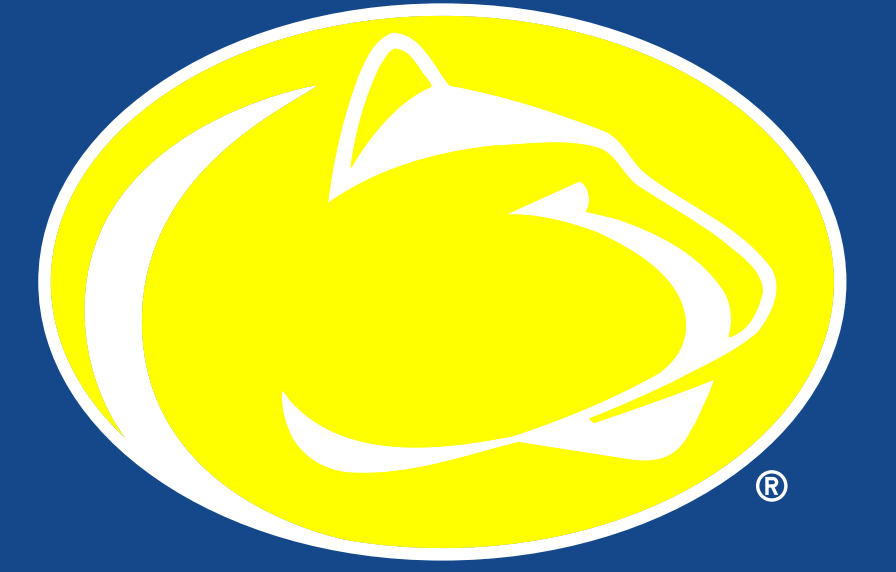


Prioritizing, Understanding, and Valuing Student-Athlete Mental Health: Implementing CCAPS-Screen for NCAA Compliance and Beyond



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BACKGROUND

- Penn State Altoona is a Penn State University Commonwealth Campus located in central Pennsylvania.
- Fall 2024 enrollment was 2,371 students, of which, 295 were student-athletes at the Division III level.
- The NCAA is dedicated to promoting student-athlete mental health and released the second edition of Mental Health Best Practices in 2024. This included screening student-athletes using a validated screening tool at least annually.
- CAPS at Penn State Altoona is a member of CCMH, which developed the CCAPS (Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms) instruments, including a screen that assesses common mental health problems experienced by college students. The pilot of the CCAPS-Screen was conducted with student-athletes in 2018 as part of their pre-participation process.
- Mental health providers from CAPS at Penn State Altoona utilize the CCAPS-Screen to implement the core components recommended, which measures eight most common areas of distress experienced by college students. The Screen is administered to all athletic teams three times each academic year (pre-season, mid-season, and post-season).

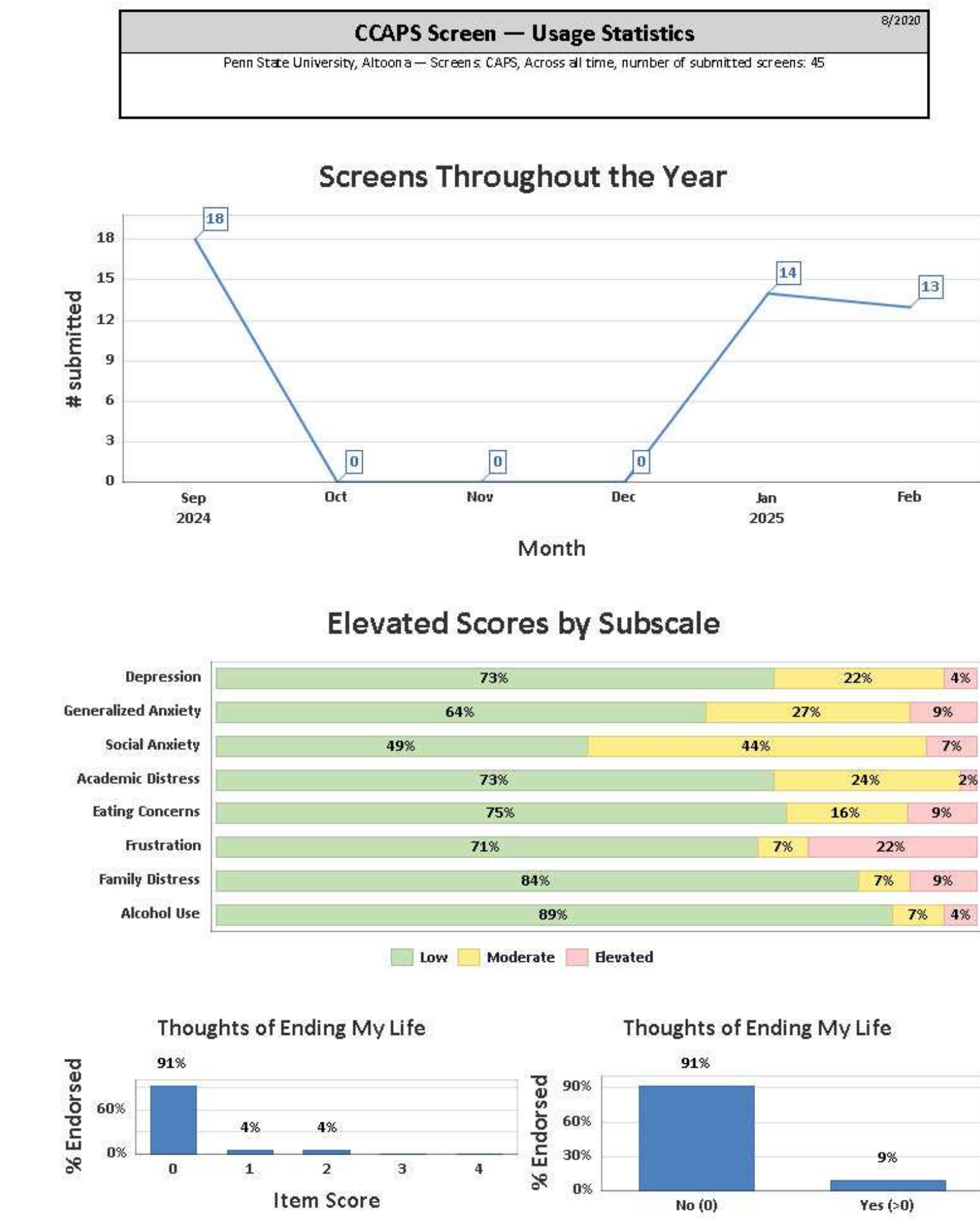
SIGNIFICANCE & INNOVATION

- The CCAPS-Screen measures eight domains of distress. Administering this to student-athletes, who balance both academics and their sport, may better capture signs of distress compared to other screening tools that only measure one domain (e.g., depression).
- Administering the CCAPS-Screen three times allows tracking of changes in mental health during the sport season. Additionally, it provides a mechanism for identifying athletes at risk and normalizing discussions about mental health.

METHODS

- CAPS counselors met with the Athletic Director and coaches to discuss and present the CCAPS-Screen and how it would be used with the student-athletes.
- Student-athletes were emailed a personal link to the CCAPS-Screen and voluntarily completed it on their personal device at the start of the meeting. An individualized report was emailed to them, which also included local resources.
- An aggregate report, based upon team results was created and results were discussed.

RESULTS (CONT.)



GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- Implement a process for student-athletes that not only aligns with NCAA best practices in terms of screening for athletes but also establishes an open dialogue between CAPS and student-athletes regarding mental well-being.
- Expand screening from pre-season/pre-participation to an ongoing endeavor to better understand how student-athletes' mental health may change during their season.
- Foster a collaborative relationship between CAPS, coaches, and student-athletes that includes formal and informal elements beyond screening.

RESULTS

CCAPS — Screen		CCAPS Screen ID: 70303	Date: 9/20/2024
Area of Distress		Level of Distress	
Depression <i>(Feelings of isolation, apathy, worthlessness, sadness)</i>	Low		
Generalized Anxiety <i>(Racing thoughts, tension, possible panic attacks)</i>	Moderate		
Social Anxiety <i>(Feelings of shyness, self-consciousness, and social discomfort)</i>	Moderate		
Academic Distress <i>(Lack of confidence in academics, concentration difficulties, problems completing school-work)</i>	Moderate		
Eating Concerns <i>(Preoccupation with food, concern about overeating)</i>	Elevated		
Frustration <i>(Problems with temper, anger, irritability)</i>	Elevated		
Family Distress <i>(Stress in family relationships)</i>	Elevated		
Alcohol Use <i>(Overuse of alcohol, negative consequences from drinking)</i>	Moderate		
Thoughts of Ending My Life <i>(Ranges from benign passing thoughts to serious suicidal thoughts with intentions to act)</i>	No		
Interpretive Guide			
Based on your responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Elevated: Further evaluation is recommended.Moderate: If these concerns are problematic, consider further evaluation.Low: no action is needed at this time. <u>You did not report any thoughts of ending your life in the last two weeks.</u> This report is not a clinical diagnosis. Please contact a health professional for a complete assessment.			
Local Resources			
Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): 814-849-5540 Penn State Crisis Line: 877-235-6400 National Suicide Hotline: 988 UPMC Community Clinic Center: 814-888-2181 Student Success Center/Peer Advocacy: Lower level Liche			

CONCLUSION

- The use of the CCAPS-Screen is designed to be more proactive than reactive – this instrument can be used to normalize mental health experiences of student-athletes, build positive and healthy relations between student-athletes and mental health professionals, and increase communication and interaction with Athletics.

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Cummins, A. (2024). CCAPS-screen. Center for Collegiate Mental Health. <https://ccmh.psu.edu/ccaps-screen>.

NCAA. (2024). Mental health best practices: Understanding and supporting student-athlete mental health: Second edition. https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/ssi/mental/SSI_MentalHealthBestPractices.pdf