

# How one person can make a difference



At this summer's Tokyo Olympics, one athlete — Simone Biles — made a decision and a difference. At the last minute, she withdrew from almost all her events. Why? She explained she wasn't feeling up to the challenge mentally and emotionally. It was a surprise and disappointment for many fans. But Ms. Biles sat on the sidelines cheering for her teammates and did not perform until the last event.

## What we learned

Ms. Biles' decision showed us some important things:

- That athletes are more than muscle, movement and training
- That even the most skilled athletes can be impeded by their mental or emotional state
- That it's difficult and brave to admit mental fragility

## The difference between a sprained ankle and anxiety

In the Olympics, as in other arenas of life, people see and understand a cast, crutches or bandage. But mental and emotional injuries don't show. They're internal. And while they're often just as painful — or even more so — no one can see them.

It's an important lesson: Anxiety, depression or any other mental illness can be just as debilitating as something we can see. It's important to see our heroes admit to being hamstrung — not by a hamstring but by their feelings.

## And the difference is...

Simone Biles made her mental wellbeing just as important as her physical wellbeing. It's really a gift to us all. Her courage is a sign of the times — when we should all feel okay with not being okay.

We should be able to talk about mental health openly no matter where we are — even on the world stage.

**The EAP is administered by Resources For Living, LLC.**

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