

Mental Health a priority today for local soccer clubs

By Robert Belardi

The third annual Bell Let's Talk event is set to be held this week, and 12 of Ontario's soccer clubs from Peel, Halton, the GTA and Ottawa are getting involved.

Hosted by Brams United Girl's Soccer Club, registration is available to join the Zoom meeting on Thursday, January 28, at 7 p.m., by emailing victoriamattacchione@gmail.com for details.

In a statement last week, organizers hailed the past year as one of firsts. This week's Zoom will be the first time community clubs have united to bring awareness of mental health impediments that many people currently face today.

During a period of uncertainty, this effort of unity to end the stigma surrounding mental health will not go unnoticed.

According to statistics, one in five athletes continue to struggle through mental health challenges.

People who are also responsible for being role models within their communities, have recently admitted their mental health struggles in the past few years.

Two notable names are DeMar DeRozan, forward for the San Antonio Spurs, and Kevin Love, forward for the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Hosted by moderator Katryna Indeway, the Acting Senior Director of Oakville Soccer Club, the Zoom meeting will feature Dr. Tracy Vaillancourt, Tier 1 Canada research Chair in school-based Mental Health and Violence Prevention from the University of Ottawa as a panelist.

It will also feature Danielle Cyr, Head Coach of the Women's Soccer Program at Mount Saint Vincent University as a panelist and Dominique Bosshart, Game Plan Advisor, Canadian Sport Institute Ontario.

As guests on the Zoom call, Jhanelle Peters, Mental Health Clinician for the Toronto Raptors and Registered Psychotherapist will be joining in, and Krista Celluci, Social Media Manager for Milestone Integrated Marketing will be attending.

Soccer clubs who will be in attendance for this week's virtual presentation will be Brams, Oakville, Richmond Hill, Erin Mills, Ottawa City, Guelph, North Mississauga,

FC Durham Academy, Burlington, Milton Youth, Oshawa Kicks and Brampton Elite Academy.