

Campaign Proposal: Improving Student Athletes' Mental Health

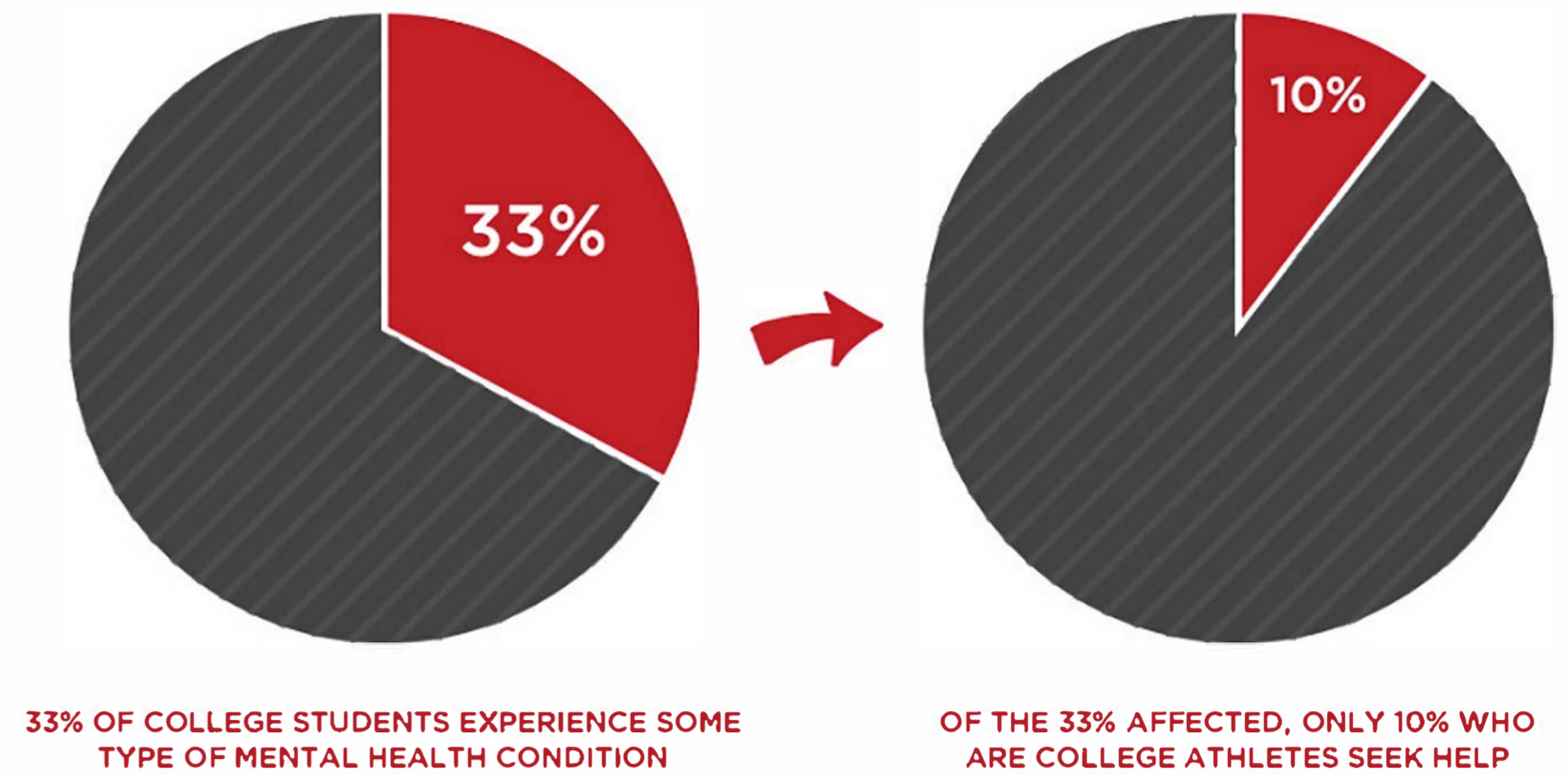
Written By: Tori Waschek | Faculty Mentor: Satarupa Dasgupta
Communication Arts
Ramapo College, Mahwah, NJ 07430

Introduction:

A hypothetical campaign regarding the quiet crisis of mental health that is going on in college athletics. My proposed campaign is meant to raise awareness for student athlete mental health on college campuses. It is called More Than Sports, because every college athlete is more than what their sport defines them as on the field.

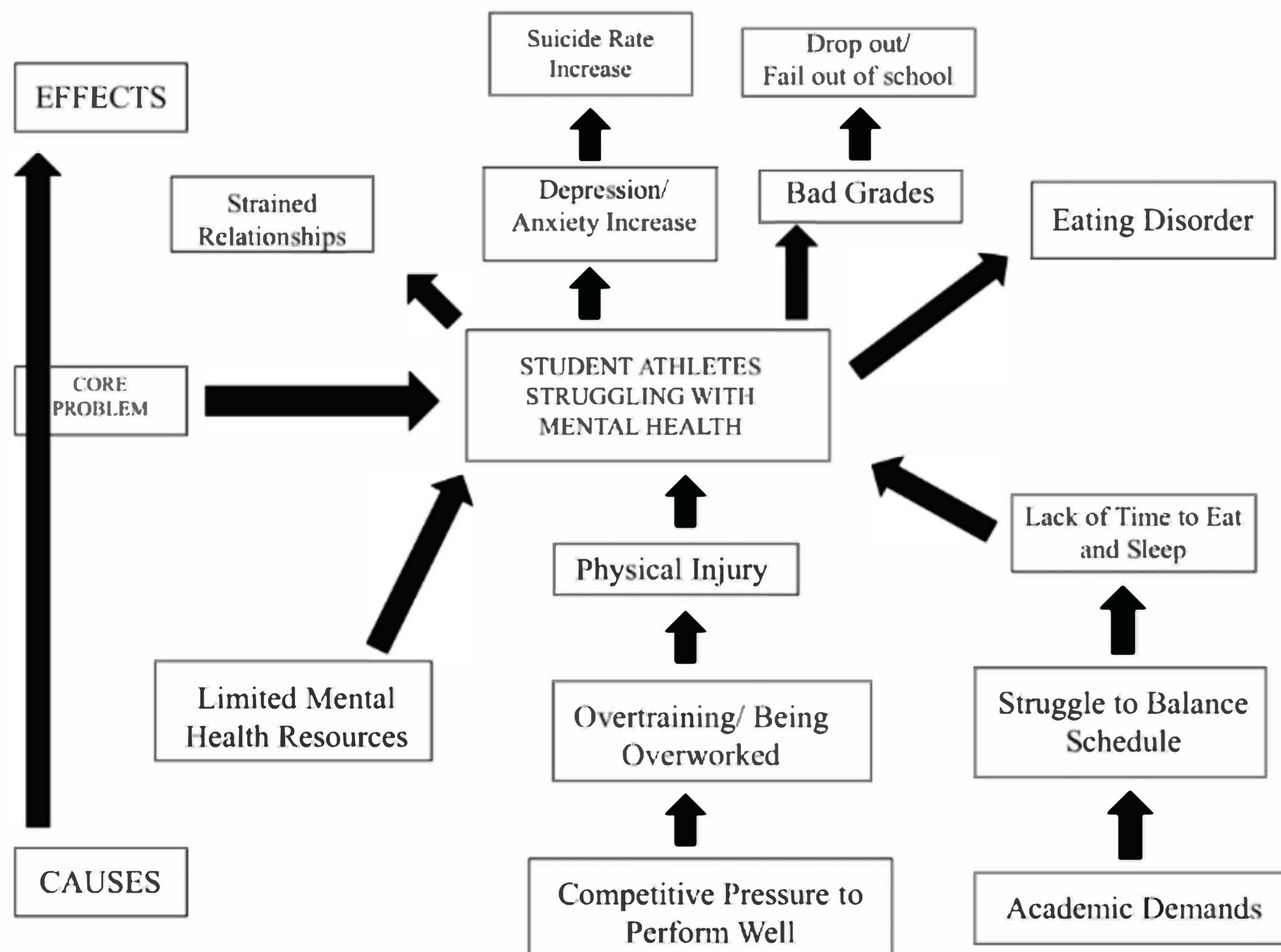
Research:

- In the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, more athletes have been revealing their mental health battles.
- The NCAA found in 2021 after extensive research in 2020, that in most cases, the rates of reporting these concerns are 1.5-2 times higher than in NCAA pre-pandemic studies.
- 33% of all college students experience significant symptoms of depression, anxiety or other mental health conditions. Among that group, 30% seek help. **But of college athletes with mental health conditions, only 10% do.**



- **Main message:** Eliminate the stigma surrounding the conversation about mental health and make it a more open conversation.
- **The goals:** Make mental health more of a priority in the athletic programs.
- Help promote, prioritize, and educate others on emotional well-being and normalize help seeking and taking care of yourself.
- **The objectives:** Making and creating healthier environments for student athletes; pre-participation mental health screenings; procedures for identifying and referring student athletes; reducing the suicide rate among student athletes; having more resources; and allowing student athletes to have mental health days without their being punished for missing a practice.

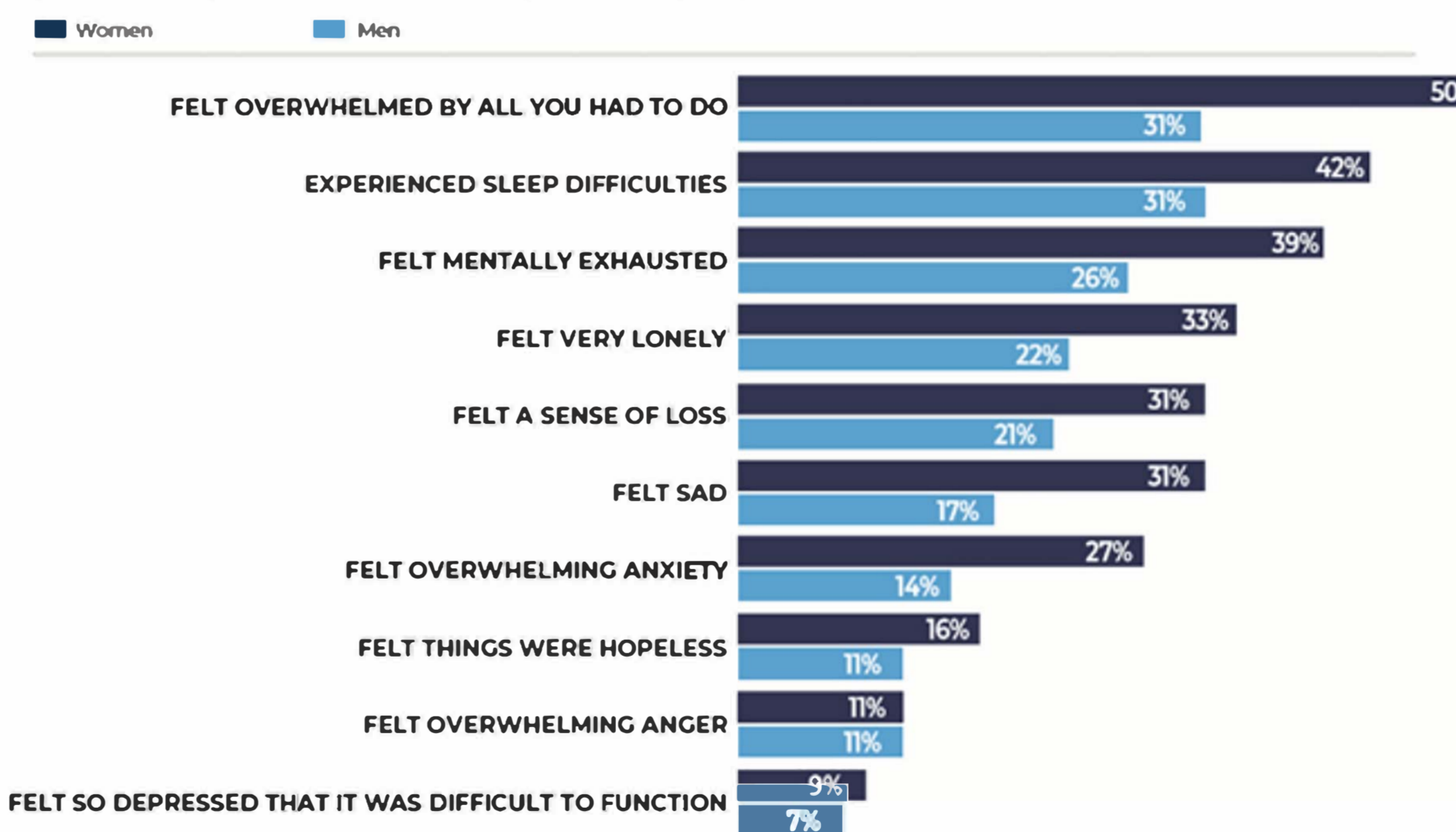
Problem Tree: Student Athlete Mental Health Struggles



There is a stigma surrounding mental health and athletes being viewed as lesser, weak and embarrassing if they reach out for help.

Mental Health Concerns During COVID-19 Pandemic

(Percent of Participants Who Endorsed "Constantly" or "Most Every Day")



Message Development:

- Social media (Instagram & Facebook)
- Podcasts
- Posters
- Panel of athletes
- Questionnaires

Target Audience: college student athletes

Secondary Audience: coaches, family and friends of student athletes

**A target audience member might confide in the secondary audience, so it is important that they are also educated on the issue at hand and can offer how to help*