Strong Minds  
Day- of Volunteer Training (approximately 90 minutes)

1. Introduction  
   a. Welcome and THANK YOU to all volunteers  
   b. Group Introduction (briefly introduce self and have each volunteer state where they are from and why they are volunteering today).  
   c. Special Olympics: The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community. Special Olympics strives to create a better world by fostering the acceptance and inclusion of all people.  
   d. Working with our athletes  
      i. Review the following handouts with the entire group (print ahead of time):  
         - [link]
         - [link]
   e. Health: Healthy Communities, Healthy Athletes, and Fitness  
   f. Healthy athletes: Healthy Athletes’ influence is evident with more than 135,000 healthcare professionals trained and free health screenings provided to more than 1.6 million athletes

2. Strong Minds Introduction  
   a. Strong Minds is an interactive learning activity focused on developing adaptive coping skills and improving emotional wellness under stress. Stations include: stress and you (using a stress ball), positive messages, deep breathing (using a pinwheel), stretching, strong teamwork, and developing an action plan.  
   b. Strong Minds is focused on emotional wellness/ emotional strength, rather than mental health  
   c. Strong Minds increases athlete awareness of active coping strategies that can be used in competition and in life  
   d. Strong minds is goal oriented and each athlete should leave with tools that they can utilize.

3. Stations  
   a. It is important that each athlete is treated with dignity and respect. It is also important to protect privacy at all times. In addition, each athlete and coach should be greeted with a positive, upbeat attitude and words, helpful mentality, and provide plenty of positive and encouraging statements. Each station has a script available to all volunteers. Here is a brief overview of each station.
Check in (and HAS form)

i. Definition
   1. This station is the gatekeeper for the event. Athletes and coaches are greeted at this intake station and thoroughly explained Strong Minds and the process. Encourage the athletes to complete and answer questions on their own in addition to going through each station without assistance. Since this station’s focus is gathering information, it should be done in a semi-private manner (as best as possible) to avoid any breaches of confidentiality.

ii. Goals
   1. To make the athlete comfortable about going through the Strong Mind process.
   2. To complete the Healthy Athlete Software form (HAS) and provide athlete with all forms needed.

Station 1: Stress and You

i. Definition
   a. This station is designed to introduce an activity based circuit to the athlete.

ii. Goals
   a. Define to the athlete what stress is and what it means to be “stressed out”
   b. To illustrate that everyone feels “stressed out” sometimes. Different people feel “stressed out” at different times. Knowing what causes you stress is important for helping yourself manage it.
   c. To show that feeling “stressed out” impacts your thoughts and your body in ways that can make you feel worse (if you don’t understand what’s happening).
   d. To show that you can help yourself feel better when you’re stressed out.

Station 2: Strong Messaging

i. Definition
   a. Positive Messaging will show the athlete that having pictures, music, and/or words can be motivating and relieve anxiety and stress.

ii. Goals
   a. To show that we can use music, photos and other reminders of what inspires us to feel better when we are under stress
   b. Find which method works best for individual athletes.
   c. To show that putting positive messages into our thoughts can improve our confidence and ability to handle stress.
   d. Provide the athletes with a tool that can be accessed anywhere and kept on them at all times.
Station 3: Strong Breathing
  i. Definition
   a. This station encompasses the use of deep breathing and its impact on stress relief.
  ii. Goals
   a. To show that the way we breathe impacts how calm or nervous we may feel. Breathing slowly and deeply and from the stomach has a self-calming effect.
   b. To demonstrate that breathing is a powerful and portable tool that we can use anytime, anywhere to help ourselves feel better when we are nervous or stressed.

Station 4: Strong Stretching
  i. Definition
   a. This station will introduce the use of physical activity to cope with stress in all aspects of life (before, during, and after). Important to know athlete limitations.
  ii. Goals
   a. To show that we hold tension and stress in our bodies and that we can release that tension by doing some simple stretches.
   b. To link the feelings of tightness in our bodies to the emotional feelings of being stressed, nervous or anxious.
   c. To illustrate that we can use our bodies to help our minds feel better.

Station 5: Strong Teamwork
  i. Definition
   a. This station allows for the athlete to express and understand their support team and how they can be a part of reducing stress of others by being there as teammates and friends.
  ii. Goals
   a. To emphasize that social support (on both the receiving and the giving end) is good for our health. Kindness has health benefits and makes the world a less stressful place.
   b. To remind athletes that we can all use Strong Minds strategies to win and lose gracefully.
   c. Have athletes leave station with tools to help others in stressful situations.
Strong Minds Plan
i. Definition
   a. The athlete should be greeted in a very positive upbeat manner. This station allows for feedback and processing with each athlete.

ii. Goals
   a. To review the stations/different tools for managing stress and nervous feelings with the athlete using the “Strategies” worksheet
   b. To encourage the athlete to choose which stations they liked/found useful by indicating their “likes” and “dislikes” on the worksheet
   c. To remind the athlete that the tools they’ve learned about in the Strong Minds stations can be used before a competition, as well as in real-life
   d. To complete the HAS form.
   e. To share resources with the athletes and encourage them to share those with their caregivers, friends and coaches
   f. To find out how we can better serve our athletes stress and anxiety issues by receiving feedback for the program.

4. Emergency response
   a. **WE DO NOT DIAGNOSE OR TREAT ATHLETES DURING EVENTS**
   b. Clinical Director is responsible for any emergency response and action during event.
   c. If athlete reports mental health concerns (delusions, harm to others, harm to self, etc.)
      i. Immediately report to Clinical Director before athlete leaves area
      ii. CD will provide local resources to Coach and Athlete
      iii. CD will call or instruct delegate to call 911 (or emergency number in your region) if crisis is imminent.
   d. If Volunteer reports unusual behavior from Athlete (ex. Flinching when close to athlete, noticing cuts, bruises, and/or discussing rough play).
      i. Immediately report to Clinical Director
      ii. Clinical Director will obtain contact information of patient (including phone number, home location). If suspected abuse CD and volunteer will call Adult Protective Services in that athlete’s region.
      iii. No follow up needed after report
   e. If Medical Emergency call 911 (or emergency number in your region.)
5. **Communication**
   a. Clinical Director is point person for everything. Any questions/breaks/assignments will come from the CD only (unless otherwise delegated or shared)
   b. Sharing of personal information (social media, contact info, etc.) is prohibited and all information both personal and information given by an athlete or coach is confidential.

6. **Practice**
   a. Have volunteers partner up and role play each station (use a timer at 4 min per station)

7. **Assign**
   a. Ask volunteers to choose a station
   b. If unable to choose, then assign
   c. Rotate throughout the day to accommodate breaks
   d. Briefly discuss plan to accommodate waiting/full stations (to avoid overcrowding and minimize downtime.

8. **Today’s schedule**
   a. Include types of sports being played today
   b. Opening and closing (all days)
   c. How breaks will be conducted
   d. Locations of restrooms
   e. Find out if anyone has scheduling issues

9. **Questions and answers**
10. **Have Fun!**