

# *From NHL to INC: Corporate Mental Health Literacy*

Aspen Finn   
strategy + insight

**CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS**



# Nice to See You



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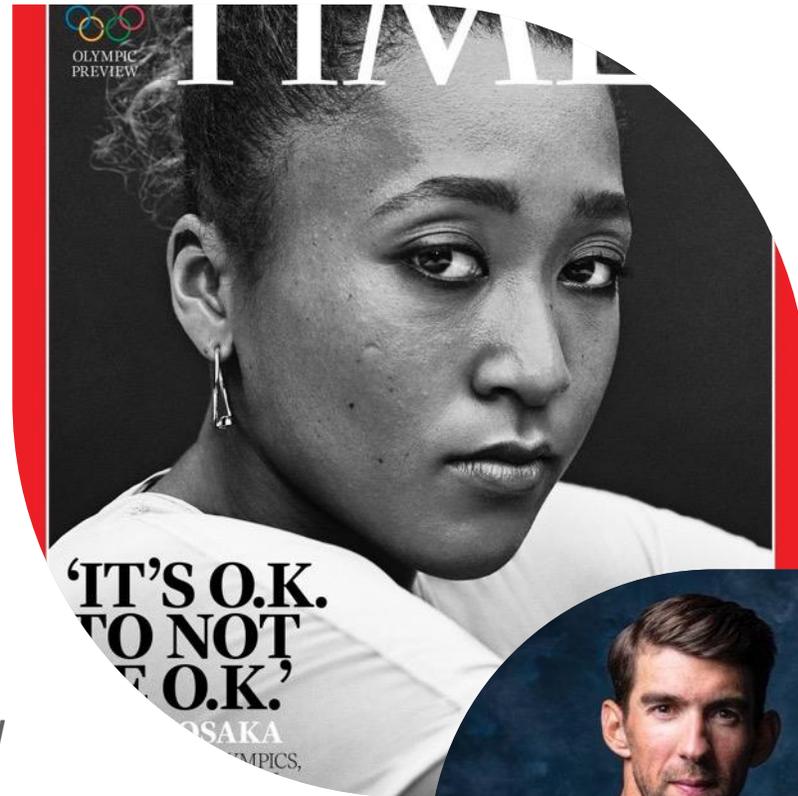
*Chicago Blackhawks*



# Stigma and the Star

*Why are conversations about mental health among elite athletes changing?*

*"We have to protect our mind and our body, rather than just go out there and do what the world wants us to do." – **Simone Biles***



*"I do hope that people can relate and understand it's OK to not be OK; and it's OK to talk about it,"*

**– Naomi Osaka**



*"As an athlete, it's challenging, especially for a male. We're supposed to be big and strong and macho, not somebody who struggles with their emotions. But we're all human beings."*

**– Michael Phelps**



# *Elite Performance Transactions*

Transactional relationships dominate high-performance corporate environments.

This can be good for business but good *and* bad for the people helping the business succeed.

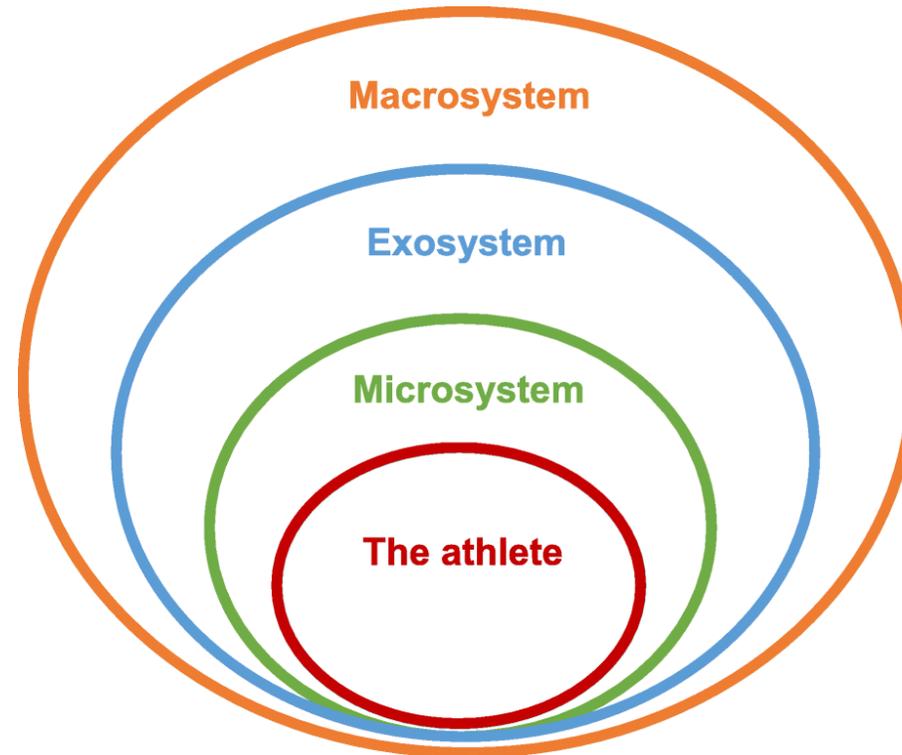
# Deficit Models



Organizations are filled with professional problem finders

Our approach to “problem finding” related to mental health naturally prevents honest assessment and growth of the whole environment.

Ignoring wider ecological factors is problematic.



**Macrosystem**  
(Inter)National sporting environment, public and social media

**Exosystem**  
Individual sport

**Microsystem**  
Coaches, parents/relatives, friends, high performance and sports medicine staff

**The athlete**  
Coping skills, attitudes

*We are Placing the burden  
of mental un-wellness on  
the individual*





*High  
performers  
excel at  
avoidance*

# *Philosophy and Structure*



## **Be a Voice that is Different**

- Disrupt unhealthy patterns of transactional relationships
- Be part of as many good moments as challenging moments



## **Presence = Prevention**

- Consistent presence builds positive associations with mental health



## **Boundaries are Currency**

- Transparent directives
- Serious rules about confidentiality and support
- Balance visibility with privacy



## **“Fix” is a dirty word**

- Do not prescribe wellness
- Learn what was done in the past



## **Build Trust**

- Trust = saying what you are going to do + doing that + REPEAT + REPEAT + REPEAT
- Everything you ask for is new – understand the ecosystem



## **Seek Support**

- Reflection and the support of a peer group is key to growth and ongoing learning

# *Support to Seek Support*



## **Individual**

Consistent access to support and focus on individual as a whole person

## **Cultural**

Clear boundaries, repeatable patterns and values-driven engagements

## **Institutional**

Organizational resources setup to provide a balance of advocacy and impact for individual contributors and the institution as a whole

# *Where to Start*

*Leadership must be open*



*Reframe & educate*



*Endorse from the top*

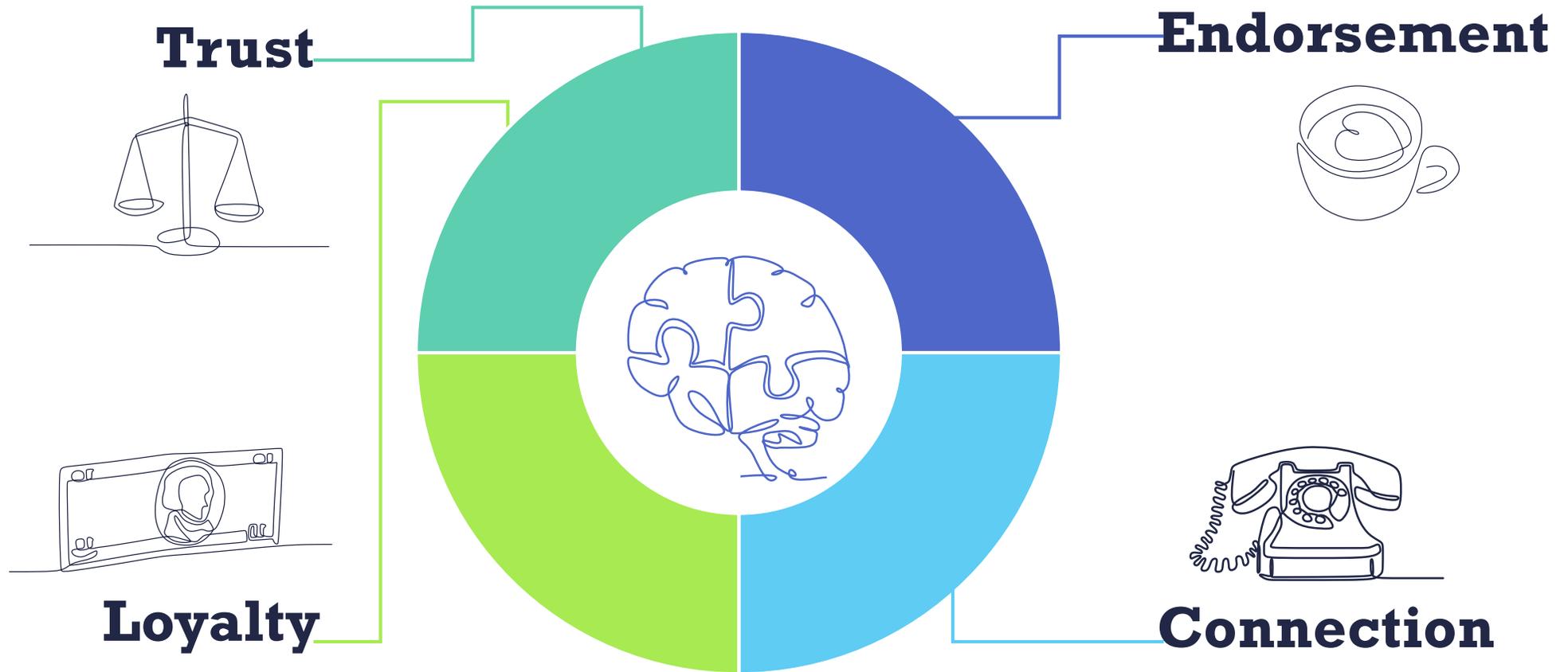


*Language*



*Consistency*

# *Can we measure success?*



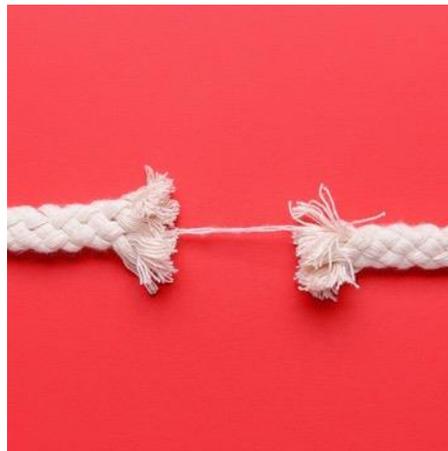
# *Drive Performance, Retain Talent*

*These are not mutually exclusive goals – both can and should support the other*



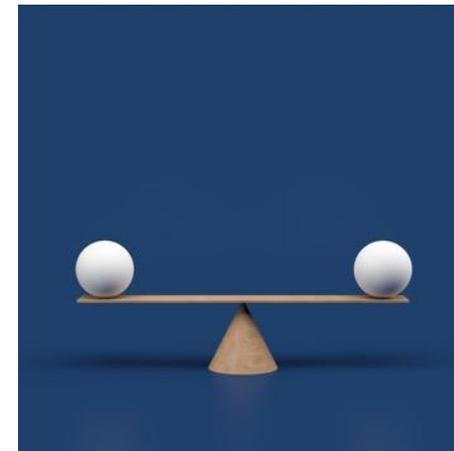
## *Inspire Performance*

What transactional relationships exist inside your organization?



## *Understand Burnout*

Are your high-performers utilizing avoidance and are they at risk for burnout?



## *Foster Balance*

What is leadership's capacity to embrace the idea that support enhances performance and ultimately, ROI?

# Q&A





Thank you

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