



Decisions at each step should always be based on **safety, stability and function** and be individualized and managed on a case-by-case basis. Team or treating physician will communicate the plan to stakeholders. In some cases, athletes may need to move back a step or remain for longer at a step when progress isn't happening. The time spent in each stage will be case by case. Athletes should have regular follow up with a mental health professional during each stage.

STEP 1 MEDICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Who is responsible? **Team or treating physician and Psychologist.**

STEP 2 SPORT REMOVAL (SEE REMOVAL FROM SPORT PROTOCOL)

2-A Acute crisis period. Management will depend on specific signs and symptoms. Once the team or treating physician deems no acute safety concerns, the athlete may enter stage **2-B**.

2-B Return to activities of daily living (ADL), including exercise outside the training/team environment.

Who is responsible? **Team or treating physician.**

Once athletes meet the criteria, they can progress to **Step 3**.

- There are **no safety issues** preventing a return to the team environment.
- There are **no safe-sport restrictions** on returning to the team environment.
- Athlete is **stable** and **able to manage ADLs consistently** without significant deterioration of mental status.
- Athlete **feels ready to manage the stressors** of the team environment.
- The team or treating physician has provided **written medical clearance** to progress based on safety, stability and function.

STEP 3 GRADUAL RETURN TO TRAINING (ALLOW SEVERAL WEEKS)

Who is responsible? **Team or treating physician.**

Once athletes meet the criteria, they can progress to **Step 4**.

- The athlete has been **able to maintain their mental health** status in the team environment.
- The athlete **feels ready to start performance-guided training** again with the team and can manage the team environment's stressors.
- The team or treating physician has provided **medical clearance** to enter performance, team-based training based on safety, stability and function.

STEP 4A RETURN TO PROGRESSIVE TRAINING

Supervised by support team members in a high-performance environment. Progressive return to the field of play.

STEP 4B PROGRESSION TO STANDARD TEAM-BASED PERFORMANCE-FOCUSED TRAINING

Sport-specific training with the team's coaches. Medical constraints or limitations may persist at this stage, but the team or treating physician and athlete will determine them and communicate them to the coaching team.

Who is responsible? **Team or treating physician remains the lead but coach becomes more involved and may guide the daily routine and determine the training plan according to the athlete's physical abilities and mental status.**

Once athletes meet the criteria, they can progress to **Step 5**.

- The athlete has **maintained their mental health** status in the team environment.
- The athlete **feels ready to manage the stressors** of the competitive training environment (potentially to include travel).
- **Medical clearance** has been provided by the team or treating physician, supported by the team or treating licensed mental health provider based on safety, stability and function.

STEP 5 RETURN TO FULL TRAINING (NO RESTRICTIONS EXCEPT FOR OFFICIAL COMPETITIONS)

Who is responsible? **Coach.**

Once athletes meet this criteria, they can progress to **Step 6**.

- The athlete has **maintained a consistent high-intensity training schedule** with the team.
- The athlete has **been able to manage fluctuations in their mental health** status in the high-performance team environment.
- The athlete **feels ready to manage the stressors** of the competitive environment (potentially to include travel).
- **Medical clearance** has been provided by the team or treating physician based on safety, stability and function.

STEP 6 RETURN TO COMPETITION

Who is responsible? **Coach.**

The athlete **must receive medical clearance** before returning to official competitions

The athlete can only proceed to this stage after obtaining medical clearance. The athlete must have reached the level of sport-specific performance to participate in competitions safely. The athlete's mental health status must be compatible with a return to performance. This stage can include competition simulations.