

# SUSTAINABLE HEALTH / PRIORITIZING MENTAL HEALTH IN THE TRAINING OF YOUNG ATHLETES



In partnerships with Ukrainian Gymnastics Federation

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

In sports, young athletes often face intense pressure from parents and coaches, which can negatively affect their mental health. Increasing the effectiveness of training young athletes without harming their mental wellbeing is becoming increasingly challenging for sports school.

## MISSION

To reduce the number of young athletes who quit sports due to psychological stress.

## GOALS



Educate coaches and parents of athletes about the main principles of sustaining mental balance and protecting mental health during the training of athletes.



Improve conflict management skills of coaches and parents.

# WHO ARE THE PARTICIPANTS

Coaches • Parents of young athletes



## USER JOURNEY OF PROJECT PARTICIPANTS



Finds out about the project



Registers to participate



Undergoes series of trainings



Passes exam



Gets the certificate



Applies knowledge in practice



Encourages others to take the course and advocates for nonviolent communication in the training of young athletes

## COURSE STRUCTURE



### Workshop 2.

“Injury prevention through physical and mental recovery”. Speaker – **Ihor Oleksenko**, sports medicine physician of the highest category, PhD in Medicine, member of the FIG medical commission.

### Workshop 1.

Topic №2: “BULLYING or CONFLICT: thin lines or clear frames?”. Speaker – **Olena Parfenova**, co-chair of the NGO “Batky SOS”, one of the developers of the law on comprehensive general secondary education (working group under the Ministry of Education and Culture and working group under the education committee of the Verkhovna Rada).

### Workshop 3.

“General basics of rational nutrition. Development of correct eating habits in young athletes”, speaker – **Iryna Syvash**, Associate Professor of the Department of History and Theory of Olympic Sports of the National University of Physical Education and Sports of Ukraine, PhD in Physical Education and Sports.

## PROJECT CHALLENGES

1. Break through the stigma of discussing mental health challenges in Ukrainian society.
2. Ability to hold participants' attention during online training.
3. Creating a trusting environment and engaging participants in a conversation in an online format.

**>3,500**  
parents of young athletes completed the course and received a certificate

**>1,500**  
coaches completed the course and received a certificate

**45,000+**  
young athletes will be affected by the results of this course



## PROJECT RESULTS

## YULIYA LAKHMAN

FIG brevet judge, Head coach  
of sport-school SPORTLIKO

### INSIGHT

In sports it is not only physical training but also the psychological environment that is important. Every athlete faces a number of challenges from time to time: adaptation, fear of injury, problematic relationships in the team, fear of public speaking and much more. All this affects the inner state of the athlete.

It is well-known that coaches often pressure their players to improve their results. And it is vital to recognize when and how to avoid crossing the line when “motivation and verbal encouragement” turn into bullying and do not bring any benefit. Moreover, it is necessary to assess a young athlete’s condition in a timely manner and take care of his/her mental health. Coaches and parents could often harm the child’s mental state and health due to their own ambitions.

Physical and psychological pressure must be correctly designed, and training must consider the child’s physical data, mental characteristics and desires. In addition, the coach must be able to constructively address conflicts and find a win-win way out of the situation, and not “solve problems” by simply raising his voice.

**Workshops organized by Impact Force provided coaches with practical tools for maintaining mental health and reminded us about the most important thing: the coach is a key figure in children’s sports. It’s up to the coach whether a child will play sports with pleasure. The coach must set an example and be able to establish contact; he/she needs to ensure that his trainees develop harmoniously, grow stronger, do not feel undermined, retain strong health and acquire useful lifelong skills.**

A good coach is not the one with the most champions but the one with the most happy trainees. After all, you must remember that sports are for the child, not the other way around!

