health and provides guidelines for coaches, players, volunteers and spectators to follow in order to create a healthy and successful Club culture.

## II. Objectives

1. Promote awareness and understanding of mental health within the Club.
2. Establish a supportive and inclusive environment for all players.
3. Encourage open communication and trust among Club members.
4. Build resilience and stress management skills.
5. Provide resources and support for anyone connected to the Club who might be experiencing mental health challenges.

## III. Key Principles

1. Mental health is as important as physical health.
2. Mental health challenges can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender or background.
3. It is everyone's responsibility to support and encourage a positive Club environment.



# MENTAL HEALTH PLAN CONT.

## IV. Strategies and Actions

### A. Promote Awareness and Understanding

1. Provide mental health education sessions for players, coaches, match officials and spectators/parents/carers to raise awareness about mental health conditions, signs and symptoms.
2. Encourage people to share their experiences, building empathy and understanding among Club members.
3. Share resources and information on mental health, including articles, training and podcasts for example.

### B. Supportive and Inclusive Environment

1. Encourage a culture of respect, empathy and compassion among all Club members.
2. Address instances of bullying, discrimination or harassment immediately and implement consequences as necessary.
3. Encourage Club bonding activities to create strong relationships and a sense of belonging among everyone.

### C. Open Communication and Trust

1. Encourage open and honest communication among players, coaches, match officials and spectators/parents/carers.
2. Establish regular check-ins with players to discuss their well-being and address any concerns.
3. Implement a confidential reporting system for players to share any mental health concerns or challenges they may be facing.

### D. Resilience and Stress Management

1. Offer information and guidance on (for example) stress management, relaxation techniques and coping skills.
2. Encourage players to develop healthy habits, including regular exercise, proper nutrition and adequate sleep.
3. Implement mindfulness and meditation practices into the Club's routine if applicable.





## MENTAL HEALTH PLAN CONT.

### *E. Resources and Support*

1. Provide a list of mental health professionals and resources available in the community.
2. Collaborate with local mental health organisations to offer support and resources for all those in need.
3. Develop a support network within the Club, pairing experienced individuals with new members to offer guidance and mentorship.

### **V. Monitoring and Evaluation**

1. Regularly assess the effectiveness of the mental health plan through surveys, feedback and observation.
2. Update and adapt the plan as needed, based on feedback and ongoing mental health needs.
3. Review and revise the mental health plan annually to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.

### **VI. Conclusion**

By implementing this Club Mental Health Plan, we aim to create a positive and supportive environment for all players, coaches, match officials and spectators/parents/carers.

By prioritising mental health, we will not only improve individual well-being but also contribute to the overall success and cohesion of our Club and community.





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## HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS

As a Club, we will provide all our stakeholders access to **The Vault - Soccer**-themed mental health support tools for players, spectators, family members/parents/carers, communities, coaches, match officials and volunteers within grassroots Soccer.

**The Vault**, from **The Soccer Mental Health Alliance**, is a digital suite of mental health support tools that empowers grassroots Soccer with its collective mental health.

What's in **The Vault**?

### Regular Webinars

All are delivered by recognised experts and ex-professional players, discussing mental health, offering lived experiences and guidance on supporting yourself and those in your care.

### Mental Health Playbook

This Playbook will help to build and maintain mental well-being by sending weekly, actionable tips direct to a smart device that can be incorporated into daily life.

### Mental Health Training

The Soccer Mental Health Alliance believe that at least one person in every grassroots club should be Mental Health First Aid trained at a minimum. FMHA can offer training via recognised providers.

### Infographics & Articles

Info on: Self-awareness, Anxiety, Mindfulness, How to spot signs of deterioration of mental health in self/players/teammates/family members, Information on how to identify and support individuals who are neurodiverse, How to mentally prepare for a match, ED&I, LGBTQ+ and more.

### Journals & Planners

Specifically designed to support and empower your mental well-being journey. The suite includes The Match Day Journal, Gratitude Journal, Goal Planner and Self-Care Handbook.

### Books

The goal is to reach junior grassroots Soccerers through an engaging collection of books that feature their fellow grassroots peers and both current and former professional players. These books shine a light on the various aspects of mental health that touch us all. Simplistic in design, yet powerful in message, each book utilises compelling imagery to resonate with the younger generation.

### Signposting

Organisations both locally and nationally that can help you or anyone you know when needed. People should not have to go looking for where to find support. **The Vault** will signpost support via our partnership with **The Hub of Hope** - [Click here for the Hub of Hope](#)

## HOW TO ACCESS THE VAULT

The Vault can be accessed via this link:

[WWW.BOSTONBOLTS.THEMHA.COM](http://WWW.BOSTONBOLTS.THEMHA.COM)



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*The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the urgent need for accessible and anonymous mental health products as people have since increasingly sought out digital options. These services eliminate barriers to early intervention, providing comfort and confidentiality to those in need.*

*Additionally, digital support also meets the demands of those who cannot or choose not to attend in-person well-being sessions offered. The Vault is the solution. Accessible anytime. Anonymous sign up. Always growing.*

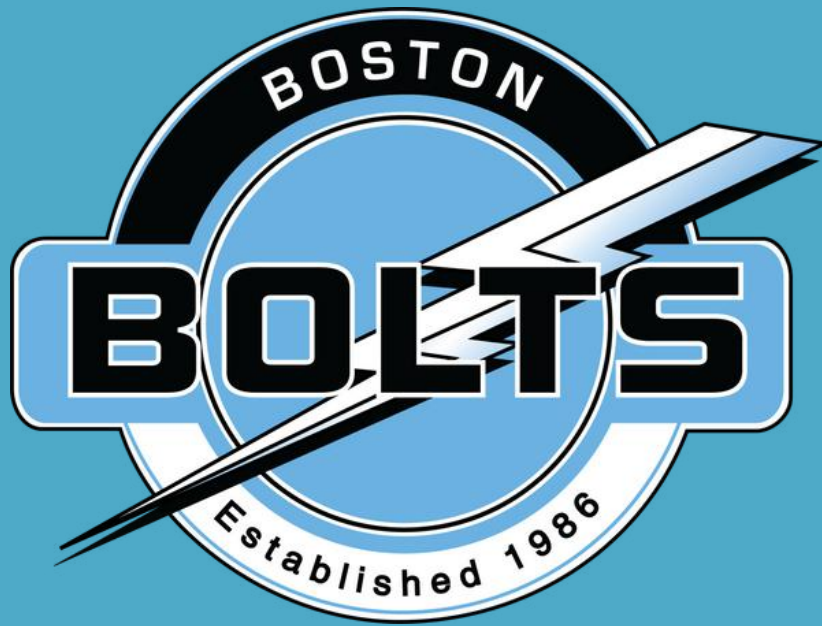
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[www.bostonbolts.thesmha.com](http://www.bostonbolts.thesmha.com)

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