

TRANSITION SUPPORT – SELECTIONS

Elite athletes push themselves each day in pursuit of their sporting dreams but before they can represent their country at benchmark events, they do have to manage the emotional highs and lows of selections.

The uncertainty of selection is often described as one of the most challenging aspects of being an athlete. This is when your role in the athlete's social support system becomes critical. Your ability to effectively support the athlete during the selection periods for Tokyo 2020 will be enhanced through the appropriate use of emotion regulation strategies.

TIPS FOR THE SELECTION PERIOD



Be mindful that athletes might be feeling the pressure and stress associated with qualifications and selections.



Be brave and ask the athlete if they need your support and how you can support them.



Be aware of the team announcement date, time and context so that you can be available to support the athlete.



Be aware of any uncharacteristic moods or behaviours shown by the athlete during this time and check if they would like to be connected with external professional support.



Be conscious of managing your emotions and communication during the selection period.





SUPPORTING YOUR ATHLETE WITH NON-SELECTION

Athletes report various emotions when they are not selected for teams. The emotions may include: denial, sadness, disappointment, anger, guilt, anxiety, depression, and acceptance. These emotions are appropriate for the circumstances and the athlete will need time, space and empathy to deal with the unpleasant feelings.

- Remind the athlete that you support and love them unconditionally.
- Show empathy and be an active listener.
- If the athlete has any questions regarding the nomination process and non-selection encourage them to speak with their sport. Underage athletes should be allowed the necessary guardian support.
- Be mindful that the athlete might not want to speak about selections and therefore, offer a positive distraction by engaging in a different topic of conversation.
- The time it takes for an athlete to deal with and accept the non-selection and move on will vary.
- An athlete might feel the need to distance themselves from the sporting environment for a period of time to avoid people or situations but with time they should be able to refocus on the next phase of their sport and life.
- It is normal for athletes to be upset and/or disappointed but if these feelings are prolonged or if your athlete displays uncharacteristic moods or behaviours then please contact the support services within the Sport, National Institute Network or AIS.

Stanimirovic R, Sports Coach, Australian Sports Commission, Volume 30, Number 2 (2008). What happens when the goal of representing Australia is not possible because of non-selection?

AIS.gov.au



SUPPORTING YOUR ATHLETE WHEN SELECTED

Enjoy the exciting news with the athlete and remember to:

- Anticipate a range of emotional reactions from the athlete e.g. excitement, nerves, pressure to perform.
- Acknowledge their efforts and celebrate with the athlete.
- Empathise if the athlete's close friend or teammate has not been selected for the Games.

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR ATHLETES

- A number of Sports have transition and non-selection support services available to athletes. Athletes are encouraged to connect with their Sport if they require assistance.
- The **Athlete Wellbeing and Engagement Network** across the country are available to assist athletes.
- The **Career Practitioner Referral Network** (CPRN) enables Australia's high performance categorised athletes to access a variety of professional career advice and guidance.
- The **Mental Health Referral Network** (MHRN) has been designed for Australia's high performance categorised athletes and provides a range of services from basic mental wellness checks to comprehensive clinical treatment plans.
- Please note that the MHRN is not an emergency call service. If you are urgently concerned about the athlete's wellbeing, please call Lifeline on 13 11 14 for immediate 24/7 support. If someone's life is in danger, call 000 at once.

CONTACTS

Questions and queries relating to the program can be emailed to: aussquad@paralympic.org.au