

# 10 actionable tips

## Support youth mental health through sports

Calling all coaches, parents, and implementers of youth sports programs! Sports are a great tool to support the mental, emotional, and social health of our nation's youth. Follow these tips from the **National Youth Sports Strategy** to create an environment that helps them thrive.



### Focus on fun!

Creating a positive learning environment helps youth get the most out of their sports experience — and teaches them healthy ways to compete.



### Know the signs of mental, emotional, and social health needs.

Be alert and connect youth with resources for support if necessary.

### Increase access to programs, equipment, and play spaces.

Create safe, accessible options for physical activity for all youth in the community — no matter their individual abilities.



### Emphasize social connections.

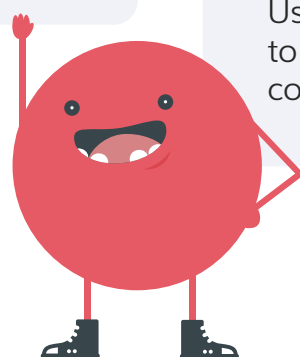
Strengthen opportunities for youth to connect with their peers and build nurturing relationships with others in the community.

### Work with others.

We're strongest together! Connect with parents, teachers, and others in youth-centered environments to support youth.

### Want to learn more?

Explore the **National Youth Sports Strategy** and related resources on [health.gov](https://www.health.gov).



### Train coaches on trauma-informed practices and positive youth development principles.

Help coaches recognize and respond to the effects of trauma, and teach them strategies to create supportive environments.

### Maximize play time.

Keep youth active and engaged throughout games and practices — so they can get all the benefits of physical activity.

### Empower youth to get involved.

Include youth when you make decisions about programs in their communities whenever you can.

### Teach coping skills.

Show youth how to use strategies to cope with stress and difficult emotions. This will help them grow on the playing field — and in life.

### Create healing spaces for the whole community.

Use sporting events as a chance for people to connect, have fun together, and boost community spirit.

