

# Mental Health and Student-Athletes:

## Managing the Invisible Injury



**Wednesday, April 15, 2026**

Registration/Breakfast: 7:30 a.m.

Program: 8 a.m. to 12:35 p.m.

**PPG Paints Arena, ULTRA Club**

1001 5th Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15219

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**Continuing Education Credits**

Certified Athletic Trainers (CEUs) - 3.5 credits

Counselors (NBCC) - 3.0 credits

PA Educators (Act 48) - 3.0 credits

Psychologists (APA) - 3.0 credits

Social Workers (LPC, LCSW, LSW, LMFT) - 3.0 credits

# Mental Health and Student-Athletes:

## Managing the Invisible Injury

**Wednesday, April 15, 2026**

This symposium is offered at no cost.

*Note: attendees should enter through the FNB Gate at the intersection of Fullerton Street and Centre Avenue.*

### Our Purpose

Student-athletes are at high risk of experiencing mental health challenges. We all have a role to play in assuring that the mental side of performance stands on equal footing with the physical game.

Whether through physical injury, unmet expectations, performance struggles, or team discord, they are vulnerable. This symposium offers the opportunity to hear from a variety of experts who are committed to collaborative care that prioritizes psychological safety and athletic outcomes.

**The mental side of performance can and must stand on equal footing with the physical game.**

### Who Should Attend?

Coaches, athletic directors, athletic trainers, administrators, school counselors, social workers, and teachers for middle school, high school, and college level student-athletes will gain valuable insight into working with and supporting the mental health needs of student-athletes.

### Learning Objectives

At the completion of the program, attendees should be able to:

- Recognize warning signs that may indicate a student-athlete may be at risk.
- Identify and implement ways to support student-athletes and the team.
- Further assist student-athletes with their internal performance fears.
- Apply resources available to support struggling student-athletes and to assist you in your ongoing role.

## Earn Credits

### Certified Athletic Trainers (CEUs)



UPMC Sports Medicine (P2760) is approved by the Board of Certification, Inc. to offer continuing education to Certified Athletic Trainers. Certified Athletic Trainers will be eligible for 3.5 CEUs.

UPMC Sports Medicine, 3200 South Water Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203

### Counselors (NBCC)



Education and Consultative Services of UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital has been approved by NBCC as an Approved Continuing Education Provider, ACEP No. 5059. Programs that do not qualify for NBCC credit are clearly identified.

Education and Consultative Services of UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital is solely responsible for all aspects of the programs. This program is approved for 3.0 hours.

### Licensed/Clinical Social Workers, Licensed Professional Counselors, Licensed Family Therapists (LSW/LCSW/LPC/LMFT)

As a Jointly Accredited Organization, University of Pittsburgh is approved to offer social work continuing education by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Approved Continuing Education (ACE) program. Organizations, not individual courses, are approved under this program. State and provincial regulatory boards have the final authority to determine whether an individual course may be accepted for continuing education credit. University of Pittsburgh maintains responsibility for this course. Social workers completing this course receive 3.0 continuing education credits.

### PA Educators (Act 48)

UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital is recognized by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to offer Continuing Education Credits under the Act 48 guidelines. UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital adheres to the Act 48 Continuing Education Guidelines.

PA educators will receive 3.0 hours of Act 48 credit for completing this program.

### Psychologists (APA)



Education and Consultative Services of UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. Education and Consultative Services of UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital maintains responsibility for this program and its content. This program is being offered for 3.0 continuing education credits.

**REGISTER HERE**



We encourage participation by all individuals. If you have a disability, advance notification of any special needs will help us to better serve you. Please notify us of your needs as soon as possible by calling Making Minds Matter at **412-246-6614**. For additional information about the symposium, please contact Nanci Case at **MakingMindsMatter@upmc.edu**.

## Agenda

**7:30 a.m. Registration/Breakfast**

**8 a.m. “Welcome to the Mental Health and Student-Athletes Symposium”**

**Ken Nash, MD**

*Chief of Clinical Services, UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital*

*Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine*

*Team Psychiatrist, Pittsburgh Penguins and Pittsburgh Steelers*

**Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation**



**8:25 a.m. “Supporting the Mental Health of Student-Athletes Through the Collegiate Level”**

Student-athletes' mental health needs evolve as they progress through high school and prepare for the demands of college athletics. Recognizing how symptoms present, identifying early signs of concern, and knowing how to respond are essential to fostering a supportive, high performing team culture. This session highlights the challenges student-athletes commonly face across their educational journey, offering deeper insight into the transition to college and the mental health needs that continue throughout their collegiate careers.

**Robin Valpey, MD**

*Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry*

*Medical Director, Center for Counseling and Cancer Support*

*Director of Student Mental Health Services, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine*

*Attending Psychiatrist, UPMC Premier Sports Program*

**9 a.m. “The Role of Anxiety with Concussion Outcomes: What are we Learning?”**

As a founding member of the UPMC Sport Medicine Concussion Program, established in 2000, Dr. Collins oversees the largest research and clinical program focused on the assessment, treatment, rehabilitation, research, and education of sports-related mild traumatic brain injury in athletes of all levels. Learn about the findings from thousands of student-athlete cases and how data is applied in practice.

**Micky Collins, PhD**

*Professor and Arthur J. Rooney Chair in Sports Medicine*

*Clinical and Executive Director*

*UPMC Sports Medicine Concussion Program*

*UPMC Department of Orthopaedic Surgery*



## Agenda *continued*

**9:35 a.m.**

### **“Managing Student-Athletes During and After Concussions and Head Trauma”**

Learn how the findings from extensive research by the UPMC Sports Medicine Concussion Program are applied to managing student-athletes as they progress from injury to recover. Knowing how to identify the appropriate expectations will enable you to support your injured student-athletes so they can return to their pre-injury status.

**Raymond Pan, MD**

*Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Orthopaedic Surgery, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine*

*Psychiatrist, UPMC Sports Medicine Concussion Program*

**10:10 a.m.**

**Break**

**10:25 a.m.**

### **“An Athletes Perspective on Mental Health Maintenance”**

Darrel Young was a student-athlete for many years before joining the NFL. He lived the path that your student-athletes are currently living. Now working with the Pittsburgh Steelers, he shares what he learned along his journey to make sure mental health stays at the forefront.

**Darrel Young**

*Director of Player Development, Pittsburgh Steelers*

*Former Washington Redskin, Carolina Panther, and Chicago Bear*

**11 a.m.**

### **“Building Mental Toughness: Motivating Your Student-Athletes for Peak Performance”**

Knowing how to motivate your student-athletes for peak performance while protecting their mental health is critical. Dr. Carr provides practical techniques to apply to your team.

**Chris Carr, PhD**

*Director of Performance Psychology and Team Behavioral Health Clinician,*

*Green Bay Packers*

**11:35 a.m.**

### **Panel Discussion – Q&A**

Take this opportunity to ask your questions of today’s speakers to enhance your own skills in working with student-athletes.

**All Speakers**

## Mental Health and Student-Athletes Symposium Speakers

**Chris Carr, PhD**

*Director of Performance Psychology and Team Behavioral Health Clinician  
Green Bay Packers*

Dr. Carr has served as the director of Performance Psychology and the team behavioral health clinician for the Green Bay Packers since May 2020. He is responsible for performance psychology and mental health services for players, staff, and the organization.

His breadth of experience includes similar roles with professional teams including the Indiana Pacers, the Indiana Fever, the Oklahoma City Thunder, the Kansas City Royals, Columbus Crew, Tasman Motorsports, and the Arizona Cardinals. In the collegiate athletic arena, Dr. Carr has served in various clinical capacities with Ball State University, Butler University, Purdue University, Central Michigan University, Lindenwood University, Indiana University, Ohio State University, Arizona State University, and Washington State University. Additionally, Dr. Carr has worked with United States Olympic teams including the Diving Team, Alpine Men's Team, and the Synchronized Swimming Team and was a member of the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee. He has also consulted with the United States Navy. Furthermore, he is an accomplished lecturer and published author.

**Micky Collins, PhD**

*Professor and Arthur J. Rooney Chair in Sports Medicine  
Clinical and Executive Director  
UPMC Sports Medicine Concussion Program  
UPMC Department of Orthopaedic Surgery*

Dr. Collins is a professor and Arthur J. Rooney Chair in Sports Medicine, serving as the clinical and executive director of the UPMC Sports Medicine Concussions Program of which he is a founding member. After more than two decades since its inception, the UPMC Sports Medicine Concussion program remains the largest research and clinical program in the world, focused on the assessment, treatment, rehabilitation, research, and education of sports-related mild traumatic brain injury in athletes of all levels.

Dr. Collins' expertise attracts elite and professional athletes from around the world seeking the comprehensive care he provides and the multidisciplinary approach he helped to introduce. The program has roughly 20,000 patient visits annually at seven different locations across Pittsburgh. Dr. Collins currently has upward of \$19 million in funding for his research efforts from entities including the NFL-GE Head Health Challenge, National Institute of Health, Major League Baseball, and the United States Army Special Operations Command.

**Ken Nash, MD**

*Chief of Clinical Services, UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital  
Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine  
Team Psychiatrist, Pittsburgh Penguins and Pittsburgh Steelers*

Dr. Ken Nash is the chief of Clinical Services at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital (WPH), which is nationally ranked as a top mental health system in the United States. He also serves as the vice chair of Clinical Affairs for the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, which has more than \$112 million in research funding and is the top recipient of National Institutes of Health funding for psychiatric research.

Dr. Nash has leadership expertise not only across clinical models of care but has also served as the residency director of one of the largest psychiatry training programs in the country, as well as a past medical director and current board member for a mental health specific managed care company, giving him a depth and range of knowledge across health care systems, whether community or academic. He is a resource for complex mental health cases from across the country and is known nationally for his leadership and mentoring of "clinician educators" and our future psychiatric leaders.

**Raymond Pan, MD**

*Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Orthopaedic Surgery, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine  
Psychiatrist, UPMC Sports Medicine Concussion Program*

Raymond Pan, MD is an associate professor of Psychiatry and Orthopaedic Surgery at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. He is the psychiatrist at the University of Pittsburgh Sports Medicine Concussion Program, and his clinic treats patients with mental health symptoms after concussion.

He is a Distinguished Fellow of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the American Psychiatric Association. He is a board member of the International Society of Sports Psychiatry, leads workshops for mental health professionals, and authors articles on mental health and injury including the Oxford Textbook of Traumatic Brain Injury.

**Robin Valpey, MD**

*Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry  
Medical Director, Center for Counseling and Cancer Support, UPMC Hillman Cancer Center  
Director of Student Mental Health Services, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine  
Attending Psychiatrist, UPMC Premier Sports Program*

Dr. Valpey serves as the medical director of the Center for Counseling and Cancer Support at UPMC Hillman Cancer Center, overseeing psycho oncology services for patients and their loved ones. In addition, she is the director of Student Mental Health at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, providing psychiatric care and wellness support for medical students throughout their training. Her clinical and academic work also includes faculty roles in eating disorders and substance use disorder, along with additional subspecialty training in women's mental health.

Dr. Valpey began specializing in the mental health care of student athletes in 2018 through her work with the University of Pittsburgh and Duquesne University. She provides comprehensive psychiatric evaluation and treatment tailored to the unique pressures of collegiate athletics, drawing on her expertise in disordered eating, substance misuse, performance related stress, and complex medical presentations. She has supported student athletes across a wide range of sports as they navigate the intersection of identity, performance, injury, and wellbeing.

**Darrel Young**

*Director of Player Development, Pittsburgh Steelers  
Former Washington Redskin, Carolina Panther, and Chicago Bear*

Darrel is a nine-year NFL veteran, playing for the Washington Redskins, where he served as team captain for three consecutive years, was the recipient of the Byron Whizzer Award for Community MVP, and won the Walter Payton Man of the Year Award in 2014. He also played for the Carolina Panthers and the Chicago Bears.

He is the current Director of Player Development with the Pittsburgh Steelers, assisting players during and beyond their NFL experience. Darrel has a proven commitment to community outreach programs as an NFL player. He has an acute knowledge of internal organizational structure, experience and relationships with key stakeholders, and an ability to create strategic vision for diversity and inclusion. Darrel volunteers for the Greater Washington, D.C. Big Brothers Big Sisters Organization. He was also an NFL USO tour participant and has extensive community involvement in the D.C. metropolitan area.