

FAQ

Movember 'Ahead of the Game' in partnership with the GAA and GPA

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1. What is Movember 'Ahead of the Game'?

Leading health organisation, Movember, the GAA and the GPA announced its partnership in the Movember Ahead of the Game emotional literacy programme in November last year. It is the most evidence-based youth sport mental health literacy programme in the world, having undergone several large, controlled trials. The programme was first developed in The University of Wollongong in Australia. MAOTG programme includes content on how to recognise mental health disorders, what to do and when to get help. The campaign highlights the importance of building mental fitness to deal with the challenges life and sport can throw at anyone. The programme is delivered in GAA clubs all over Ireland and involves two workshops, one for male or female U14/15 teams and one for the parents and coaches of these teams.

Between November 2023 and June 2025, 331 clubs across the 32 counties of Ireland took part in Phase 1 of MAOTG, with at least 1 club in every county receiving a workshop. The initiative engaged 5,789 young male and female members, as well as 4,518 parents and club coaches.

MAOTG has already had a positive influence on participants during Phase 1 & 2:

- 91% having a better understanding of the importance of being mentally fit and healthy.
- 94% said they now know who to talk to and where to go for mental help support for themselves and for others (also 94%).
- 91% said that after the session they felt more assured in recognising the signs of poor mental health in themselves.
- 93% saying they feel more confident recognising the signs of poor mental health in others too.
- 93% of player participants also said they now had confidence to talk with a friend going through a tough time with their mental health after taking part in.



2. Is there a cost to participate in the MAOTG programme?

There is no cost to participate in this ground-breaking new initiative run by the GAA, GPA and Movember.

3. When can the MAOTG programme take place in my club?

The timeline for delivery of the programme is from September 2025 to May 2026. Clubs can apply to receive the programme during these months using the following link:

➤ https://share-eu1.hsforms.com/1NskWuNs_Teer-nFzptpLsg2e30uf

The programme manager, Corey Scahill, will work with clubs to schedule a date and time that best suits the clubs and facilitators after the expression of interest and scheduling details forms have been completed.

Please note that if a club has already participated in MAOTG during Phase 1 or 2, it would be best to apply for a different team in that club to receive the programme as the content is the same.

Workshops can take place on a weeknight or weekend morning/afternoon/evening.

4. What does the delivery of the MAOTG programme in a club look like?

Structure:

The programme consists of two workshops (one workshop for players, one workshop for adults). Both workshops take place on the same day/evening. Two hours in total are needed.

Content	Time
Player workshop	Approx. 1 hour workshop for the players on the selected team (12-18 years old)
Break	15-minute break for facilitators
Adult workshop	Approx. 1 hour workshop for the support network of this team including parents, coaches and volunteers (attendees can be other adults involved in the club and not just connected to the team receiving the programme).

Rules:

- There is a maximum of 25 participants for the player workshop and 25 participants for the adult workshop.
- There is a minimum of 10 participants for the player workshop and 10 participants for the adult workshop. If there are not 10 consent forms for each workshop, the programme cannot proceed in a club.
- No parents or coaches apart from the nominated person should be present during the players session.
- No players should be present during the parent, coaches and volunteers' session.
- The player workshop cannot be mixed gender.
- The host club must ensure that a minimum of 2 club officers are in attendance for the full duration of the MAOTG workshops (both juvenile and adult sessions). The name, officer role and contact details of these officers must be shared with the programme manager before the workshop takes place. If there are any changes to this, the updated details of the 2 supporting club officers must be sent to the programme manager before the workshop takes place.
- The club representative who is arranging the MAOTG workshops must ensure that the club executive and all participants are aware of the workshop details and subject matter which is mental health. The 2 supporting club officers must be comfortable assisting the facilitators and/or participants should any issue arise. At least 1 of the 2 supporting club officers must always be available outside the room in which the workshop is taking place.
- As per protocol, we cannot deliver the MAOTG programme in clubs that have been affected by a suicide or attempted suicide in the past 6 months. Please let me know ASAP if anyone in your club community has been affected by a suicide or attempted suicide within the past 6 months. If this is the case, the delivery of the MAOTG programme will need to be postponed to a later date in your club.

5. What facilities are required to host the MAOTG programme?

A room/space that can accommodate up to 25 people with access to electrical sockets and an area to project a presentation.

All facilitators will be equipped with a laptop and projector in order to run the programme so all clubs will need to do is provide the facilities and participants.

A nominated club officer (more details below) must be present for the young person workshop. This person must sit outside the door of the workshop and be available if needed by the facilitators.

6. Who will be delivering the MAOTG programme?

The programme consists of 36 facilitators who are past and present inter-county players that deliver the programme in the 32 counties across the country. The names of the inter-county facilitators assigned to each club will be shared with the club contact ahead of a session in a club. Facilitators will communicate directly with the club contact at least 1 week prior to the date the session is scheduled to go ahead.

Here are a few examples of MAOTG facilitators:

- Galway All- Ireland winner Iggy Clarke
- Cork All Ireland Camogie winner Saoirse McCarthy
- Galway All Ireland Football winner Leah Caffrey
- Meath All Ireland Football winner Mary-Kate Lynch
- Antrim Hurler Paddy Burke
- Roscommon Footballer Ciarán Murtagh
- Dublin Footballer Killian O’Gara
- Cavan Footballer Liam Brady
- Derry Footballer Anton Tohill

All facilitators have received training on the MAOTG programme and also have the following qualifications:

- Mental Health First Aid
- GAA Safeguarding
- Vetting
- HSE course “Let’s Talk About Suicide”

7. Who is the MAOTG programme delivered to?

All participants must be over the age of 12 and under the age of 18. We are aiming to deliver the Ahead of the Game programme to 12–18-year-old boys’ or girls’ teams of any code in clubs. An U14/15 team is our current recommendation for the first workshop in a club.

Parents, coaches and other club volunteers are invited to attend the adult workshops.

Participants in each session should be members of the same squad. There can be flexibility around this if necessary to ensure enough participants. Keeping participants in the player workshop as close in age together as possible should be a priority.

The player workshop should not be mixed gender e.g., either all girls or all boys per workshop. This is not relevant for the adult workshop, this can be mixed, and any age range is permitted.

8. Can more than one team in a club receive the programme?

Yes. Please fill out a second expression of interest form and communicate to the programme manager that would like to organise a second date for your club.

9. How does a club prepare for the MAOTG programme delivery date?

a. Confirming a date for delivery

The timeline for delivery of the programme is from September to May. Clubs can apply to receive the programme during these months using the following link:

- https://share-eu1.hsforms.com/1NskWuNs_Teer-nFzptpLsg2e30uf

The programme manager will work with clubs to get the scheduling details form filled out with a date, time and team that best suits the clubs and facilitators in that area after the expression of interest form has been completed.

b. Actions required by the club after a date has been confirmed with the programme manager:

- The Club Children's Officer must be aware of the time and date that the session is taking place.
- Clubs must coordinate with coaches and parents to ensure that there is enough participants available to attend. There is a minimum of 10 participants for the player workshop and 10 participants for the adult workshop. If there are not 10 consent forms for each workshop, the programme cannot proceed in a club.
- Consent forms via an online link will be provided to the appointed club coordinator by the programme manager after the date has been confirmed. These consent forms must be shared to all parents/guardians of prospective attending players in advance of the session and must be completed on behalf of any players under 18 participating in the Player session (workshop 1). Parents/coaches/volunteers will be required to complete their own consent form to participate if also attending the adult session (workshop 2). All consent forms must be completed the day before the MAOTG workshop is due to take place. The Facilitators will provide updates on number of forms completed one week before the delivery date and again 3 days before the delivery date.
- The host club must ensure that **a minimum of 2 club officers** attend for the full duration of the MAOTG workshops (both juvenile and adult sessions). The name, officer role and contact details of these officers must be shared with the programme manager before the workshop takes place. If there are any changes to this, the updated details of the 2 supporting club officers must be sent to the programme manager before the workshop takes place.
- The club representative who is arranging the MAOTG workshops must ensure that the club executive and all participants are aware of the workshop details and subject matter which is mental health. The 2 supporting club officers must be comfortable assisting the facilitators and/or participants should any issue arise. At least 1 of the 2 supporting club officers must always be available outside the room in which the workshop is taking place.

10. What happens if a club schedules a date to receive the MAOTG programme but needs to reschedule or cancel?

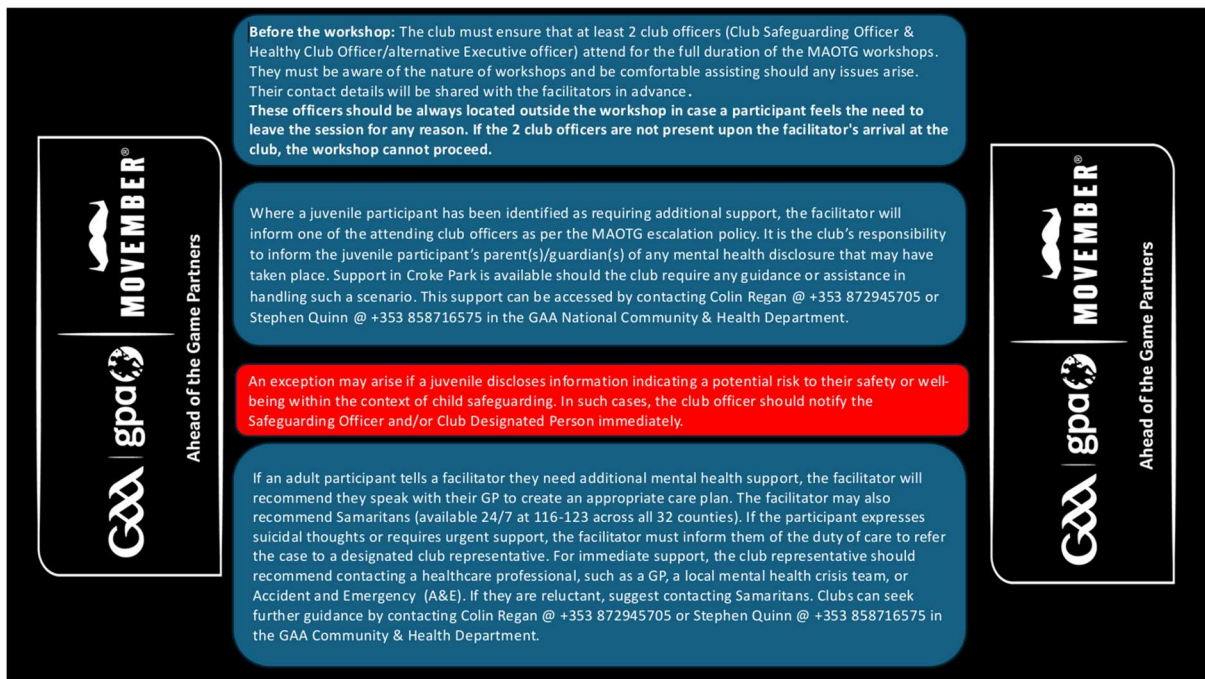
There must be a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 25 in both the player and parent/coach sessions.

A club needs to give at least one week's notice if the session needs to be cancelled. A very large volume of work goes into the scheduling of the MAOTG programme in clubs. The facilitators arrange their schedules to be available to deliver the programme on this date and time in your club. This will also give the programme manager time to offer the date to another club.

If a club is unable to fulfil the scheduled date and provide one week's notice, best efforts will be made to reschedule the club for later in the year.

11. What is the policy regarding critical incidents that could arise during delivery of the MAOTG programme?

We have a policy regarding the escalation procedures that need to be followed should any incidents arise while the programme is being delivered in a club. The full policy will be sent to the club contact upon confirmation of a delivery date in a club. Please view a simplified version of the policy here:



Before the workshop: The club must ensure that at least 2 club officers (Club Safeguarding Officer & Healthy Club Officer/alternative Executive officer) attend for the full duration of the MAOTG workshops. They must be aware of the nature of workshops and be comfortable assisting should any issues arise. Their contact details will be shared with the facilitators in advance. These officers should be always located outside the workshop in case a participant feels the need to leave the session for any reason. If the 2 club officers are not present upon the facilitator's arrival at the club, the workshop cannot proceed.

Where a juvenile participant has been identified as requiring additional support, the facilitator will inform one of the attending club officers as per the MAOTG escalation policy. It is the club's responsibility to inform the juvenile participant's parent(s)/guardian(s) of any mental health disclosure that may have taken place. Support in Croke Park is available should the club require any guidance or assistance in handling such a scenario. This support can be accessed by contacting Colin Regan @ +353 872945705 or Stephen Quinn @ +353 858716575 in the GAA National Community & Health Department.

An exception may arise if a juvenile discloses information indicating a potential risk to their safety or well-being within the context of child safeguarding. In such cases, the club officer should notify the Safeguarding Officer and/or Club Designated Person immediately.

If an adult participant tells a facilitator they need additional mental health support, the facilitator will recommend they speak with their GP to create an appropriate care plan. The facilitator may also recommend Samaritans (available 24/7 at 116-123 across all 32 counties). If the participant expresses suicidal thoughts or requires urgent support, the facilitator must inform them of the duty of care to refer the case to a designated club representative. For immediate support, the club representative should recommend contacting a healthcare professional, such as a GP, a local mental health crisis team, or Accident and Emergency (A&E). If they are reluctant, suggest contacting Samaritans. Clubs can seek further guidance by contacting Colin Regan @ +353 872945705 or Stephen Quinn @ +353 858716575 in the GAA Community & Health Department.

An example of an incident could be a mental health disclosure made by a juvenile to a facilitator and/or club officer attending the workshops. It is important to note the policy has been developed to ensure all clubs officers know their role clearly and have adequate supports should any incident arise.



Potential incidents are rare and exceptional – there have been only 2 such scenarios that have arisen to date out of delivery in 331 clubs - a prevalence of less than 1%. The feedback from clubs on the programme has been overwhelmingly positive and engendering help-seeking is one of the stated aims of MAOTG.

A workshop is achieving one of its goals if a person feels empowered to reach out for help. Clubs must read the full policy carefully ASAP and ensure they have everything in place before the workshop to ensure the policy can be fulfilled if needed. The two attending club officers must also read the policy ahead of the session. It is recommended that clubs download the simplified version of the policy, save it on a mobile phone and send it to the two attending club officers.