

SUPPORTING AN ATHLETE IN TRANSITION

ADVICE FOR PARENTS AND SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

As athletes make the transition into post-sport life, it is common that parents and significant others become their primary support system.

SOME QUICK TIPS



Create a safe and open space for them to share what they are feeling



Listen to hear and not to fix or to offer solutions.



Encourage them to seek support from peers, mentors, and professionals



Create time and space to continue to take care of yourself and your emotions

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Feeling supported is shown to be a strong predictor of positive transition for athletes. Parents and significant others can help to foster support by engaging in active and empathetic listening.

TIPS FOR LISTENING EMPATHETICALLY

- Create a safe and open space that is non-judgemental
- Give them your full attention by removing as many distractions as possible.
- Listen carefully, try to note their tone and body language
- Maintain positive and open body language yourself. Shoulders back, arms uncrossed, eyes engaged
- It is okay for you to stay silent, this leaves space for your athlete to process and to continue to express their feelings
- Restate and paraphrase what they are saying to ensure you are fully understanding
- Refrain from giving them advice unless they specifically ask
- Take time to follow up later to see how they are feeling

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For many parents and significant others, the end of an athlete's career also means there are significant changes in their own lives. It is important for them to seek support and care for themselves during this transition.

SELF-CARE TIPS

- Create a safe and open space for yourself that is non-judgemental
- Set boundaries that clearly outline how you can support and when you are available to support
- Set time aside to engage in activities you enjoy
- Set time aside to spend away from your athlete
- Allow yourself emotional space to feel and process the changes that are happening in your life as a result of this transition
- Find someone you can trust and feel safe with to express your feelings about the transition
- Allow yourself space to feel all of the emotions, even if they seem selfish or inappropriate. All feelings are valid

References:

7 tips for empathic listening. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.crisisprevention.com/Blog/7-Tips-for-Empathic-Listening>

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