

SCOPE OF THE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE OF CLINICAL SPORT PSYCHOLOGY

Executive Summary, February 2024

Recent years have brought about increased attention and concern by shareholders in elite sport programs about having resources available to address a wide variety of psychological issues among athletes. This paper outlines several key points about the field of clinical sport psychology (CSP) and better defines the scope of training, the activities of clinical practice, competencies specific to the sport context, and relevant ethical and legal codes for LMHPs practicing in this area. Arming professionals with the ability to outline the scope of practice of specifically trained and experienced clinical sport psychology LMHPs is imperative to maintain a high standard of service delivery to athletes and assure that qualified individuals are filling the vacancies of jobs within sport, which have been created by recent demand.

The following is a summary of the main points of a paper distributed to the membership of CCSPA:

Licensed Mental Health Professionals (LMHPs) with experience and training in clinical sport psychology deliver services across a broad spectrum of care.

- On one end of the spectrum is mental health therapy to remediate clinical distress from psychiatric disorders and on the other lies mental skill building activities geared toward helping athletes thrive and optimize athletic performance.
- CSP LMHP's are trained to intervene with individuals, teams, organizations and communities at any point along the spectrum of care.

LMHPs in this field should have had proper graduate-level classroom and supervised clinical training from an LMHP experienced with sport populations.

- Several differences between general and athletic populations exist in the areas of diagnosis, intervention/treatment planning, consultation, ethics, and multicultural considerations. LMHPs in this field are also adroit at:
 - knowing the limitations of their experience and training, and seek consultation and/or supervision from other clinical sport psychology professionals
 - seeking to maintain their competence through mentorship, and attending continuing education opportunities about the latest in clinical and performance enhancement interventions, as well as ongoing ethical considerations with sport populations.
 - making appropriate referrals to qualified professionals as needed.

Competent CSP clinicians recognize the culture of sport, have experience with, and continually exhibit, cultural humility in challenging their own biases.

- They respond to the diverse needs of the varied identities of the athletes, coaches, and administrators with whom they work.
- They promote a culture of embracing differences of individuals with intersecting identities within their organizations and advocate for a healthier space for all in sport systems.

LMHPs in this field should seek to align with best practices/standards of care which have been outlined by relevant professional organizations, like the APA and the NCAA.

- These guidelines detail an LMHPs involvement with sport organizations at more than the individual level (teams, departments/organizations, and communities) and includes prevention, mental health screening, and advocacy activities.

Competent clinical sport psychology LMHPs have a knowledge of ethical codes, and federal and state/provincial laws.

- CSP LMHPs conduct their work with individuals, teams and organizations informed by the highest standards.
 - Ethics and laws will inform the LMHP how clinical policy is created within sport organizations.
 - Confidentiality and the legal right to privacy are important provisions for competent LMHPs in CSP
 - CSP LMHPs should have specific training to develop the competencies to negotiate ethical issues in sport context with special consideration, nuance, and consultation.