



TORONTO DINGOS FOOTBALL CLUB

Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

Introduction

The Toronto Dingos Football Club will provide a safe, supportive and inclusive sporting environment in which all members of the community are welcome to join and participate and contribute to the club in various ways. A safe and supportive club culture protects people against a range of health-related risks. A strong and inclusive club enables players, members, supporters, families and others in the community to engage in meaningful and positive relationships for mutual benefit.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the club committee and club members understand the club's role and position in relation to mental health and to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health.

When does this policy apply?

This policy applies to all members and visitors to any formal or informal event, meeting, match, competition or other function that is organized under the auspices of the club. In addition, the club expects its members to acknowledge the policy in their private lives

Responsibilities

Our club will:

- Activate and comply with this policy
- Promote the policy in various ways
- Reduce stigma around mental health discussions with promoting available workshops to assist with education on mental health
- Promote and role model the expected attitudes and behaviours at all times
- Encourage open communication
- Appoint and provide support for Welfare Officers who have the responsibility to assist club members who might require help
- Display key contact numbers in accessible places
- Provide an accessible list of health service providers who can help club members in need

- Display information about where to seek help for mental health issues
- Conduct an annual Good Sports day to promote safe alcohol consumption and mental health
- Ensure relevant personnel have current first aid training, and that first aid trained personnel are present at all club activities
- Maintain a comprehensive first aid kit

Individuals will:

- Comply with this policy
- Promote and role model the expected attitudes and behaviours at all times
- Be responsible and accountable for their behaviour
- Alert club officials or Welfare Officers with any concern about the wellbeing of any club member
- Honour our commitment to the health safety and wellbeing of all of our members
- Treat everyone with respect and care

Supporting members with mental health issues

Open communication is encouraged between all members, including players and coaches, so that members feel comfortable to talk about any support they may require to maintain their health. This might mean a break from training, games, social events or training in a less intensive manner for a period of time.

Responding to a need

All information provided to the club in relation to a member's mental health is treated as confidential unless that member requests that others are made aware of their circumstances. If there is a crisis this information may need to be shared with the appropriate services/supports to ensure the health and wellbeing of the member.

When responding to a situation of need the club will focus on the safety and wellbeing of those directly and indirectly involved in as discreet manner as possible in the circumstances. All responses will reflect the club's duty of care to members and visitors.

- Where a concern is raised about a member's mental health and wellbeing they will be approached discreetly by a Welfare Officer, President or other club official, to discuss the concerns observed. In concert with the member, club officials will determine how the club may be able to support that member
- Where applicable the member is encouraged to a medical centre or health agency for advice

Incident and Crisis management

When an incident surrounding mental health occurs it is important to stay calm, listen, offer reassurance and approach it in a thoughtful manner.

- In the case of a person behaving in an erratic or disturbed manner, club members will alert a welfare officer or president who will take charge of the situation. **Note:** *The club official will approach the person to talk calmly about what is happening and what help is required*
- If necessary the club official will contact a doctor, mental health service, police, a suicide helpline or 24 hour crisis line for advice and support.
- They will explain to the person needing help the steps that are being taken to 1) support them, 2) by whom and 3) in what way
- We will develop a protocol for responding to mental health crises within our team, including procedures for accessing emergency services and providing immediate support (see Responsibilities)

Policy promotion

The club will promote the mental health and wellbeing policy regularly by:

- Putting a copy of the policy in club newsletters
- Publishing on the club's website
- Promoting positive mental health messages through the club's social media
- Periodic announcements to members at training, functions, football trips

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed as needed and at the club's annual general meeting (AGM) to ensure it remains relevant to club members and reflects community and societal expectations.

Conclusion

The Toronto Dingos are committed to supporting the mental well-being of all members and creating a positive and inclusive environment both on and off the field.