WILLIAM CROSSEN

PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE IN SPORT AND EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY

PORTFOLIO

A portfolio submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Liverpool John Moores University for the degree of Professional Doctorate in Health Psychology

Submission for Examination: March 2021

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Abstract

With the recent development in the field of sport psychology professional training, the value of the professional doctorate has become increasingly apparent due to its ability in allowing neophyte practitioners to develop competence required of practitioner psychologists, and translate knowledge in research to the workplace. The present portfolio contains a blend of research and practice components, complimented by significant reflective practice content, to demonstrate the author's competency in ethics and professional standards, consultancy, research and teaching and training, whilst demonstrating aspects of originality and the generation of new knowledge for the field. The portfolio commences with the author's reflective accounts across key professional standards, consultancy, research, and dissemination experiences, identifying the meaningful learning experiences that most developed the author both personally and professionally. Following this are three consultancy case studies, which provide an in-depth account of the staged-process the author underwent in the creation, development, and monitoring of an intervention(s) when working with golf, running, and football athletes. Within this, ongoing critical analysis and reflective practice allowed the author to develop an effective, congruent philosophy of practice in humanism and holism, facilitating a more authentic sense of self within their practitioner identity.

The portfolio then explores the teaching and training elements of the professional doctorate, including the negotiation of the environment and key stakeholders within the process, the construction of an applied, active learning environment for the teaching of sport psychology, and the key pedagogical frameworks and taxonomies that underpinned the approach. Attention then switches to the research elements of the portfolio, with the systematic review and two empirical papers attempting to bridge the gap between research and practice within the topic of Identity in disability sport, including investigation of the psychological well-being experiences of stakeholders working in Para-Football and the development of a psychological

well-being culture. Within this, key ontological and epistemological paradigms enabled the author to navigate a coherent and congruent practitioner–researcher identity. Ultimately, the reflective practice commentary (meta-reflection) provides a summary of the process, with the professional doctorate providing the candidate with an authentic connection between their work and a broader transcendent life purpose beyond the self (Bailey & Madden, 2016).

Declaration

I can confirm that there are no known conflicts of interest associated with the submission and publication of the present professional doctorate portfolio.

I can also confirm that no portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of any application for another degree or qualification of any type, at Liverpool John Moores or any other university or other institute of learning.

Acknowledgements

The path toward this portfolio being submitted has been circuitous, yet it is the people who have supported me along the way that has made this journey so much more meaningful.

Firstly, I have been tremendously fortunate to have a supervisor in Dr. Martin Eubank, who over the past 7 years, has shown me what a renowned, genuine sport psychologist and person looks like. It is only through your patience and guidance that I have been able to grow and develop into the practitioner you see today. To Dr. David Tod, you have taught me how to be perfectly at ease with silence, which more often than not, is so much more powerful. Your knowledge and expertise in truly understanding an individual is something I will never forget. I would also like to thank all my LJMU professional doctorate peers and other internal and external staff, who along the way have assisted me through my most challenging times.

Holly White, you challenge me each and every day and make me a better person. You have supported, guided, and stuck with me, which has seen me reach for things I never thought I could. I look forward to the future and what we can continue to achieve together.

Finally, Bernard and Christine Crossen, mum and dad, your unconditional love and support holds no bounds, and it is this that has helped me believe in myself and to be whatever I wish to be. Whenever I turn around I know you are going to be there driving me on. This portfolio belongs to you as much as it does to me.

Professional Doctorate in Sport and Exercise Psycholog

Practice Logbook

Please record all your Consultancy, Research, Dissemination and Professional Standards (incl. CPD) activity below

Professional Standards (incl. CPD)					
Client details	**Location**	**Date(s)**	**Nature of the activity**	**Contact Hours**	**Placement Host details (if applicable)**
Dr. Brian Hemmings	Home Address and Rockliffe Hall Golf Club	01-01-18 --- 07-01-18	Golf Psychology Coaching Enrolled in Brian Hemmings PGA accredited golf psychology coaching course. This involved working with players with varying handicaps and engaging in activities and assessment to further understanding of the use and implementation of sport psychology in golf.	10 Hours approx.	Rockliffe Hall Golf Club, Hurworth-on-Tees, Darlington, DL2 2DU
Liverpool John Moores University	Liverpool John Moores University	18-01-18	Enrolment and Induction to Professional Doctorate Introduction to the course, relating to supervision, assessments, consultancy and research. Given an outline and understanding of what competencies need to be displayed across the Key Roles and assessment submissions.	8 Hours	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St, Liverpool, L3 5AF
Various	Home Address	19-01-18	E-mail/Networking with previous contacts	45 Minutes	Various

			Involving both athletes and coaches: Jamie Barker (Team GB Sports Psychologist) Chris Bradley (MFC Sport Psychologist) Cameron Boyek (Team GB 1500m athlete) Mike Greener (England Golf County Support Officer) Anthony Verity (Darlington FC Coach) Danny Holmes (SAFC Sport Psychologist) The above then helped in facilitating and setting up meetings to further my development.		
Jamie Barker: Team GB Paralympic Football Sport Psychologist (Cerebral Palsy)	Home Address	30-02-18 --- 04-03-18	Drafted up and completed cover letter and CV tailored to the vacancy to work with the England Power Chair Squad. This involved sending it to two referees to double check quality and spoke with supervisor (Martin Eubank) to ensure I was covering the right areas within cover letter. Sent off to Jamie Barker on 4th May.	7 Hours 45 Minutes	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT
MCFC Head of Sport Psychology Vacancy	Home Address	07-03-18 --- 14-03-18	Drafted up and completed cover letter and CV tailored to the vacancy to work with the MCFC Academy. Sent off to MCFC on 14th May.	5 Hours	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT
Liverpool John Moores University	Liverpool John Moores	15-03-18	**Prof. Doc** Discussion with peers and supervisor surrounding early practitioner	6 hours	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St, Liverpool,

			experiences with insights from one another as to how they may/may have not handled situations. Key in understanding how to always remain ethically clear, trusting your competency as a practitioner, and different client-encounters and how to deal most effectively with them. Also included discussion of the importance of reflection during our Prof. Doc and how to fit in each key refection with relevant theories/cycles (i.e. Gibbs).		L3 5AF
Liverpool John Moores University	Liverpool John Moores	12-04-18 & 26-04-18	**Prof. Doc** This focused more on collective and individual philosophical approaches and my understanding. These were then related to assessment learning outcomes (1 & 2). Second session focused more on consultancy practice and its associated ethics. Meeting with external examiner for reflection on current progress and discoveries in early stages of Prof. Doc.	11 hours	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St, Liverpool, L3 5AF
Anthony Quinn – 'Inspiring Alliance': Advising senior	Hash Coffee House, Darlington	01-05-2018	Discussion of the use of psychology in business. Ant offered business perspective on how he dealt with client/employee engagement. Highlighted the	1 Hour 30 Minutes	Hash Bar and Kitchen, 14 Coniscliffe Rd, Darlington, DL3 8HN

business people on ethical influence, high performance and pragmatic employee engagement			importance of the 'customer journey' and having a refined product from start to finish. Additionally, the significance of listening to what the client wants and putting the onus on them. Also discussed branding and how to put across the best representation of myself.		
Liverpool John Moores University	Liverpool John Moores	10-05-18	**Prof. Doc** Centre for Entrepreneurship chat: Discussion around standards of professional practice and the potential ethical issues and dilemmas I may encounter. Emphasis placed on having the professional and legal material and knowledge before initiating consultancy with a client, as this is not only more professional but displays a more effective and rounded service.	6 hours	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St, Liverpool, L3 5AF
Howdens Insurance Group	Home Address	11-05-18	Got Professional Indemnity Insurance Coverage with Howdens	30 Minutes	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT
Liverpool John Moores University	Liverpool John Moores	24-05-18	**Prof. Doc** Day centred around consultancy experiences (Key Role 2) within sports psychology. This was relevant to my 'Consultancy Case Study' assignments,	6 hours	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St, Liverpool, L3 5AF

			and how the process of the consultancy (including ‘intake’; ‘needs analysis’; and ‘case formulation’) were central to establishing and then developing my relationship with the client. This incorporated the use of philosophies, core competencies and how they fit in with the assignments also.		
Harry Rowbotham – ‘Productive Plus’: Corporate fitness & health.	Café Nero Coffee House, Darlington	06-06-18	Discussion of the use of psychology and fitness in business. Harry offered experience and insight into how fitness and well-being can be implemented into corporate settings. This provided the opportunity to discuss the provision of my services and how to accurately market myself, ‘how to get paid’, alongside retaining clients but also expanding. Also discussed the nature of BNI (networking) and how attending sessions may not only allow for networking with prospective clients, but also how to effectively deliver under pressure and time constraints. This will give me experience needed relating to both business and university projects.	2 Hours	N/A
Liverpool John Moores University	Liverpool John Moores	28-06-18	**Prof. Doc** Discussion of relevant conferences my peers and supervisors had attended. Outlined to me the significance of	6 hours	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St, Liverpool, L3 5AF

			beginning to attend more workshops and conferences around the country (although expensive) as they will contribute highly effectively to my CPD and experiences going forward both in consultancy and research. Following this, group discussion with other cohort (Danny Ransom, Nick Wadsworth, Robbie Anderson etc.) and Mark Nesti about applied experiences and scenarios they had encountered, as they were 6 months further ahead in their Prof. Doc. Qualification.		
Liverpool John Moores University	Liverpool John Moores	27-09-18	**Prof. Doc** Prof. Doc session with cohort above around collective practitioner experiences and dilemmas encountered. Morning session covered shared reflective practice logs and discussion of techniques and professional philosophies in different case studies. This underlined the need to be effective in your reflections through the use of appropriate theoretical research, so that you are able to use these experiences to enhance/improve your work and competencies moving forward.	6 hours	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St, Liverpool, L3 5AF

			The afternoon session covered the 'Systematic Review' assignment (Key Role 3) and the protocol of completing it. This involved the common issues encountered when completing this assignment, and how-to best approach each section of your research from start-finish.		
Dr. Josephine Perry – 'Performance in Mind'	Home address - phone call chat	02-10-18	After reading Dr. Perry's case study article on her experiences in sport psychology consultancy, I got in touch to discuss my current experiences and dilemmas I am facing. The phone call centred around my experiences of 'rejection' when applying for job vacancies/roles and subsequent feelings of incompetence/self-doubt. This then transitioned into what I was currently doing with my Golf Consultancy business and how to convert those 'interested' into 'clients' – this also looked around branding myself and setting up an effective working relationship so that fees, guidelines etc. are managed a lot easier and more readily from the outset.	45 Minutes	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington County Durham DL2 1QT
Performance Psychology Conference:	Staffordshire University	03-10-18	Conference around the use/role of performance psychology in different environments.	8 Hours	College Rd, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 2DE

Dr Kate Hays Dr. Jeff Breckon Dr. Tim Pitt			The conference opened with Dr. Kate Hays (Head of EIS) giving her experiences of how psychologists within the Olympic/Paralympic set-up create pressurised environments to best replicate competition scenarios. An emphasis was placed on 'Project Thrive' and the ability of the athlete to thrive in pressure situations and learning to 'Fail Smartly'. Also added that there has been a 70% increase of psych. team from 2015-2017. Motivational Interviewing workshop: How to form a relationship with the client and 'actually listen' to what they say through the power of silence etc. Highly rewarding and revealing workshop of how I currently interact with clients and where I need to go to. Understanding my practitioner profile and where my strengths and weaknesses lie within my philosophy/approach. This significantly impacts my interactions with athletes/clients and being more aware of them in different scenarios/environments will enhance my competency.		

Steve Eaton (Ex Royal Marine) Dr. Paul McCarthy			Managing trauma in high performance. How individuals react/adapt to trauma in different ways and the role of 'fight or flight'. Experiences of consultancy work and how he manages constant dilemmas/issues. This included the content and process of sessions; establishing common ground; what do the clients need; and assumptions of what consultancy involves.		
Liverpool John Moores University	Liverpool John Moores	11-10-18	**Prof. Doc** Focus on 'Teaching and Training case study' assignment (Key Role 4): Laura presented her work within an organisation around imagery and PETTLEP material and how this was incorporated within an elite student athlete population to be most effective. Lydia then presented her 'pressure training' work that had been done within tennis athletes – this involved the understanding of 'playing to win' vs. 'playing to lose' initiative and how performers are able to use pressure to thrive in difficult circumstances. Martin Eubank then incorporated this work into the assignment and how the work done needs to be understood as to whether it is 'teacher-centred,	6 hours	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St, Liverpool, L3 5AF

			'learner-centred' or 'co-operative learning', and the key criteria for each of these.		
Paul Hughes – Head of performance psychology and culture at British Shooting	BPS offices London	06-11-18	Paul's talk focused on his early experiences as a practitioner within the field of elite sport and British Shooting. This included early ethical and practice-based encounters and how he negotiated through them based on core principles both to him and the organisation. His work then evolved to more transition-based work with the athletes he worked with being from varying ages, levels and backgrounds and transitioning in/out of sport and up/down levels. Fundamentally, his key 'intentions' underlined all the work he did alongside the lived values of the individual and his 'stop', 'start', 'continue' initiatives.	2 Hours 30 Minutes	Storbritannien, 30 Tabernacle St, London, EC2A 4UE
Liverpool John Moores University	Liverpool John Moores	15-11-18	**Prof. Doc** 'Psychological challenges for physical activity uptake' session with Dr. Laura Thomas: Discussion of developing a framework for designing physical activity interventions. Looking at behaviour change in critical populations through the use of physical activity.	6 hours	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St, Liverpool, L3 5AF

			‘Applying exercise psychology in practice’ session with Dr. Paula Watson: Looking at the processes involved in a physical activity intervention and how to evaluate whether it has been successful or not.		
Liverpool John Moores University	Liverpool John Moores	29-11-18	**<u>Prof. Doc</u>** Counselling session of 1-1 relationship between ex footballer and practitioner and the dilemmas and difficulties experienced during their 16-year work. This included how the consultancy was initiated and the key areas worked on during their relationship including identity, injury, transition and retirement. Very good insight into a practitioner’s work within an elite sporting environment.	6 hours	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St, Liverpool, L3 5AF
Liverpool John Moores University	Liverpool John Moores	13-12-18	**<u>Prof. Doc</u>** Morning session: Discussion of ongoing practitioner work and experiences. (Key Role 2 and 4). Reflections from these experiences were discussed in a group context to offer alternative approaches, philosophies and interventions. This informed my understanding of how to approach future situations in a more holistic manner. Afternoon session: Based around extension of physical activity uptake in previous session. This involved	6 hours	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St, Liverpool, L3 5AF

			education around how to implement a strategy to increase uptake of physical activity in lower SES and mental health groups.		
Liverpool John Moores University	Liverpool John Moores	31-01-19	**Prof. Doc** Morning session: Discussion of ongoing practitioner work and experiences with all Cohorts (including advice for the new cohort on my experiences during the Prof. Doc.). Afternoon session: This involved a group discussion of philosophies within our practice and how different trainee practitioners advocate and employ different approaches/methods based on their philosophical underpinnings. Also, the 3 I's course was mentioned that is relevant to our 'Teaching and Training' module.	6 hours	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St, Liverpool, L3 5AF
Liverpool John Moores University	Liverpool John Moores	28-02-19	**Prof. Doc** Morning session: Group discussion of consultancy case studies and the underpinning philosophies used alongside the interventions conducted by the practitioners. This incorporated the various ethical/moral dilemmas practitioners have faced and how they have overcame them/ reflected back on them.	6 hours	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St, Liverpool, L3 5AF

			Afternoon session: This mainly focused on reflection and in particular meta-reflection and the relevant literature. This included how we as practitioners are able to objectively reflect on an experience and then be able to reflect on that reflection. This will assist in developing us as practitioners, if we are able to relate back to practical/applied experiences and highlight where improvements can be made. Additionally, the session involved ‘Coherence’ discussion by David Tod, and how our ‘paradigm’, ‘orientation’, ‘method’, ‘goal’, and ‘findings’ are what fundamentally informs our research and what we should look to explore/develop.		
BNI - Enterprise	Judges Country House Hotel	07-03-19	After speaking with Anthony Quinn (Inspiring Alliance) about my golf consultancy business, he recommended I attend a BNI meeting as his guest. This BNI meeting involved 70 or so local businesses ranging from marketing to trade work, consultancy to insurance firms. Whilst attending the conference I networked with several businesses (both commercial and self-employed), whereby I was able to hand out and receive business cards and referrals in order to generate a client stream.	3 Hours	

			However, the most significant part of the conference was the 60 second 'elevator pitch' that I had to stand and deliver about my business, that needed to be succinct, straight to the point and memorable. My speech involved the introduction of myself and my business, how I would be able to benefit others, but focused primarily on grabbing attention through 'how much is 4 hours on the golf course worth to you?' and being able to appeal to the audience. Following this, I had several people come and speak to me following the conference and mentioned that they would like the opportunity to work with me and my business as a client/partner as they found the idea of psychology within golf and sport after a stressful working week, of paramount value. Therefore, moving forward it has shown me the importance of being able to network and engage the audience immediately so that I am then able to turn the audience into potential clients.		
Blackburn Rovers FC	Blackburn Rovers Academy	28-03-19	<u>Blackburn Rovers Interview</u> For the interview at hand, I was required to provide a 10-minute presentation regarding my 'philosophy	2 Hours	Blackburn Rovers Football Club Academy, Brockhall Village, Old Langho,

			of practice'; 'How I am able to impact performance'; and 'examples of when I have implemented my approach'. This concise presentation required me to provide a succinct insight of how I approach my work, and greatly developed my understanding regarding my professional philosophy. Through understanding my construalist/pragmatic approach, it informed the staff what factors are crucial to me when working within an organisation and has significantly enhanced my awareness in this area moving forward. A 45-minute (approx.) discussion followed, whereby the BRFC staff provided scenario, theoretical approach, and broader-life based questions, to further understand myself as both a neophyte practitioner and as an individual separate from this. This provided a significant learning curve into what/when staff in these environments require from myself as a sports psychologist and how I look/am able to influence performance and wellbeing in my work.		Blackburn, Lancashire, BB6 8BA
Liverpool John Moores University	Liverpool John Moores	28-03-19	**Prof. Doc** Morning Session: Unavailable (as at Blackburn Rovers Interview)	2 Hours 30 Minutes	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St, Liverpool,

			Afternoon Session: Motivational Interviewing session with Dr. Jeff Breckon around skills required/involved within MI. This expanded into grouped tasks involving scenarios and how we as neophyte practitioners would respond in the most effective way.		L3 5AF
Dr. Martin Eubank	Home Address	02-04-19	Discussion of BRFC Interview and subsequent feedback Having discussed my interview and subsequent feedback with several of my peers, I spoke with Martin around the areas to improve, as I had only been told to 'gain a broader range of experience'. Martin highlighted that the successful candidate would have likely had experience better suited to Blackburn and the ethos they were instilling. Additionally, Martin reassured that the feedback was mostly positive, but to enquire about possible further comments from Blackburn so that I know where to improve/develop moving forward in interviewing, other than developing my experience.	1 Hour	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT
DSEP Northern Applied Hub	Leeds Beckett University	05-04-19	The DSEP conference began by centring around Dr. Hugh Gilmore (Olympic Powerlifting Sports Psychologist) experiences throughout his trainee years as a sports	5 Hours	Jubilee Room, James Graham, Headingley Campus, Leeds, LS6 3QU

			psychologist, ranging from ethical dilemmas to work within elite sport. The second area of the conference focused on ethical scenarios within sport psychology practice. This included group discussion around areas such as client contracting, potential grey areas, and doping matters. The second Keynote speaker, Dr. Nanaki Chadha, presented her REBT research framework and its application within her work with athletes. I personally got a lot from this session, with its relation into golf furthering my understanding of how changing irrational beliefs into rational thought patterns can help enhance understanding and performance within athletes.		
Nanaki Chadha (Sport & Performance Psychologist, Staffordshire University)	Liverpool John Moores University (Phone Call)	12-04-19	Following the conference at Leeds, I wanted to gain an understanding of how REBT may relate into my current consultancy within golf. During the phone call, I was made aware that I was currently already applying several REBT concepts (e.g. appraisal of irrational thought processes) within my own work. However, Dr. Nanaki explained that REBT placed more emphasis on the understanding of the	30 minutes	Liverpool John Moores university, School of Health, Tithebarn St, Merseyside, Liverpool L2 2ER

			athlete's core beliefs and how these affect their emotions, with a focus on education, disputation and exposure stages whereby the client is able to understand the concept of REBT, what it looks to explore and how it is then applied. Therefore, moving forward I look to apply REBT concepts within my consultancy, through engaging in in relevant REBT CPD courses and other platforms.		
Liverpool John Moores university – Doctoral Academy Conference 2019	Maritime Museum, Royal Albert Dock, Liverpool	09-05-19	The event was an opportunity to showcase the latest research from LJMU's PhD and Prof Doc. students, and researchers to present their work through various formats. Of interest was Dr. Rebecca Lawthorn's research exploring the concept of identity in those with a disability, whereby I was able to apply several themes present within her research to my own examining identity within disabled sport. The shift of individual to collective resilience and the building of a 'toolkit' from wider issues allowed me to critically evaluate the research I was currently conducting and involved a follow-up discussion after the conference with Dr. Lawthorn around her research process, ideas and approach.	8 Hours	Maritime Museum, Royal Albert Dock, Liverpool, L3 FAQ

			Following this, were '3-minute thesis presentations', where students and practitioners discussed in 3 minutes their project aims, findings and dissemination. Additionally, the day included other researchers discussing their journeys through their practitioner experiences and the encounters they have had and what they learned from them.		
LJMU Power of Sport conference	Redmonds Building, Liverpool John Moores university	10-05-19	1st keynote speaker: Hannah Cockroft (MBE) – 5-time Paralympian The conference began with Hannah Cockroft discussing her experiences within her Paralympic career, and how early exclusion out of sport and setbacks faced in early life had exposed her to the difficulties that would then inform and benefit her in later life. This then transitioned onto the various obstacles she negotiated throughout her youth and professional career both on and off the track, and related very closely to the research I am conducting with the Paralympic footballers within my empirical paper. 2nd Keynote speaker: "The impact of social architects and formal coach education within the FA"		Redmonds Building, Brownlow Hill, Liverpool, L3 5UG

			Presentation of the creation and development of formal coach education and how different philosophies such as constructivism underpinned the research, and the extrapolation of data in the field. 3rd Keynote speaker: "Coach perceptions of the FA's England DNA initiative within grassroots football" How the launch of EDNA has informed and given insight into the coaching philosophies evident within English grassroots football, and the significance of creating an identity within coaching. 4th Keynote speaker: "Elite performance training – coaching pillars" (Neil Parsley) The main pillars behind working and implementing your approach within elite sport (British Taekwondo/Wrestling; England Rugby, Manchester City etc.). The significance of: 'Innovation'; 'Knowledge'; 'Growth Mindset'; 'Organisation'; 'Challenge/Enthusiasm'; 'Humility'; 'Communication'; 'Trust'.		
Steve Ingham	Home Address	28-05-19	The webinar consisted of Steve providing his knowledge and	1 Hour	47 Teesway Neasham

(Supporting Champions - Webinar)			perspective on 'Interviewing for performance jobs'. This largely was formed of understanding how interviews work, so I am able to perform in them. It focused on preparation before the interview, performing in the interview and also reflection upon interviews as much/frequently as possible, so that I have a greater knowledge of how they work moving forward into the next one. During the interview, interviewers are often trying to find the limit of my knowledge and therefore will keep asking me relevant questions around the area. Steve highlighted key considerations within this, including: 'Be patient but persistent', 'modest but motivated', and 'open-minded but discerning'. By displaying these characteristics, the employer/interviewer would be shown my talent/expertise, but also where I would be able to be moulded to suit the job more effectively.		Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT
		30-05-19	Following the Webinar, I decided to attend a follow-up that was structured around questions, answers and presenting to an audience. Steve focused upon the nature of interviews as being an exposure to certain weak-	1 Hour 30 Minutes	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			spots and areas you could have answered better. He stated that questions will generally be around: qualifications, experience/roles, application, skills, suitability, working with others, and YOU. – Ultimately, they want to see if they are able to trust me and that I have the potential to develop (growth-mindset, resilience, drive etc.) General questions will be: ‘How have you improved performance?’; ‘What are your strengths/weaknesses?’; ‘Impossible questions’ etc. – I need to show I have experience and demonstrate knowledge in these areas, but also show self-awareness of where I can improve (e.g. weaknesses). All in all, the 2 webinars have added to my own previous interview experiences to best prepare me to move forward, not only in interviews but also in other practical areas.		
Tom Young – Cognite (Tommy Fleetwood, Belgium national team etc. Sports Psych)	Liverpool John Moores University (phone call)	21-06-19	Having missed the Prof. Doc session with Tom appearing as a guest speaker, I felt it crucial to have a chat about his experiences since we had last met during my MSc. The conversation focused around Tom’s consultancy Inc. work with Tommy Fleetwood; early	1 Hour	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St Liverpool, L3 5AF

			practitioner experiences/setbacks; and future work prospects/collaborations. I had mentioned about my applied work within golf and wanted to gain some knowledge/advice from Tom, with him having been in my position and likely experienced a lot of my dilemmas and difficulties. We discussed how he distinguishes technical and mental work with Tommy, with this being an area that I have had a great deal of anxiety and discomfort in separating when working with golfers. Tom highlighted his ability to be self-aware and playing to your strengths including not getting involved in the technical work, as 'they are the expert, they are the golfer, they tell me', they have enough support with technical work so Tom quickly understood the majority of his work would be/is giving the player someone to talk to outside of the technical coaching pros' – 'These golfers have everyone else analysing them, why do I need to?'. Following our in-depth discussion around consultancy and how he negotiated his way through, we then discuss potential opportunities moving forward for myself, as Tom and I had		

			very similar experiences in that we both work in golf, both had similar experiences at Everton Football Club, and both followed similar practitioner philosophies. This discussion involved Tom stating that he had a great deal of work on his plate re. Tommy and Belgium, and his other website clients, so he was therefore unable to work with every client/organisation that had contacted him and asked. Therefore, moving forward Tom mentioned about the possibility of myself working alongside him and having the flexibility to work with and establish effective relationships with clients/organisations that he was unable to (Fleetwood Town, Sheffield Wednesday etc.), and therefore we agreed that we would keep in contact and should any opportunities arise, I would be made aware.		
Reflective and Reflexive practice research and application Conference – Dr. Andy Miles & Professor	Liverpool John Moores University	21-06-19	Having previously identified my need to be more reflective with my experiences, and using them to inform my knowledge and practice moving forward, the conference gave me a great opportunity to further my understanding of how effective reflective practice and being proactive with my experiences can enhance myself both as a practitioner and as an individual.	5 Hours 30 Minutes	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St Liverpool, L3 5AF

Brendan Cropley			The conference began by Andy and Brendan attempting to get us to understand ‘what are the most significant factors impacting our research/practice?’. Personally, mine had focused around my setbacks, my ability to learn from others/experiences, my expertise and my philosophy and accompanying bias that comes with it. This incorporated our skills and knowledge that impact our work, with often the knowledge (tacit/implicit/explicit) we attribute to practice greatly influencing our and the client’s experience. The outstanding comment here was Andy and Brendan’s viewpoint and understanding that “knowledge is a product of learning, and NOT a product of time”, which can often be the misconception by most individuals and organisations within the sport psychology industry. Central to this is the concept of ‘experiential learning’ and crafting our trade through having a ‘growth-mindset’ whereby we only learn and then improve through experience, with it NOT being a passive process. The afternoon session then focused on the models used within reflective		

			practice, including the exploration of 'reflection on-action' and 'reflection in-action'. Through the use of our 'toolbox', (made up of experiences, situations, philosophies and interactions) I personally was made aware and understood the need to make more 'positive reflections' that included times when my work had succeeded, or a client had developed through our relationship. My tendency to purely conduct reflections based on negative experiences may 'cloud' my judgement in the long run and not focus on what areas of my practice that work for me and my philosophy.		
LJMU Sport & Exercise Psychology Professional development day Dr. David Tod	Liverpool John Moores University	26-06-19	As part of the LJMU conference day, I was required to help co-lead and inform MSc. student interested in furthering their sports psych. career in 'break-out' sessions around various areas within my Prof. Doc experiences. These centred around work and research I had engaged, difficulties encountered, and the pathway for prospective candidates. David produced a keynote speech around 'come on tell me, who are you?' This involved the various clients who David had worked with around the world over his 30+ year professional	6 Hours	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St Liverpool, L3 5AF

			career. The themes running throughout looked at 'why am I here?'; How might I grow as a person?'; and 'How can I Help myself?'. This was a highly informative and thought-provoking keynote that got me to examine all areas as myself as a practitioner and an individual and my unique 'identity'.		
Liverpool John Moores university: Mark Nesti	Liverpool John Moores	27-06-19	**<u>Prof. Doc</u>** <u>Delivering sport psychology in the EPL: An Existential Approach.</u> Mark's session revolved around his experiences with professional practice, and how often, practitioners can struggle in applying theory and knowledge into content and effective work with their client/athlete. The over-focus on 'diagnosing' an 'issue' and then attempting to resolve it through interventions such as MST and PST, is often only 10-15% of your work in elite sport. Mark instead highlighted the significance of what elite athletes CARE ABOUT. This generally surrounded 'real-life' practical examples such as loneliness, isolation, transition, termination of career etc. that actually AFFECTS PERFORMANCE. Mark's approach although often volatile, is the most thought-provoking,	3 Hours	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St Liverpool, L3 5AF

			engaging and effective approach to facilitating my learning that I have ever seen. He has seen and experienced a vast array of sports, cultures, environments and situations that provide the experience to accompany the knowledge. Mark highlights the 'in-action' experiences, feelings and critical moments that we have and will continue to endure, and identified 'being a part, but apart' as one of the most difficult and straining parts of being a sports psych. in elite sport. Later in the session, he went through dressing room situations, delivering effective work with both players and staff, with the underlying message that as long as it is uncomfortable, awkward, difficult, then it shows that it means something to you and to the people you are working with; however, as is often the nature of elite sport, the dynamic unforgiving nature often revolves heavily around 'results-performance-results'.		
BPS North East Branch Meeting	York St. John University	04-09-19	This BPS workshop/conference day centred around 'Café Psychologique' and practitioners setting up in independent practice. This largely consisted of different psychological disciplines (Counselling,	4 Hours	York St. John University, Lord Mayor's Walk, York, YO31 7EX

			Sport, Clinical, and Forensic) and the various similar/different considerations and issues around starting up your own independent business away from statutory organisations. The main themes highlighted what my successful practice will be and the essential ingredients for this: philosophy, practice approach, values, fees, networking, and people. It was interesting to be the only sports psychologist at the conference, as most conferences I had been attending had solely focused/oriented around my approach and work within sport. The mix in disciplines allowed me an insight and an alternative perspective of how other practitioners within the field operate and taking different ideas and concepts and applying them to my practice to increase effectiveness.		
Liverpool John Moores university	Liverpool John Moores university	03-10-19	**Prof. Doc** Amongst 1-1 meetings, we had a group discussion around different assignments in the Prof Doc. This consisted of 'Consultancy Contract/Report' (Key Role 2); 'Teaching & Training' (Key Role 4); and 'Systematic Review' (Key Role 3).	1 Hour 30 Minutes	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St Liverpool, L3 5AF

			The ‘3 i’s’ was a main focus of Teaching and Training, with the key theories and teaching philosophies an integral part of my assignment and potential future work. Thus, I will likely complete the 3 i’s training course in November in order to further my progression and knowledge.		
Martin Eubank			My meeting with Martin focused on Consultancy Case Study and England PS work. As part of the consultancy, we reviewed the sections of the work and restructuring them to fit the flow of the assignment more effectively. We discussed underlying philosophies, theories and techniques that formed part of my consultancy intervention and how I could look to increase effectiveness.	1 Hour	
David Tod			With David, we finalised my systematic review and the correct formatting procedures fit for publishing. I made necessary changes and sent off to David on Monday 7th October.	1 Hour	
DSEP Northern Applied Hub	Leeds Beckett university	18-10-19	The conference began with Dr. Andy Abraham discussing the ‘Defining professional practice through the lens of professional judgement and decision making’. This focused on theories around ‘practice’ and ‘decision making’	4 Hours 30 Minutes	Jubilee Room, James Graham, Headingley Campus, Leeds, LS6 3QU

			and the ways in which 'what'; 'how'; and 'who' are we teaching?' - affects our client(s) whereby: "perception judgement" impacts "decision" which impacts "behaviours", which impacts "consequences". We then moved onto professions and professionalism, which incorporated ethical scenarios and case studies through group discussion. 4 scenarios were given whereby we had to work our way through (using our PJDM) the most effective and ethical way of dealing with the 'issue'. These scenarios included confidentiality; barriers to sport psych.; managing disagreements of player management; and finding the time to implement support.		
Liverpool John Moores university Rob Morris	Liverpool John Moores university	31-10-19	**<u>Prof. Doc</u>** Rob Morris: Making the link between research and applied work In the morning session Rob provided a talk on his experiences working in women's football and the issues/areas associated with this. In particular the theme of 'dual-career' of the players and the need to negotiate a life in and out of football has played a pivotal role in Rob's work and how his underpinning	2 Hours 30 Minutes	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St Liverpool, L3 5AF

Chris Marshall			humanistic philosophy is a critical part of his work being effective. Focusing on the uniqueness of the individual, and their capacity for choice, growth, and development underlines this and remains a key focus. Chris Marshall: Chris talked about his experiences in Team GB Boxing, England Cricket Team and England Football: - This focused on the inter-play of 'character' and 'knowledge' in Chris' experiences and how both are crucial in your work and even getting your 'foot in the door'. - Team GB Boxing: Raw & emotional, but steeped in respect; disciplined but open; 'you can't shirk the tough stuff' - England Cricket: Drinking culture – social sport; know what they want and are open to work - England Football: The most challenging environment there is; win-based; cut-throat Overall, a very good session with an individual I'd highly recommend.		

Liverpool John Moores university: Martin Eubank, Rob Morris & Emily Cartigny	Liverpool John Moores university	28/11/2019	**Prof. Doc** **Morning Session:** Discussion of dual-career athletes, NGB's and Organisations. This involved discussion around the key competencies possessed/required by athletes, coaches and sport psychologists in these environments, and how these influences their work/career. What makes an environment successful? – Effectiveness and Efficiency **Afternoon Session:** Discussion of key findings including the large disparity between stakeholders and athletes, in terms of: care of dual-career athletes' mental health and wellbeing, and the availability of flexible dual-career solutions.	5 Hours	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St Liverpool, L3 5AF
Liverpool John Moores university: 3 i's Training	Liverpool John Moores university	27/01/20 – 31/01/20	**Monday 27th** As an introduction to the course, we began by being provided with an outline of the content, structure and assessment of the week and follow-up assignments. This included key information around the 10-minute assessment presentation we would have to deliver at the end of the week to showcase our learning/knowledge.	15 Hours	Liverpool Exchange Station Tithebarn St, Liverpool L2 2QP

			We then moved onto being taught around ‘What’, ‘Why’, ‘When’, and ‘How’ of my ‘Personal Development Action Plan, and the ways in which I look to reflect and evaluate my progress. In the afternoon, we were guided around the dialogue between myself and the learners, with the ‘cognitive’, ‘affective’, and ‘behavioural’ mechanisms playing a crucial role in how I deliver and convey support – this included the use of Learning Outcomes. **Tuesday 28th** Tuesday involved learning in small groups and how we look to facilitate learning in this environment. An effective method was directed teaching, followed by individual tasks, which fed into pair work, then eventual group work. This allowed all involved to contribute and interact with one another and displays a range of skills and versatility in teaching. For example, the use of mind-maps, jigsaws, brainstorming, debates, buzz-groups, are all effective methods in this situation. In the afternoon, we looked at larger group environments (i.e. lecture theatres and halls) and how being able to remain in control of the group and engage a range of audience		

			backgrounds and interests may be challenging. **Friday 31st** I delivered a 10-minute presentation on ‘elevator speeches’ to a group of 7 students. This involved an initially introduction and learning outcomes. This then led to student pair activity around the skills/knowledge you may need to involve in a 45 second pitch, which then fed back to the group, whereby I added in other potential areas of information in the area. Finally, in pairs, I got students to deliver their own 45 second pitch to a partner based on the skills and content we had discussed, which we then fed back to the group. All in all, my feedback was largely positive, however I could have maybe provided slightly more clarity and mentioned the learning outcomes earlier to clear understanding. Moving forward, I am looking to complete the qualification in order to obtain ‘Associate Fellowship’, whereby lecturing jobs actively seek this qualification within their job description(s). I have learnt a great deal through the course, specifically, the ability and skillset to engage the		

			audience as quickly as possible, and also to show versatility when delivering to apply to different levels and groups.		
Mike Rotheram: 'Resilience for uncertain times'	Home Address	25/03/20	**<u>Resilience for uncertain times – Zoom Session</u>** Mike's online session looked at our current situation (dealing with the coronavirus) and how the need to be resilient and learning through uncomfortable experiences is vital. A core part of the session was that of Viktor Frankl and 'The search for meaning' and how his time in Auschwitz allowed him to 'find himself' and what was truly important to human beings and how they coped in the most adverse and threatening circumstances. This transitioned nicely into 'you see the world through how you feel'. Moving into the second part of the session, we explored 'growth through adversity' and how : 'Acceptance'; 'Connection'; 'Reframing'; 'Appreciation'; 'Resources', are the core foundations to growing through difficult times, and how connecting with reality, finding support, reframing the experience and finding	1 Hour	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			meaning, and using past situations and experiences ultimately allow us to 'lean into the uncertainty' moving forward and allow us to continually grow. A final focus was on the transition to elite performance, whereby as everything in competition is often done at maximum speed, the ability to 'think slow, breathe slow, act slow' is crucial for slowing down performance and reminding yourself/the athlete what the most effective way is to deal with the task at hand.		
Liverpool John Moores university: Prof Doc Cohorts. Dr. Martin Eubank. Dr. Amy Whitehead.	Home Address	26/03/20	**Think ALOUD – Zoom Session** As a face-to-face session was unavailable, an online session was set-up, so that Amy could discuss her research and applied practice experiences using Think ALOUD. The main focus of the session was to understand how 'cognition-in-action' and athletes verbalising as their doing, is crucial in providing awareness and understanding of thoughts and how they influence behaviour. The research has been conducted in golf, tennis and cycling thus far, with a view to differentiating and understanding the differences between novices and	2 Hours	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			experts in Think ALOUD. One key area within golf was that of experts using external gathering and planning of information, whereas novices focused more emphasis on technical instruction and self-encouragement. This in turn led to ‘paralysis by analysis’ and over-complication of skills, which was more likely to result in ‘choking’. Think ALOUD itself is most effective in pre- and post- performance scenarios, whereby the performer is able to understand how they attribute language to performance and behaviour. During performance is potentially more difficult, as it will likely disrupt FLOW, however there are some advantages of this in the beginning in allowing the athlete to understand the thought-processes they are engaging in. Another key consideration with Think Aloud is that of experience vs. memory and how memory can often be distorted when recollecting information after the experience, therefore its use during the event can become crucial. Moving forward, I am likely to begin incorporating elements of Think ALOUD into my practice and support with coaches, in order to assist them with		

			coaching styles, potential coaching bias and how their practice is influenced by their thoughts and behaviours, which then has an impact on players.		
Liverpool John Moores university: Prof Doc Cohorts. Dr. Hayley McEwan Dr. Martin Eubank.	Home Address	02-04-20	**Zoom Meeting – Think ALOUD** As a continuation of Amy Whitehead's session, Hayley took the session and begun by talking about her initial 'fraudulent' experiences within teaching. This was reassuring to hear, having taught in an educational capacity myself, and occasionally feeling that the role wasn't for me, and that there was someone else better placed to deliver the content. This brought in ongoing reflective questions around: - What new ideas, questions or insights do you have? - What was good about the thinking you did & explain… - What would you still like to know more about? These questions allowed Hayley within her practice and research experiences to continually update and manage how she can expand on her knowledge and understanding of topic areas. Alongside this, it checked the validity of her thoughts alongside research/evidential areas, so that she could cross-check	2 Hours	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			that what she was discussing had reliable and viable backing. A key part of the session was the use of us as practitioners in a role-playing capacity, and how we can 'run past' our ideas to one another and how we have managed ethical, practical, and wider dilemmas and issues. However, Hayley stated that 'real play' is potentially significantly more effective than 'role play', where us as practitioners can provide our own ongoing issues and concerns in a client/practitioner format, so that we are able to assist one another in tackling current issues and problems that may be affecting us. Not only will this help from an advancing knowledge/awareness perspective, but also it maintains contact in a sports psych. delivery capacity, and ultimately keeps the conversations 'real'.		
Liverpool John Moores university: Prof Doc Cohorts. Russell Earnshaw –	Home Address	16-04-20	**<u>ZOOM Meeting – Russell Earnshaw (Coaching)</u>** Russell 'Rusty' Earnshaw gave us a talk and discussion around his professional experiences, both from a playing and coaching perspective. As a coach, Russell highlighted 'psychology support' is often viewed as	1 Hour 30 Minutes	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

Ex England Rugby Player			either a ‘fixer’ or ‘add on’ to the normal support that is offered within rugby. Within this, he shared his experiences of both ‘successful’ and ‘unsuccessful’ psychologists who he has encountered: What are sport psychs. Doing wrong?: - Being the workshop person - Using complex language - Don’t relate to people - There for the kit - Can’t form relationships What does a good sports psych. do? - Relatable - Upskilling everyone - Good work around parental support - Language choice is spot on Why do coaches maybe struggle to ‘buy into’ psych.? - Previous experience – people want tangible differences - Want quick, short-term solutions - Cost – trainees are cheaper, psych. is a luxury Ultimately, Rusty highlighted that in elite sport specifically, decision making under pressure is everything. An effective sports psych. can deliver a message through the coaches (as they have much more contact time), can have an impact on the ‘loose cannons’		

			who maybe disrupt team cohesion/performance, can mentor athletes, and have a consistent language that everyone in the culture 'buys into'. Furthermore, like the athletes you will work with, you have to be brave enough to 'put your head above the parapet' and be uncomfortable.		
Dr. Martin Eubank	Home Address	22-04-20	My phone call with Martin focused around 3 key areas as I reach the final stages of the Prof. doc.: **Assignments** - What I need to do re. proof-reading and revisiting assignments to make sure they are up to D-level standard. **Reflections** – Ideas for further reflections to complete my portfolio and cover all key roles. **Meta-Reflection and Viva** – This involved discussion of what would be imperative to include for my meta-reflection, including visual formats, language, key themes, and reflections across the 2 years and how to document this in 5000 words.	1 Hour 30 Minutes	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			Ultimately, the discussion provided a clear, informed understanding of what I need to do between now and submission, and what the process looks like when I do submit, which has helped remove/reduce my apprehensions and worries I had around submission and delays moving forward.		
Liverpool John Moores university: Prof Doc Cohorts. Dr. Martin Turner	Home Address	23-04-20	**ZOOM Meeting – Applying REBT in sport** With Martin working in the FA and the England futsal team, we'd had previous meetings and discussions around his experiences and how that could apply/benefit me within my practice and work with the England Partially Sighted team. However, Martin shared a lengthy discussion around the presence of use of REBT in sport, and how he has successfully implemented it within his own experiences and years in practice. The GABCDE Framework was brought in to understand how when working with clients and athletes, exploring the deeper underlying thoughts, and meaning through purposeful questioning and discussion, is highly effective. Martin's talk made me think about how when working with players, a	2 Hours 30 Minutes	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			more person-centred, Rogerian approach, that rigorously challenges irrational thoughts and beliefs, will enable the athlete to produce greater self-awareness and understanding of their experience. As such, in future I am going to engage more with REBT and understanding how the discipline operates, in order to effectively incorporate it within my practice when necessary.		
Liverpool John Moores university: Nathan Ryder	Home Address	30-04-20	**<u>Viva Preparation: 'VIVA SURVIVOR'</u>** Dr. Ryder provided a 3-hour ZOOM session on the key elements for the VIVA assessment. The key elements consisted of: (a) Before Submission: Preparing for the assessment in an effective and efficient manner. Consider: potential details, requirements, resources, 'allies. (b) Effective Preparation: Read my thesis, don't skim (over a week or so); annotate my thesis (underline, margin notes, post-its); create summaries (find useful questions and formats to record useful thoughts; write a single line at the top of each page to outline, in 10 words or less a summary of the page! – take a sheet of paper for each assignment and write 'What's	3 Hours	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			important?' – annotate, discuss, evidence! (c) Expectations: Examiners will have looked at everything in your work, but don't be scared of this, it allows a conversation and discussion to flow and grow. (d) Viva Day: Confidence (mindset, practical – pause!, 'I don't know' is a valid response occasionally, but understand why you don't know!) Key Points: There are 3 key answers the examiners need to ask: 1. Explore your significant original contribution; 2. Unpick the 'how's' and 'whys'.; 3. Examine my competence. Have a 'top 10/20' references that are key to my process Think about: what is valuable to others in each piece of my work?; What is interesting to me?; Ask the examiners what they would do to progress my work? Keep up to date with current literature to show that I continue to expand my		

			knowledge and keep in touch with developments.		
Mike Rotheram: Zoom CPD Training	Home Address	28-04-20 30-04-20	**Session 1: The Missing Chapter** In Mike's first session, we discussed the major challenges, lessons, and beliefs Mike has learnt from his experiences in the EIS, Football, and various other sports. From these, we had breakout groups and interactive polls to contribute to the session, and understand where others in a similar position to me lie in their experiences. Key points centred around: Sports psych. being the link for all other disciplines within an organisation. However, there will be ever-present factors at play, such as: imposter syndrome, an ability to influence, measuring effectiveness, always being on probation, and needing to be a 'good person' t have around. In the following sessions, there will be guest speakers. **Session 2: The High-Performance System – Dr. Kate Hays** The second session featured a guest speaker in Kate Hays, who had worked within the EIS for many years as a	1 Hour 1 Hour	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			performance psychologist. Kate discussed the nature of systems within an organisation, including how as a psych. you will work on various levels: Competition, Training, Individual, Team, Performance System. Within these levels, there are prominent areas for the psych. to negotiate and consider. These included roles and responsibilities, performance review, challenge and recoverability, celebrated uniqueness, and individuality. Crucially, it was working systematically with key stakeholders and pre-agreeing non-negotiable behaviours that would help define and measure success through this. This is driven by EVERY member of staff within the organisation, which allows for a consistent, congruent approach and then feeds into both a team and individual identity.		
		05-05-20	**Session 3: Creating Shared Understanding (ft. Chris Marshall)** The 3rd session centred around the core principles of shared understanding within teams. Core concepts were: 'buy in' confidentiality within the organisation, where everyone in the EIS knows each other's issues. Also,	1 Hour	

			holding the 'middle ground' is crucial between staff and players, where if either party was asked 'Who's side are you on?' – both sides should say that you are on their side. This is not sitting on the fence, its being the glue that holds everyone together. Chris Marshall then featured, and explained the value of 'effective formulations' in applied work. 'Effective Formulation' related to a hypothesis to be tested, whereby we need to develop an effective format of linking theory to practice. Chris provided a staged process of how he and stakeholders will deal with a performance area/issue: 1. Identify the problem 2. Obtain multiple perspectives 3. Formulation 4. Action Planning 5. Intervention Delivery 6. Evaluation This process looked at the 4p's of: predisposing, protective, precipitating and perpetuating factors of dealing with issues, which was proceeded by the potential processes underpinning performance breakdown under pressure. Common breakdown issues concern: poor threat detection,		

			indecision, decision making, reinvestment, cognitive anxiety, ironic effects, and narcissism.		
		07-05-20	**Session 4: 'Coaches Corner' – Mark Robinson** Mark provided a discussion from a coaching perspective and how they look to implement psychological support. Mark begun by stating that it is 'the experiences we have which govern the way we see the world'. This related to the emotional world we operate in within sport, and how experiences bond each individual together, with it being something that is shared across the environment. Mark then went into highlight the 'qualities of a good sports psych.' - Relate to players/coaches/club/environment - Strong – stands up when need to - Not always looking for direction – independent! - Be invisible but appear when you need them The core theme of Marks' and Mikes' conversation was how, we as sports psychs. can best help ourselves when	1 Hour	

			working with coaches in elite sport. This highlighted the importance of understanding those you are working with, in terms of knowing what you're good at, what motivates/demotivates the player? Who does the player get on with? – these areas emphasised the ability to understand my own philosophy, have examples of effective work, and help shape the environment. Further to this, we need to appreciate the role of the coach, with it often a lonely job at times, with everyone always looking to you for answers, taking issues home with you, and having the responsibility and final say to everything. – As such, we need to support this *Also understand that the best players we work/will work with in sport, will come with 'baggage' – therefore, how can we best inform them and learn through them.		
		12-05-20	**Session 5 – 'Performance psychology in the real world' – ft. Jonathan Finch** This session focused on how we work with other key stakeholders within the	1 Hour	

			organisation, and specifically the performance director (PD). The session emphasised how we need to not be 'locked in the box' and minimising our support solely to 1-1 support. This brought in discussion around the systems approach we can adopt, with the collaboration with others in the MDT help provide a shared understanding, learning cycle, and ultimately remembering: the athletes are the most important, but not more powerful than the environment. Jonathan Finch then led us into how, we as sports psychs. can work effectively with the PD, to ensure this system approach we keep highlighting. The example of the work done in England cricket, highlighted 'taking the pride forward', which represented the 3 lions' emphasis on courage, adaptability, togetherness, and active participation. Within this, it is important to understand each individual's nuances, with every single staff member and player having/will show vulnerability. Jonathan and Mike then went to highlight the values and beliefs of		

			working with England, with, if they are done right they will impact and help shape each and everyone's behaviour, however, if they are done wrong, they will just be 'a sheet of a4 paper on the wall'. Ultimately, it is about having honest conversations with individuals, with there often being 'a zone of uncomfortable discussion' where the most effective conversations take part.		
		14-05-20	**Session 6: 'Ethical dilemmas and decision making in sport psychology'** In this session, we discussed the importance of understanding the history of the situation, expectations, the system, and the context, when we are making an informed decision around critical ethical issues and dilemmas. It is our job as psychs. to 'spot the context' and be able to anticipate, comprehend and deliver when ethical dilemmas may arise, where the use of reality testing our decisions is key and understanding what the best and worst possible outcomes could be. The above then linked into scenarios:	1 Hour	

			1. Giving a psych. opinion on team selection - This looked at giving balanced information, like other staff (physio) around the readiness of the player, which will allow the coach to make a more informed decision 2. Providing clinical support when no access to any other in club - This highlighted continuing work with the athlete as they both trust you and you have a duty of care to them. However, this is all done through the guidance of the mental health practitioner and their advice. 3. Bringing in a new model that doesn't have any scientific backing - Central to this, was providing the receivers will all the relevant information to understand and make an informed decision. Ultimately, the session highlighted 3 key areas to consider when engaging in ethical dilemmas: INTENTION; BEHAVIOUR; IMPACT. And what is important is that we won't get every decision right, but we need to reflect and review the decisions and actions we do make.		
		19-05-20	**Session 7: 'The Training Environment': ft. Alex Davies (England & Lancashire batsman)**	1 Hour	

			This session focused on the transfer of pressure from performance (deliver your skill when there are consequences) environments into training (deliver your skill). Alex came in and started to discuss his experiences, and how 1 key area of 'releasing your inner strengths' was crucial. This allowed Alex to seemingly transition from wanting to be the best batsman in the team, to the best player in the world, and how this belief and journey to do that has made him twice the player he initially had the potential to be. Mike then brought in 3 training mindsets: 1. 'Explorer' (Development Mode): Goal is to get better through learning, developing super-strengths, being innovative, but most importantly making lots of errors to stretch yourself and learn from. 2. 'Performer' (Performance Mode): Goal is to practice performing, simulate scenarios, replicate routines, performance mindset. 3. 'Pre-Performance Mode': Goal is to feel confident, and have limited errors, often done immediately before competition.		

			Ultimately, navigation through these 3 mindsets allows mistakes to occur, and for these to be ok! This incorporated the use of pressure training, where there is: 1. Reality test: learning what they can do under low pressure, what mental skills they do have, and where potential decrements may lie; 2. Pressure train with support: education and awareness; 3. Pressure test: non-dependence, test transfer of skills in a high-pressure environment. Ultimately, the session was valuable in demonstrating how psychs. can help incorporate pressure manipulation within their support, with this often an incredibly difficult area to try and recreate.		
		21-05-20	**Session 8: Competition Support** Transferring of skill, knowledge, and confidence is most difficult at the top of the game. As such, Mike provided excerpts of issues and dilemmas, including: "So and so doesn't have this skill (e.g. confidence, determination): this led us to discuss how rather than looking at this as an issue, where the coach may be looking at it through a tunnel vision lens, we should look to	1 Hour	

			observe performance and work backward. This would consider the following: - Do they make the right decisions constantly? - Do they start well? - Do they demonstrate adaptability or become fixed? - Do they raise their game? - Do they have the right attitude to training? - Do they perform well in critical moments? As such, by asking these questions of the athlete, we can then look to address where the slips and decrements are, in order to then support. This support would present a 'develop', 'react', 'co-ordinate', 'perform' modes to assist with: Develop: Be proactive, test/review strategies, performance-focused React: 'Reduce the noise', problem solving, de-escalate, sounding board, performance/well-being Co-ordinate: Proactive and reactive, support plans in place, role support, 'helicopter role', performance/well-being		

			Perform: PERFORM To conclude the session, our support in critical moments would look to: de-escalate, normalise, and simplify, in order to understand the situation, use logic/resources, and look at potential solutions.		
		26-05-20	**<u>Session 9: Performance Problems</u>** In the penultimate session, Mike discussed the ‘yips’ and other related performance issues – central to this was understanding the brain and psychophysiological issues, with the individual’s perception of a threatening situation or circumstance dependent on their state of helplessness. As such, as practitioners, we may look to either: unlock the less conscious, instinctive brain, remove the blocked emotion, or rewire the amygdala and hippocampus to respond differently. Within this, we can support by stamping out on sloppy language, consulting appropriate clinical support, and screening the performance for long or short-term effects. **<u>Session 10: Elise Christie</u>**	1 Hour	

		28-05-20	Mike’s final sessions of the series involved Elise Christie as a guest speaker chatting about her experiences. Elise talked about her setbacks, mental health issues, performance and well-being, and external influences on her performance. A standout quote was: “They have to beat me, not I have to beat them”, which signified the journey she came on in pursuing success.	1 Hour	

Consultancy					
Client details	**Location**	**Date(s)**	**Nature of the activity**	**Contact Hours**	**Placement Host details (if applicable)**
Mike Greener: *England Golf* – County Durham Support Officer	Rockliffe Hall Golf Club Home Address	23-01-18 24-01-18	**Golf Consultancy** Discussion of consultancy assignments and how to initiate workshops and one-one meetings. This included discussion of 'branding', 'clients', 'steps/routine' and 'activities'. I then tailored what was discussed in the meeting including 'England Golf Psychology Principles', to my clients.	2 Hours 30 Minutes	Rockliffe Hall Golf Club, Hurworth-on-Tees, Darlington, DL2 2DU
Chris Sanders: *Rockliffe Hall Member* and initial client	Rockliffe Hall Golf Club Home Address	25-01-18	**Golf Consultancy and Business Set-up** Discussion of start-up including 'insurance', 'client-base', 'contracts' and 'forecasts'. Need a 'go-live' date and initial 'guinea pig' clients for testimonials etc. Additionally, I began filling in 'Bathgate' start-up business form.	1 Hour 30 Minutes	Rockliffe Hall Golf Club, Hurworth-on-Tees, Darlington, DL2 2DU
Rockliffe Hall Golf Club	Rockliffe Hall Golf Club	14-02-18	**Golf Consultancy** Wrote up a paragraph in golf newsletter that goes out to 350 members – re. my golf consultancy.	45 Minutes	Rockliffe Hall Golf Club, Hurworth-on-Tees, Darlington, DL2 2DU

			This then resulted in 5 initial golfers interested in consultancy.		
		21-02-18	Personal business/contact cards published. Also created a consultancy e-mail address.	N/A	
Brian Hemmings		22-02-18	Discussion with Brian Hemmings re. consultancy.	40 Minutes	
Gary Crane: *Rockliffe Hall* Member and Client	Rockliffe Hall Golf Club	10-03-18 --- 13-03-18	Sent needs analysis to Gary to complete and send back to get an idea of where he would like to improve. Then designed and carried out initial intake session that outlined the areas of improvement (anxiety and tension) and discussion of these. Agreed to work together and look to making it a balance of theoretical and practical based work. Verbal agreement of £50 package consisting of 'Intake', '4 hours' worth of sessions' and 'Debrief'.	60 Minutes	Rockliffe Hall Golf Club, Hurworth-on-Tees, Darlington, DL2 2DU
		02-04-18	Conducted session on driving range as I felt I would be able to get more of an idea of Gary in action. Apprehension at first to provide a 'solution' and resulted in looking heavily at prompts. However, as the session	60 Minutes	

			progressed, I focused on listening fully to Gary rather than thinking what to say next. After watching him in practice, I suggested a breathing exercise (‘Get Fat’) which attempts to alleviate the anxiety and tension he may have when putting. Then debriefed and left Gary to implement in practice and competition and feedback his results.		
		07-05-18	Opened the session by discussing Gary’s feedback on results. Stated that it had ‘worked wonders’ for him as it took all the attention away from swing mechanics and reduced tension as he focused on his breathing more, this resulted in better, more composed putting. However, he then went on to mention that the technical side of his putting was falling behind. I reminded him that this was likely more suitable with one of the Club Professionals, and that over time it would ‘all interconnect’ with one another. Then went on to discuss ‘focus’, chipping and 3-putts. I didn’t feel as effective in this session as I have previously, as I	60 Minutes	

		17-05-18	felt Gary was looking for a 'solution' or exercise to use for his chipping, rather than discussing the issue fully. We sat and talked through the areas and experiences of losing his focus and gave him a 'brief sheet' to refer to if he was struggling with his thinking/conditioning. He then sent me a 9-hole shot-by-shot breakdown of his game and where he felt he may be struggling. Compiled next session for Gary - this involved discussion with England Golf coach (Mike Greener) around different drills associated with pressure manipulation and how Gary may be able to transfer practice to competition more successfully. Additionally, with chipping aspects becoming more of an issue, I looked to bring the use of 'countering' into play, alongside possible pre-shot routine management in order to reduce the amount of pressure Gary was placing on himself whilst standing over the putt.	90 Minutes	
Harrison Hodgson, *Rockliffe Hall Member* and	Rockliffe Hall	08-05-18	Referred by his father, Harrison felt he was struggling with the ability to cope in high-level tournaments in pressure situations.	60 Minutes	Rockliffe Hall Golf Club, Hurworth-on-Tees, Darlington, DL2 2DU

England Golfer/Client			Sat down with Harrison and got him to discuss if he felt it was apparent in his game. He went on to mention that in putting he would 'choke' when he knows he needed to make a putt to stay in the lead or catch up with the leaders. I proposed trying to recreate/manipulate pressure situations in practice to strengthen his ability to deal with pressure. He then went on to mention that when he 'is playing for something' it works for him (i.e. money or something on the line). We also discussed drill exercises that we could use on the practice range and that we would look at the anxiety and pressure more fully in the next session.		
		08-06-18	Harrison had played in several major competitions since our last session, including the Wales junior open. In this he had missed several high-pressure putts, due to not being able to 'think straight' and also mistakes such as not marking his ball. Harrison stated that he had put into practice the 'get fat' breathing exercise we had	60 Minutes	

			previously discussed, and it was crucial in reducing his tension and taking his breathing away from putting mechanics/stroke and towards his breathing. This was beneficial as it stopped the over-focus he often put on his movement which may have caused him to 'yip' and essentially distracted his attention elsewhere. After recapping, the current session focused on putting drills specifically designed to put him under pressure and getting him to think clearly under pressure. This involved the support of the England Golf coach (Mike Greener), where we designed a drill ranging from 1ft. through to 10ft. putts from varying angles, designed to increase the pressure putt on putt. This then progressed to having Harrison set targets, incorporate distraction cues, and having him do it blindfolded to get the feel for the movement without seeing it. Following this, I reinforced to Harrison the importance of what we were doing so that ultimately it would become subconscious to him		

		06-08-18	(auto-pilot) so he could then benefit from it when in competition. This session felt more purposeful, as I displayed more effective listening skills that created a more open and honest environment for both parties to contribute effectively. Harrison outlined immediately that since working with me and utilising the putting drills and breathing technique that his putting had improved significantly – with him stating he had gone away from worrying about missing the putt (and consequences) and instead knew he wasn't going to miss from within 6ft. The session then focused around recent performances, and although his putting had improved his long game had begun to go the other way. In previous competitions he had become focused on 'making the cut' and thinking about bad holes, that had resulted in him slipping down the leader board. I therefore began discussing where improvements could be made going forward.	60 Minutes	

			I provided a ‘3 step plan’ when in pressure situations that consisted of: 1. ’20-yard initiation’ prior to ball strike; 2. ‘pre-shot’ routine and a ‘think’ and ‘play’ 2-yard line from the ball where he would switch off; 3. ‘Get fat’ breathing technique to reduce tension/anxiety. I gave him this to use and go away to practice with and feedback results. Moving forward, observation in practice will be key and viewing him out on the course. Additionally, the use of a pad providing him with session notes regarding statistics, drills, performance to competition techniques and routines, will be provided.		
Howdens Insurance Group	Home Address	11-05-18	Got Professional Indemnity Insurance Coverage with Howdens	30 Minutes	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT
Grant McTaggart – Ultramarathon Runner (Gambia 10 in 10)	Client’s Home Address	16-07-19	Having begun working with 2 Marathon clients who had created the Gambia 10 in 10 projects, I felt that speaking to an experienced Ultramarathon runner would provide the best insight into my initial meetings with my clients.	1 Hour 30 Minutes	Client’s Home Address

			Tom and Michael were running 10 marathons in 10 days in Gambia, which having not done a marathon before, I knew that the prospect of running 10 marathons in 10 days, in somewhere like Gambia, would likely be an extremely difficult physical and mental test. Grant had previously completed many ultramarathons including Des Sables (Sahara Desert) and would be a vital source of information moving forward. Grant and I began discussing his experiences, with Grant noting that he had never had someone discuss the psychology side in as much detail as I had. Grant talked about his background and route into running through the Army and then went into his experiences in ultramarathons including Des Sables. In the build-up to the challenge Grant had discussed the many difficulties and issues he had encountered, including being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and various other injuries experienced. These setbacks had fuelled him to the start line, however had not fully prepared him		

			for the experience he was about to encounter. Grant's mental strength had remained a constant through the event, with him highlighting his ability to 'embrace it' and remember why he was doing it (through visits to the charities and conversations remembered). He mentioned that although he prepared as much as he could, more work could have been done on the mental side of it, as in his words it was 70% mental and 30% physical. This identified that my work with the runners was vital and that I needed to prepare them as well as possible psychologically. We then moved into the possible ways in which I could look to support Tom and Mike to BEST prepare them for Gambia. Overall, this was a very worthwhile chat that prepared me well for the initial meetings and encounters with Tom and Mike.		
Tom Walker (Gambia 10 in 10)	The Mowden Pub	17-07-19	As Mike was not able to meet with us, Tom and I met and focused on his initial experiences of planning the project and challenge ahead.	1 Hour 30 Minutes	The Mowden Staindrop Road, Darlington, DL3 9BE

			We began with his experiences within running and the charity and why he was doing what he was doing. This then flowed into why he wanted to work with me and 'what he wanted from me going into the process?' This uncovered both collective and individual needs and issues, with both Tom and Mike underestimating the impact psychology would have on the experience and process. Having been referred to me through a physiotherapist (mutual friend), I wanted to ensure they wanted to work with me for the right reasons both from their intentions and also my own. Having established an initial warm relationship and knowing both parties were committed to the working alliance, we moved into Tom's personal difficulties with what lay ahead and what he had already experienced. Tom, not being a natural runner like Mike, had recurring injury difficulties that was impacting him mentally and having big issues with it. This provided a potential avenue to		

			explore moving forward, whereby Tom also highlighted the serious amounts of pressure they were both putting themselves under to prepare and undertake this massive challenge. We briefly discussed these, including people who had begun to doubt them and their commitment/ability and what we would look to do moving forward. This initial session was a seemingly very honest and open encounter where Tom admitted initially dismissing the psychological element of the challenge, but through encounters and setbacks, had become aware of its significance. The session had given me potential lines of enquiry moving forward, including Tom's injury, the notion of pressure, and the significance of a well-functioning relationship both between them, but also everyone involved including myself and other coaches.		
Michael Bleasby (Gambia 10 in 10)	Rockliffe Hall	02-08-19	Having met with Tom, I felt it best to meet Mike for a 1-1 to see his personal views and thoughts on psychology and the challenge.	1 Hour 30 Minutes	Rockliffe Hall Golf Club, Hurworth-on-Tees, Darlington, DL2 2DU

			Having established a good rapport with Mike over running, he began to open up about his love/hate of it and how he was falling in and out of love with the sport. This challenge had provided with a kickstart back into running and a new lease of life almost with how he viewed himself and the world. Having a background in running, this resonated with me, however it was crucial to not let my experiences interfere/interact with Mikes as it meant that the session would become more about me and my experiences. Having previously raced against Mike in my junior years, he hadn't noticed or became aware of this, so I left it at the door and continued forward with our discussion. I provided consideration and food for thought for Mike, by bringing in the concept of a 'runner's identity' and how the way he had talked about his experiences and what running meant to him, had showed to me had attached his identity to that of a runner and prided himself and his life on this. Tying this in		

			with the challenge and ultramarathons, I wanted to ensure that Mike was again doing it for 'the right reasons' and not for some personal goal-setting/achievement. Although Mike had highlighted examples of self-fulfilment (without explicitly stating this), he had shown to me that the challenge was a route back into rediscovering himself and finding what he loved again. He was fully committed to the project through personal attachments with the charities, and was motivated to achieve these through his own personal goals. Through these 2 initial meetings with Tom and Mike, it had shown the individual and collective desires to start and complete the challenge, and presented various lines of enquiry for us to psychologically prepare them best for the ultramarathon in Gambia.		
England Partially-Sighted Football Squad (The Football Association)	Various Locations:	01-08-19	Having gained employment with the England Partially-sighted football team, I had begun trying to integrate myself within the coaching staff and gain an		47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

Ian Bateman (Head Coach)	Home Address		understanding of how the organisation/culture operates. I had an initial phone call with Ian Bateman (Head Coach) who introduced me to the team and gave me background information on how the team had been performing, how the players/staff operate, and where I could hopefully fit in moving forward. Ian outlined that some of the players had been having various difficulties both mentally and physically/socially (e.g. mental health, aggression, anxiety, performance etc.) that had been needing to be looked at from both a performance and wellbeing perspective. Ian was very honest and open about the current situation within the squad, and that they had been finishing 2nd and 3rd in major tournaments, but had hoped the introduction of a psychologist would make the difference and jump up to 1st. Although initially a daunting prospect, the opportunity to work at this cutting-edge elite level in major tournaments excited me hugely. Ian then went into how psychology	1 Hour 30 Minutes	

			has been generally implemented within the squad, and suggested a few areas to focus on when coming in and developing.	1 Hour 30 Minutes	
John Whittingham (Team Manager)	Home Address	14-08-19	Following my chat with Ian, I called John later in the day to understand from a manager's perspective what his role/experience was and how we would look to work with one another. John was more relaxed and less forthcoming with ideas (had been in the job less than a year), and left it more open to my own suggestion/interpretations as to what I felt best. John understood my position, having come from an academic background himself, and understood It wasn't as simple as me coming in that would make the difference between 2nd and 3rd, to then 1st. John just wanted me to understand the support is there for me, but it's up to me what direction/approach I go in with.	1 Hour	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT
Martin Eubank (LJMU supervisor)	Home Address	15-08-19	Having spoken with two of the coaches from England Partially Sighted Team and had time to reflect and understand my thought-process, I rang Martin to assist with how I look to move forward going		47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			into the first training camp and beyond. I highlighted the specific issues some players had been having (i.e. mental health, aggression etc.), whereby Martin outlined the significance of my needs analysis process (both written and mental) whereby I would take time to understand the situation(s) and culture, and then understand the individual and team, to then best inform what I do going forward. I need to go in with a fresh perspective/mind-set and understand what is already known, and what maybe isn't known. No psychologist in the world is able to guarantee a gold medal, so it's about understanding the process, and as the team have been generally process-focused, it should benefit me moving forward in tournaments and competitions. I am ultimately an additional layer of sport science, so I should look to compliment what is already being done.		
Ian Bateman (Head Coach) and Steve	Costa Coffee (Preston)	23-08-19	The day after speaking with Martin, I had a meeting with Ian and Steve to meet face-to-face and get an idea from both a coach and player	2 Hours 30 Minutes	Costa Coffee, 286 Garstang Rd, Fulwood,

Daley (Team Captain)			perspective of the team and organisation. Having spoken with Ian previously, we left Steve to drive a lot of the discussion, to understand what his perception of the team and set-up was like. Having played for the team for 21 years and soon moving up into management, Steve had an in-depth understanding of the hierarchy and how each player tended to operate. We predominantly chatted about major competitions (World Cup, World Championships etc.) and the major factors contributing to how the players and team performed. Players had been having issues both on and off the pitch, so it was about understanding how it impacted the team in the tournament – this was reassuring to here, as I, from a holistic philosophy background, wanted to inform on pitch performance through off-pitch experiences and encounters. Both Steve and Ian were very open with how I wanted to conduct my work and integrate myself in, and suggested speaking		Preston, PR2 9RX

Steve Tones (Assistant Coach)	Moose Coffee (Liverpool)	28-08-19	to Steve Tones to clarify any other queries. Steve, having been brought to my attention by Ian and John, was an assistant coach with the team who had engaged in some psychology work, and came from an educational background as he was a teacher in the ‘Faculty of education and children’s services’ at Chester University. We both talked about more of the psychological element of the job role and how the team operated as a whole and how each player fed into that. A big part of Steve’s philosophy was about ‘disrupting the flow’ and stopping detrimental behaviours/information/experiences interrupting and influencing performance and wellbeing. The importance of norms and values, and culturally embedded information was going to be significant to my work when entering the squad. Steve reinforced to me that learning styles are crucial, and getting the players to buy into mine and their own philosophies is crucial. At the first camp, Steve suggested	2 Hours	Moose Coffee 6 Dale St, Liverpool, L2 4TQ

Dr. Martin Turner (Sport Psychologist for England futsal senior team)	Home Address	06-09-19	discussing something that interests me on a personal level, and the importance building relationships gradually before any psych. work is thrown in. Having spoken with 4 of the coaches and players, I needed to gain an insight from a sport psychologists' perspective operating within this field. Martin worked with the England futsal team for 7 years, and had experienced a change in style and philosophy throughout his time there. Martin in his early days highlighted the importance of 'performing under pressure' and based upon his book 'tipping the balance'; as futsal was a decision-making fast-paced sport with little time to think, players have to play instinctively and be able to play subconsciously. He then talked about his cognitive-behavioural approach informed by a Rogerian philosophy, where a big thing for him was about aggression and self-control. Martin stated 'Catharsis' as a myth, and I need to interrupt the flow/association with	45 Minutes	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

Dr. Jamie Barker (Sports Psychologist for England Cerebral Palsy team)	Phone call – Avril Robarts Library (Liverpool)	08-09-19	negative thoughts/performance through performance behaviours (e.g. tying laces, moving shin-pads etc.) as the connection will get stronger and stronger the longer the connections are made between a negative thought and a debilitative response. He mentioned to go in with an open-mindset and take what each coach says with a pinch of salt, as a lot of the time they get the wrong interpretation about a player, hence why I have been brought in. Prior to the first camp next week, Jamie called to get an idea of my thought processes going into the camp and how I would initially approach work with the players. I mentioned about observation being critical in the first camp or two and gaining as much information as possible. Jamie then went on to highlight about potentially de-mystifying sports psych. and educating the players/coaches about what it is as there has never been a sports psych. in place with the squad before. Additionally, further down the line it will be about understanding when to intervene,	30 Minutes	Avril Robarts Library, 79 Tithebarn St, Liverpool, L2 2ER

			and the ability in being agile and reactive. We then went on to discuss about the vision and value of sports psych. across the whole squad and doing work further down the line of where I and the squad are going and my role in this. Ultimately, my role will be unique to other squads as the disability is unique to the squad and the player. Will de-brief with Jamie following the 1st camp.		
John Flinn (Gambia 10 in 10) – Physiotherapist	John Flinn Physiotherapy	22-08-19	Having met with both runners and began working with them, I felt it was beneficial if I had a meeting with one of the support team. John had been providing physio and training plans for Tom and Mike, and therefore had an idea of some of the things they had been working on potential issues that had been highlighted/discussed. John mentioned about Mike and his commitment/desperation to establish himself as a runner once again, with the years he had not been running/competing resulting in Mike feeling that he had 'missed out' on certain opportunities and was trying to rediscover these. This	1 Hour	Faverdale Industrial Estate, Keep Fit Darlington Gym, Unit 1-3, Darlington, DL3 0PX

			aligned and confirmed my thinking around developing and rediscovering Mike's 'runner identity' and the fact that by Mike completing this ultramarathon, was finding a way back into the sport and into his life before he stopped. Both John and I agreed about the risk of Mike potentially becoming 'obsessed' with the running and training side of the challenge, and the importance of allowing himself to 'switch off' and not burnout. Therefore, we discussed about complimenting and supporting one another's work by both addressing Mike's desire to be a runner and John helping/coaching with the physical side of training and myself with the mental side. Moving onto Tom, we discussed about him being more of a 'closed book' and his focus more being towards actually being able to run and complete the challenge, rather than doing it in a certain time etc. Tom had been having knee injuries that he had highlighted with myself and been working through with John, which appears to be an ongoing issue whereby if he		

			pushes himself too hard it has resulted in re-injury. Therefore, I mentioned that from my perspective that this may be a 'mental block' for Tom that may be in the back of his mind, which is made worse by himself and where he may overthink situations/scenarios. Alongside this, we both identified Tom's hectic schedule of running 2 businesses, doing his master's degree, training and meetings, would eventually (if not already) exhaust him and could be detrimental to the challenge. I have now begun to address this with Tom and in the process of establishing a timetable where each area is given adequate support and will allow him to best prepare himself mentally, although whether I am a sports psych., or a glorified PA is yet to be determined…		
Tom Walker & Michael Bleasby	Various Locations: Hash Coffee House; Teesside University; Phone	23-08-19 --- 11-11-19	Having met with all parties and agreed on the areas of support and process of consultancy, I progressed with both clients in implementing an intervention and subsequently monitoring it.	Approx. 20 Hours (Based on my daily Practice Logbook) – This included both sessions and write-ups	Hash Bar and Kitchen, 14 Coniscliffe Rd, Darlington, DL3 8HN Teesside University,

	Calls/Emails; 3 Yorkshire Peaks		Sessions included, a 'Yorkshire 3 peak challenge', whereby I had approx.. 12 hours of contact time with both clients to discuss and work through Mike's runner's identity and Tom's stress reappraisal. With Mike, we began by acknowledging and establishing his 'past self' in relation to his experiences within running and his athletic identity. This then transpired into his current and future identities, and the way in which they corresponded with one another to cause an 'identity crisis'. Through the following group and individual sessions with Mike, we began to work through his identities in a 'storyline' approach, whereby through discussion and understanding of his experiences, were we able to produce effective consultancy work and optimise support. With Tom, underpinned by stress research within the area (namely Lazarus and Folkman; Sparkes & Smith), we identified the stressors that had been proving difficult for Tom in his work, training and life balance. This was affecting his		Olympia Building, Middlesbrough, TS1 3BF

			progress in the build-up to the challenge, whereby his 'appraisal' of stress was predominantly negative and was exacerbated by the demands he placed on himself. After identifying the stressors in play, we worked to reappraise them in a more facilitative format. This involved recognising the primary and secondary appraisal, and if the 'stressor' was viewed as 'significant' we worked to adopting the correct effective coping mechanisms and strategies. As provided, these sessions were conducted over various dates and various channels, in various locations. This allowed versatility in my consultancy if I was not able to meet face-to-face, and enabled me to consult sessions in different environments: track-side; climate chambers etc.		
England Football – Sport Psych. Meetings: Jamie Barker; Jeff Davis; Dan Carter; Andrew	St George's Park	29-10-19	Strategy Meeting across Para Football **1st Part:** *Looking and discussing 'whole programme mentality'.* This began with the creation of a programme for both players and staff and considering 'How much do we educate staff?'	5 Hours	Tatenhill, Burton upon Trent, DE13 9RN

Wood; Erin Prior			- I suggested an 'Iceberg format', whereby we view performance on the surface as 5-10% of the work we do, but this is underpinned by the 85-90% of the 'values'; 'lifestyle'; 'culture'; 'wellbeing' etc. that we do every day at and away from camp - Exit strategy: Having a process in place for transitions in/out of sport. How can the players use their attributes learnt and developed in sport and with the squads be transferred into everyday/wider life? *** Big issue is that I am often trying to create an 'elite performance environment' with 'amateurs' **2nd Part:** *Research* – looking into Mental Health work and referrals. Research needs to be beneficial and if I do research it would have to be with a different squad, so there isn't a confusion of roles!		

			- More awareness = more referrals **3rd Part:** *Reflections from tournaments* -***Dan Carter:*** Positives of fitness, tactics and togetherness. However, there was a lot of 'inconsistent behaviours' re. coaches behaving differently when in pressure situations and getting beat – adapting from the process to what THEY feel is best. -***Erin Prior:*** Negatives of tension between players, coaches and carers – dual role of parents/carers = increased difficulty; Players didn't engage in psych. skills re. 'Individual Preparation'. However, learning from other staff and coaches is crucial in tournaments. -***Andrew Wood***: CAN WE CREATE A TEAM OF STAFF THAT CAN LOSE TOGETHER?; decision making/judgement; open and honest environment; what are our strengths and not our weaknesses?; Togetherness and Identity. -***Jamie Barker:*** 120 MINS FROM KICK-OFF ARE WE CONSISTENT		

			IN THAT TIME??; self-care – as a psych. what am I doing to look after myself?; themes – driving particular themes for tournament(s); IDENTITY – player and team identity, different identities = more able to deal with stress/issues!		
Tom Walker & Michael Bleasby	Various Locations: Teesside University; Phone Calls/Emails	12-11-19 --- 25-11-19	As the challenge approached nearer, we engaged further in building identity with Mike, and negotiating through challenges and stress demands Tom faced. With Mike, we progressed from 'past self' to current and future selves, with identity seen as dynamic, multi-faceted and ever-changing. Mike was able to incorporate both competitive and holistic elements from past and current identities in order to inform how he approached his identity going into and beyond the challenge. This was hugely successful in Mike acknowledging how his experiences within running were influenced/being influenced by other areas of his life. With regards to Tom, we explored various stressors and demands through the Transactional Model of stress. This incorporated narrative inquiry and Socratic questioning in	Approx. 25 Hours (Based on my daily Practice Logbook) - This included both sessions and write-ups	Teesside University, Olympia Building, Middlesbrough, TS1 3BF

			order to consider the impact of these stressors on his performance and wellbeing. If coping was required, we implemented both problem and emotion-focused coping in order to provide Tom with the adequate tools to deal and thrive off stress.		
England Partially Sighted Football Camps	Gloucester;	13th-15th September	The 1st camp began with several meetings over the course of the 1st night. This provided an opportunity for players and staff (new and old) to integrate themselves within the squad and get to know each individual's background and experience. Heavy focus on the 'process' between now and Turkey, with the squad focusing on putting in place all the right things to enable us the best chance to succeed in the World Championships. The 2nd day focused heavily on training and getting all players and staff on the same page re. the regime and planning in/out of game. I began to gain a good insight in our team meeting on the evening on different players roles within the squad and based on personal and group chats, an idea of their understanding and openness to	Approx. 85 Hours (Based on my daily Practice Logbook) – this included whole camp weekends where I was constantly interacting/meeting with players + also work away from camp including phone calls with players.	Tatenhill, Burton upon Trent, DE13 9RN

			psychology. The 3rd day brought about a game against Worcester university futsal team (fully-sighted), where having been beaten 3-1, I got to gain an insight into what certain players were like in a pre-match, game and reflection scenario with both themselves and each other. Ultimately, the weekend provided an introduction into the environment and culture I would be working in, and gave me crucial initial insights into what I will likely need to support with. The 2nd weekend provided a double-header game against Australia. The common themes and main points I got out of this weekend were as follows: 1) I led a session on Saturday night discussing the concept of 'mates 1st, team-mates 2nd' with the lads breaking off in pairs and feeding back as a group, this brought 95% positive comments and outlook from the team, however I was still aware on issues 'pushed under the surface' that would come out in 1-1; 2) pre-match before the 1st game there were severe nerves with Andy Cahill, Tom Lamb, Harry-		
	St. George's Park, Burton-upon-Trent	11th-13th October			

			Mac, Harry Gibbo, where they paced about nervously, didn't know where to look etc. which gave me my first insight into how these may behave prior to a major game in a tournament; 3) Frustration at playing time and 'favouritism' amongst staff to certain players – "if you don't have a big voice or big ego, you won't get heard".		
	St. Georges Park, Burton-upon-Trent	8th-10th November	Prior to the 3rd weekend, I had various chats with several of the players around various issues, including disruption within the team; aggression/emotion on pitch; players not pulling their weigh at/away from camp; wider life issues (including borderline mental health issues and weight issues). Consideration and work around 'off the pitch' areas will likely be a large part of my work with some of the players, which complements my holistic philosophy well! Additionally, I had a sports psych. meeting with those who worked with other disability football squads and their experiences at major tournaments with the squads – lot of food for thought around inconsistent behaviours in		

			tournaments and conflicts, that I will look to head off before we get there. With regards to the camp itself, we played Nottingham Trent futsal team (fully-sighted), which again provided a perfect opportunity (given we lost 10-0) about how certain players react when they are losing – in particular Tom Lamb's lack of discipline that he highlighted prior to the camp was a concern. Yet, Jon-Mac's attitude toward other players on the pitch seems to have subsided. Moving forward, looking to continue to increase role clarity and understanding on an individual and team basis, and work as a 'pressure valve' for players (as put by JP) in order for them to get things off their chest in a comfortable, non-judgemental environment.		
	Loughborough university	22nd-24th November	For the last camp before Turkey, we trained on Friday and played Loughborough university on Saturday. Over the weekend I had various discussions with players and staff around their progress in the build-up to Turkey. Having been beat 10-0 at the last camp by		

			Nottingham, the players had time to reflect on where they currently were in their development and performance. Given the last weekend was regarded more as ‘development’ than ‘performance’, the players had reflected on needing to improve in terms of fitness, diet, commitment, and asking themselves if they ‘were being true to themselves and their team-mates?’. Subsequently, our discussions across the weekend enabled us to work through these areas and for players to understand what they were required to between now and the World Cup. This weekend also integrated me more within the coaching and physio roles within the squad, allowing me to understand the roles and pressures these staff members undergo in game and tournament scenarios.		
England Football – Sport Psych. Meetings: Jamie Barker; Dan Carter; Andrew Wood;	St. Georges Park	30-01-20	<u>Strategy Meeting across Para Football Psychology Support</u> Summary from previous meeting and proposals for enhanced support moving forward. This consisted of: dedication for enhanced ‘out of camp’ support	5 Hours	Tatenhill, Burton upon Trent, DE13 9RN

Erin Prior; Betsy Tuffrey			including coach education, reflection time, and sustainability of provision. Moving forward we look to reduce the ‘performance gap’ and the regression players often make after camp. To counter this, we look to ‘shadow’ other sports psychs across squads during camps, as this will provide a flexible and dynamic idea of support across squads, and the opportunity for psychs to grow in their understanding and knowledge within disability sport. In the afternoon session we progressed through the key updates within each squad: B1 (Ending of a cycle, new initiatives needed – this involved the various squad emotions experienced); Dead (new role for Dan, becoming more knowledgeable and understanding interpreters, new squad etc. through building relationships and casual conversations); Powerchair (‘Buy in’ and ‘Power-shift’ themes were evident here). An overview was provided to summarise, with core		

			themes of shadowing, lifestyle and culture, and 'away day' support for all involved.		

Research					
Client details	**Location**	**Date(s)**	**Nature of the activity**	**Contact Hours**	**Placement Host details (if applicable)**
Liverpool John Moores University	Home Address	22-01-18 – 01-03-18	**SWOT Analysis** The SWOT analysis provided a start-point for the Prof. Doc, with it allowing me to consider the process I would engage with regards to the key roles and the timeline of how/when these may potentially engage in. I broke-down the CPD, consultancy, research, and applied practice elements of my portfolio, and consider how I would approach each area. Alongside this, 8003 and the reflective elements of my study would likely flow throughout and alongside my 8002 assignments, to provide a gradual, scaffolded progression of my knowledge and competencies based on my experiences throughout. The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats elements of the SWOT analysed and evaluated the areas I may ‘thrive’ in, including the networking	Approx. 30 hours based on my daily practice log book	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			contacts I had previously built up within organisations, and key research ideas, but also considered where I may need more support, specifically around consultancy and training elements.		
Jamie Barker: *Team GB Paralympic* Football Sport Psychologist (Cerebral Palsy)	Home Address	29-01-18	**Empirical Paper 1 Proposal** E-mailed Jamie outlining my project proposal and previous research in the area, and possibility of working him and the players. Conducting my research around the area of resilience and team resilience in Paralympic sport – 'Gap in the knowledge base' and original research.	30 Minutes	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT
Dr. Martin Eubank: *LJMU* Supervisor	Liverpool John Moores university	01-02-18	**Empirical Paper/Systematic Review** Discussion with Martin regarding initiation of review, participant sample, publishing of material and journal articles. Inclusion and exclusion criteria also discussed, with the possibility of the 2 *empirical paper* assignments linking into the *systematic review*.	1 Hour	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St Liverpool, L3 5AF
LJMU	Home Address/Liverpool	01-02-18 ---- 01-03-18	**Plan of Training** Completed:	N/A	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham

	John Moores university		- Plan of Training template - Gantt chart - SWOT Analysis -		DL2 1QT
Dr. Jamie Barker: *Team GB Paralympic* Football Sport Psychologist (Cerebral Palsy)	Home Address	02-03-18	**Empirical Paper 1 Proposal** Spoke with Jamie regarding my proposal – informed by him that I may be able to have contact with several teams (blind, partially-sighted, wheelchair, cerebral palsy). Crucial that I can take the research and apply it to the players.	30 Minutes	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT
		07-03-18	Proposal e-mailed to Martin Eubank for clarification. Then to be sent to Jamie Barker and Team GB Football Performance Director.		
		04-04-18 --- 06-04-18	Read several papers around resilience/team resilience and typed up 300 words of introduction.	4 Hours	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT
Consultancy Case Study 1 (Gary Crane)	Home Address	29-03-18	**Consultancy Case Study 1** Began typing up/drafting assessment, due to Gary being my first paying client and my overall neophyte practitioner concerns with an initial client. Typed up 400 words.	90 Minutes	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

		24-04-18 --- 07-06-18	Planning, research and write-up of 1st draft of consultancy case study 1 – this included: 'Background/Introduction', 'Intake', and 'Needs Analysis' sections. Relevant reading was done around the topic alongside my own professional judgement/experiences and insight from knowledgeable others (supervisors, golf professionals etc.).	15 Hours 30 Minutes	
		08-06-18 --- 15-06-18	'Case Formulation' reading and write-up. This involved incorporation of my own philosophy (Construalism) relevant to my client and chosen theory (TPP – Transactional Process Perspective).	5 Hours 30 Minutes	
		18-06-18	Relevant changes made to sections after discussion with supervisor and how to make my essay more succinct, relevant to Gary (my client) whilst considering the criteria the report needed to include.	3 Hours 30 Minutes	

		26-06-18 --- 05-07-18 24-07-18 --- 31-07-18	‘Choosing an intervention’ and ‘Planning the intervention’ sections completed. This tied in all of my taught sessions with Gary and how it relates back to my philosophy, CPD and the client’s goals from the intervention. Completion of final section ‘Delivery and Monitoring’ – this included my final sessions and de-brief with Gary.	7 Hours 6 Hours	
Dr. Martin Eubank: *LJMU* Supervisor	Liverpool John Moores University	31-01-19	**Systematic Review/Empirical Paper** I have been working away at my Systematic Review using the professional tracking process and narrowed it down to a selection of papers. This has provided me with a ‘gap in the knowledge base’ in order to conduct my review on, that will form part/link into my Empirical Paper Research. We also discussed my ethics application form and the content within it, that pending one or two attachments (Questionnaires and Interview format) is ready to be sent in for approval.	1 Hour	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St Liverpool, L3 5AF

Various *LJMU* Staff	Liverpool John Moores University & Home Address	June 2018 – July 2019	**Reflections** Whilst engaging in my Prof. Doc experiences (consultancy, research, and applied work) I have written up various reflections around areas and experiences that I feel have had an instrumental impact and facilitated my learning and development as a practitioner. These reflections have included: - ‘Experience of my first paying client in golf consultancy’ - ‘Experience working with an England youth golfer’ - ‘Development of my consultancy business’ - ‘Development of my philosophy of practice’ - ‘We were just looking for someone with a bit more experience (rejection reflection)’ These reflections, and the subsequent ones I will produce, have provided me with the greatest understanding and knowledge of what it feels to be like as a ‘Sports Psychologist’	Approx. 40 Hours (Based on my daily Practice Logbook)	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St Liverpool, L3 5AF 47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			and the various trials and tribulations I have experienced on my way. This ranges from experiences and difficulties I have had with athletes and how these 'uncomfortable' and 'awkward' moments have had an instrumental effect on my applied work and knowledge moving forward; attempting to develop an effective self-sufficient golf consultancy business, whereby having done various golf days, BNI meetings etc. have I learnt the skill-set it requires to set-up and run an effective start-up business right through from attracting clients to advertising to ensuring revisits; developing my philosophy of practice based on my experiences within practice and research; and the difficulty of being a neophyte practitioner and attracting opportunity and work after being rejected in numerous interviews, and how overcoming these have made me both a better practitioner and a better person.		
Dr. David Tod: *LJMU* Supervisor	Liverpool John	January 2019 - 26-06-19	**Systematic Review** Having sat down with David and discussed my Systematic Review	Approx. 92 Hours (Based on my daily Practice Logbook) -	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St Liverpool,

	Moores University		work that I have been doing since the start of the year, we quickly realised that although the final complete end product of papers I had, the process in which I had engaged in had various flaws. I did not have a title when beginning my review, which had resulted in a lack of clarity in my 'scoping review', 'database review' and 'keyword searches'. This then had undermined and flawed the papers I had ended up with (approx. 881 down to 33); as I had not appropriately used the systematic review protocol involving PICO, PRISMA etc. to drive the selection process. Although I had ended up with a selection of papers that adequately reflected the area of 'disabled identity', I had not engaged in the correct review process, and therefore when having to 'defend' my research to supervisors/examiners etc. the validity of my work would be brought into question. Moving forward, having discussed the systematic review	future hours will be noted on a more consistent basis	L3 5AF

			process with David, Martin and several of my peers, I now know and understand the correct protocol and how I am going to conduct my systematic review appropriately and effectively, to best deliver the area of work around 'disabled identity' research so that it will best inform future research within this area.		
Dr. Martin Eubank: *LJMU* Supervisor Dr. Jamie Barker: *Team GB Paralympic* Football Sport Psychologist (Cerebral Palsy)	Liverpool John Moores University	27-06-19	**<u>Empirical Paper 1</u>** Empirical Paper 1: Having been working through my Empirical paper for several months, I have completed my Ethics Application; Introduction and Methods Sections; constructed the AIMS questionnaire and posted it on 'SurveyMonkey'; and constructed an Interview guide for the participants. However, as I am waiting for Dr. Jamie Barker to arrange an introduction with potential participants, a research collection start date is currently awaiting confirmation, so that I am able to arrange interviews and begin gaining research information.	Approx. 92 Hours (Based on my daily Practice Logbook) – future hours will be noted on a more consistent basis	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St, Liverpool, L3 5AF
Various *LJMU* Staff	Liverpool John Moores	28th June 2019 – 16th July 2019	**<u>Reflections</u>** Following on from my reflections up to July 2019, I have since	7 Hours	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St, Liverpool,

	University & Home Address		been completing reflections on a more consistent basis. These reflections have centred around expanding on my previous reflections, but also included interview experiences and applied examples. In particular, my 'rejection reflection' has been substantially reflected and developed upon to the standard I feel is adequate for someone in my position (Prof. Doc), but also provides a personal element that is unique to myself and my experiences.		L3 5AF 47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT
Dr. David Tod: *LJMU* Supervisor Jan Burrell: *LJMU* Academic Liaison Librarian Various other *LJMU* librarians	Liverpool John Moores university	28-06-19 – 30-07-19	**<u>Systematic Review</u>** Having begun my Systematic Review again, I had completed my PRISMA checklist to drive my systematic review process. The PRISMA subsequently informed my EndNote and database searches, which resulted in a clear-cut and structured final set of papers that had been explored via the correct process. I had continually engaged in the support of LJMU staff including librarians to ensure I was engaging in the correct manner and process throughout the early	41 Hours approx. (Based on my daily Practice Logbook)	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St Liverpool, L3 5AF

			stages of the review and compiling my final papers. I then moved these full-text papers into an Excel database where through the PRISMA guidelines and under the direction of David Tod, I began whittling down my papers into the final total I would use. This resulted in 18 papers at the end of the process that I would use to base my systematic review on. Having continued background reading in the area of meta-analyses; systematic reviews and other relevant literature, I set up a meeting with David Tod to discuss some of the queries and issues I had been experiencing. David and I talked these out, with David providing a previous student's systematic review portfolio to help guide some of my sections (namely 'methods') and allow for the main structure to be appropriate to get my message across. Following the meeting, I began writing up my abstract, introduction and method sections,		

			where I am now currently (05-08-19) at a stage whereby I am ready to begin extracting results from my papers to drive my findings and discussion, whilst revisiting and structuring my other sections. It is flowing a lot smoother this time!		
Dr. David Tod: *LJMU* Supervisor	Liverpool John Moores university	30-07-19 – 29-08-19	**Systematic Review** Following the previous months' work, I have now completed my Methods section and nearly finishing completion of my Results section. This has seemed the longest process of the Review thus far, as I have had to keep revisiting each individual paper on multiple occasions at each sub-heading in order to ensure that the correct 'data analysis', 'guiding theory', and 'theoretical orientations' have been displayed, and so that the correct information is visible within my figures and write-up. Moreover, I have been updating these figures (Table 1. And 2. Etc) and frameworks alongside my write-up, and continually revisiting them in order to gain	24 Hours approx. (Based on my daily Practice Logbook)	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St Liverpool, L3 5AF 47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			the best understanding of the role of identity in disabled sport.		
Dr. David Tod: *LJMU* Supervisor	Liverpool John Moores university	29-08-19 – 23-09-19	**<u>Systematic Review</u>** I have completed my Systematic review. First, I finished and tightened up my Results section, so that in ran cohesively with the rest of the review. I then moved onto my discussion, and amongst several phone call discussions and meetings with David Tod, I began using other research in the area as a guiding framework in order to understand the structure and flow of my discussion. Informed by theory and previous research in the area, I provided a well-rounded Discussion that also provided limitations and future recommendations for research into identity in disabled sport.	34 Hours approx. (Based on my daily Practice Logbook)	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St Liverpool, L3 5AF 47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT
Dr. David Tod: *LJMU* Supervisor	Liverpool John Moores university	24-09-19 – 07-10-19	**<u>Systematic Review</u>** Having finished my write-up, I had subsequent meetings and phone calls with David to finalise formatting criteria and structure of my assignment. Having completed these, I sent off to David for review/approval.	3 Hours 30 Minutes approx. (Based on my Daily Practice Logbook)	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St Liverpool, L3 5AF 47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

Consultancy Case Study 2 (Michael Bleasby & Tom Walker)	Home Address	31-07-19 – 29-11-19	**Consultancy Case Study 2** The Consultancy case study write-up begun with the reading of relevant material around the subject area (stress management, identity). I then wrote-up profiles for each client, with this outlining the key areas of support (based from intake) and the potential interventions/methodology for consultancy. These were backed by pedagogical and epistemological underpinnings around the literature. Write-up of the case study was initiated following several meetings between the clients and me. The intake and needs analysis sections discussed the key areas of support for Mike (identity reconstruction) and Tom (stress-coping mechanisms), with the negotiation of time, philosophy, and approach having a significant impact on how our work operated.	75 Hours approx. (Based on my Daily Practice Logbook)	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			Case formulation was structured around the areas of support, with social identity theory and Lazarus & Folkman's transactional model of stress informing the approach taken. This then transitioned smoothly into choosing, planning, and subsequently delivering an intervention, whereby through continual reflection and peer consultation, my intervention was informed by valid underpinnings within research and applied practice.		
Julia Atkinson-Tait (A-Level Teacher)	Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form	04-01-20 --- 24-01-20	**Teaching & Training Case Study** Having taught at QE Sixth Form for just over a year, I felt that the experiences I had obtained from teaching warranted the formation of my T&T case study. This Case Study consisted of: **The Client Group** – How I assessed the client group needs, including content, conflicting factors in how I looked to work with and incorporate my skills in working with these individuals. **Training Programme Structure and Content** – This section	39 Hours approx. (Based on my daily Practice Logbook)	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St Liverpool, L3 5AF 47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			consisted of the SOLO taxonomy and how this would underpin my sessions and attempting to guide students through stages of development and what this would look like. This also incorporated a Scheme of Work (SoW), and Learning Outcomes of the course. **Appropriate Materials** – What materials I would use that would be most beneficial and effective in monitoring student progression and subsequent assessment. **Programme Delivery & Critical Evaluation** – Discussion of my session(s) content in relation to learning objectives, syllabus and organisation standards. This involved continual discussion of the ongoing conflict between personal teaching style/philosophy vs. demands of the organisation and whether conformity occurs. Evaluation throughout enabled me to continually reflect on how my sessions ran and what could be improved/changed on a session-by-session basis.		

			Assessment of Learning Outcomes – Discussion of how I would assess learning outcomes and 'success'. Furthermore, what I would advise/recommend for future directions and teaching work to consider. The assessment was crucial in understanding how organisation vs. personal conflicts may cause unease and potential conformity to standards that you morally may not agree with. Furthermore, I found that by using a solid taxonomy (SOLO) that underpinned my work, solidified both my and understanding of the subject area and something I would thoroughly recommend moving forward to others.		
Julia Atkinson-Tait - Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form Martin Eubank – Liverpool John Moores university	Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form Liverpool John Moores university	27-01-20 --- 11-02-20	**<u>Teaching Diary</u>** As part of my Teaching and Training assessment, I completed an ongoing reflection and evaluation of my work in the teaching domain. This involved critical in-depth reflection of how I adapted and informed my practice in both the college and football environments, based on	25 Hours 30 Minutes approx. (Based on my daily Practice Logbook)	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St Liverpool, L3 5AF 47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			the experiences and encounters within each. How these interacted and conflicted with one another was one of the main driving factors to enhancing my effectiveness and support moving forward. Ultimately, the teaching assignments have been invaluable in allowing me to adapt and interchange my philosophy and approaches in order to best fit the audience and client. Moving forward, these experiences will undoubtedly inform future teaching and practitioner experiences and enable me to adopt a truer identity as a teacher and individual involved within education.		Vane Terrace, Darlington DL3 7AU
Consultancy Contract (Based on Consultancy Case Study 2)	Home Address	18-02-20 – 20-02-20	Having completed and submitted my Consultancy Case Study 2 before the start of the year, I decided to revisit the feedback I had obtained from the clients (Tom and Mike) in order to submit my consultancy contract. The contract itself consisted of the *contract agreement*: ‘Nature	4 Hours 30 Minutes approx. (Based on my Daily Practice Logbook)	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			of the contract'; programme of delivery; payment of service; and ethical considerations. It also contained *feedback to the client* including relevant figures and theory, and also *feedback from the client* based on the effectiveness of the overall consultancy.		
Empirical Paper 1 *New Version	Home Address	17-02-20 – 13-03-20	Having begun my Empirical Paper a year or so go, it had been backlogged due to ethical and gatekeeper consent, resulting in no contact with potential participants. As a result, myself, Dr. Jamie Barker and Dr. Martin Eubank had a group video call to discuss a new line of research that instead focused upon 'stakeholders' impact on the promotion of wellbeing in Para-Football'. This new empirical study provided an up-to-date area that required further research in from both a research and applied perspective. Research would likely inform practice within the Para-Football environment moving forward, with consistency throughout squads needed, and a programme for all to adhere to.	6 Hours 30 Minutes approx. (Based on my Daily Practice Logbook)	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

	Home Address	14-03-20 – 29-04-20	My revisit of the empirical study, begun with an addendum being submitted on the newly proposed research area, reason for change of subject, and any new potential ethical considerations. Following my addendum being accepted, I begun further reading around the area of well-being, disability sport, and stakeholder influences, in order to inform my judgement on how my research would inform and update the research area, how I would collect and analyse data, and how the findings could have applied implications. I began writing up the introduction of the research, with a clear focus on clarity, being concise, but allowing the reader to ultimately understand the purpose of the research and why it was being conducted. As such, I scaffolded my understanding of the research area, and following several conversations with peers, supervisors and researchers in	53 Hours approx. (Based on my Daily Practice Logbook)	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			the field, I begun recruiting participants. Up to the point of writing this stage of the research, I have completed 5 interviews and began transcribing these. To follow this, another 8-10 interviews will be conducted and transcribed to complete the data collection stage of the research.		
Consultancy Case Study 3 (Harry Macdonald – England PS)	Home Address St George's Park IBSA World Championships, Turkey	20-02-2020 – 12-03-20	Having worked with Harry across several months in the build-up and eventual participation in the IBSA World Championships in Turkey, I felt that the impact of our consultancy and intervention(s) warranted a write-up of a consultancy case study on our time together. Our consultancy was based on a distinct lack of self-confidence, identity issues, and general apprehension in the build-up to the tournament. Our early interactions/meetings identified that Harry often wished to base his own identity on what others wanted of him, and given that he struggled with self-confidence on and off the pitch, he would model	30 Hours 30 Minutes approx. (Based on my Daily Practice Logbook)	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT Tatenhill, Burton upon Trent, DE13 9RN

			others' behaviours and opinions of him, to ultimately showcase what they wanted to see but demonstrated a distinct lack of congruency. Subsequently, cognitive restructuring and self-talk were introduced through Murphy & Murphy (1992) confidence model and guidance, whereby a consistent and holistic identity eventually emerged, where H was remaining congruent to himself. We initiated performance behaviours and self-talk before, during, and after games, where he understood the power of 'being himself'. In the write-up itself, it was crucial having Hays et al. (2010) and their consultancy support interventions, and Murphy & Murphy (1992) as a guideline for support and how this greatly influence my effectiveness and impact.		
Research Commentary	Home Address	13-03-20 – 06-04-20	For my research commentary write-up, I chose to discuss my progression based in terms of: ontology and epistemology, application of knowledge to	14 Hours approx. (Based on my Daily Practice Logbook)	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			research, and research-informed practice. Within each area, I highlighted the major dilemmas and negotiations I undertook, with conflicting approaches, philosophies, and experiences, although challenging, eventually led me to a more informed and coherent approach. The commentary itself has been vital in allowing me to become more self-aware of my personal and practitioner approaches and philosophies, whereby transitioning through: positivist – interpretivist – pragmatist approaches, allowed me to reach a more knowledgeable stand-point. Ultimately, this research has then allowed me to maintain and adhere to research-informed practice, whereby my support and work with athletes is fundamentally underpinned by current best practice.		
Reflective Practice Diary: Reflections	Liverpool John Moores University	17th July 2019 – 29th April 2020	As provided in other logs, the preference of writing up a 'mass block' of reflections within this practice logbook suits the	96 Hours 30 Minutes approx. (Based on my Daily Practice Logbook)	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St, Liverpool, L3 5AF

	& Home Address		process better from a personal perspective. Since my last log, I have neared completion of my reflections, with an even spread across the 4 key roles. As such, my current reflections broadly represent: Key Role 1: CPD events, confidentiality, active listening, boundaries, wearing of different ‘hats’, key reading, interview/application reflections Key Role 2: Stakeholders, client dependency, interventions, personal reflections, weaknesses, payment concerns Key Role 3: Research-practice gap, data analysis, assignment experiences, pedagogy/epistemology/ontology, key research areas, key literature Key Role 4: Viva preparation, courses, affording opportunities, ‘off the shelf’ approaches, relating psychology into other domains and areas of performance		47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			Ultimately, the reflective process I have engaged in throughout the Stage 2 QSEP has been invaluable. At first, I didn't value the 8003 module or hold it in the same regard as the 8002 modules, as I believed it was about 'getting the job done' and meeting the demands of the Prof. Doc. However, as I have grown as both a practitioner and a person, the value and necessity to reflect on my experiences has been imperative. I have noticed a scaffolded progression of my writing ability, with it eventually reading doctorate standard (hopefully!). Also, the quality and standard of each reflection has grown, with this a reflection of me personally, and how I have grown in competence and confidence alongside my reflections. Although not an exhaustive list of reflections, the reflections I have included represent experiences, issues, encounters that matter and are meaningful to me, and have ultimately informed me moving forward.		
All Assignments:	Liverpool John	14-04-20 – 29-04-20	**Revisiting Assignments to Proof-Read before submission**	28 Hours 30 Minutes	Tom Reilly Building, Byrom St,

	Moores University & Home Address		As I am nearing completion of the Stage 2 QSEP, I have begun revisiting and analysing each assignment I have completed, before I submit my portfolio. <u>Teaching and Training Diary and Case Study</u> This involved restructuring certain paragraphs relating to Assessment of Learning Outcomes and Future Research Suggestions, alongside Appendix 1., 3., and 4. To ultimately provide a more coherent and succinct format. <u>Research Commentary</u> This involved relating key points back to prominent literature in the area, and the key theories, concepts, and findings that help shape my ontology and epistemology underlying my research direction. Furthermore, relevant references were inserted to provide empirical basis for points made. <u>Consultancy Case Studies and Contract</u>	approx. (Based on my Daily Practice Logbook)	Liverpool, L3 5AF 47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			The consultancy contract itself didn't require much alteration (except the client feedback report), subsequently, major alterations were made to Consultancy case study 1, and parts of 2 and 3. Consultancy Case Study 1 required a complete overhaul with regards to its structure, the literature base, and how the content around intervention and the consultancy process was carried out. Meanwhile, Case Study 2 and 3 required minor alterations around figures, references, and certain paragraphs being shifted out/around. Systematic Review The Systematic Review was looking to be published, therefore the use of a secondary researcher in Noora Ronkainen was called to sift through and analyse the project, with this offering key criteria for publication. Empirical Paper 1 & 2 With the Empirical Papers currently being carried out, these		

			required extra reading around the Introduction and Method sections in order to inform what had already been discussed. Ultimately, the revisiting of these assignments over this key period provided a significantly more efficient and coherent portfolio to emerge, whereby its standard and quality improved twofold.		
All Assignments	Home Address	30-04-20 – 22-05-20	**<u>Revisiting Assignments to Proof-Read before submission</u>** I continually revisited the key assignments to ensure best practice was being carried out, and that I could review the content, structure, frameworks, and overall themes to ensure a more comprehensive end-product. Consultancy Case Study 1: Most of my hours in this period focused on my first case study, with this requiring a significant amount of restructuring, adjusting of content, and sorting of appendices, in order to get the piece of work up to the doctorate standard. With this being my first assignment of the doctorate	28 Hours approx. (Based on my Daily Practice Logbook)	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			process, it was interesting to note the journey and progression I have made in the detail and quality of my write-ups, in comparison to when I began the process.		
Reflection Assignments: Meta-Reflection and General Reflections	Home Address	30-04-20 – 22-05-20	With the Meta-Reflection of the whole doctorate process, the detail required within 5000 words was particularly challenging. As such, I decided to break it down into: philosophy and values, synergy across learning outcomes, reflection, and leaving my mark, Ultimately, I felt that these 4 areas provided the most significant and impactful areas on my trainee route, and how navigating these has led me to becoming both a better practitioner and better person. Alongside this, I completed reflections on 'Viva Preparation', 'Qualitative Research', 'Golden thread of literature', 'Reflection on the reflective process', 'consultancy philosophy', 'organisational culture', and 'affording CPD opportunities". These reflections, alongside the others, began to form a	36 Hours 45 Minutes approx. (Based on my Daily Practice Logbook)	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			comprehensive overview of the meaningful experiences, dilemmas, issues, training, and interactions throughout the process, to present what you see in front of you – an individual devoted to humanistic principles, holistic development of the individual, a belief that realities are largely dependent on the individuals' interpretations of the experience, with influences of culture, environment, and other experiences, and how key reflection is to developing.		
Empirical Paper 1	Home Address	23-05-20 – 05-06-20	**Empirical Paper 1** Following the initial 5 interviews I had carried out, I arranged a further 5, with difficulty in achieving further interviews following this. Naturally, data saturation had begun to occur. After transcribing all interviews, I began coding them through thematic narrative analysis with this allowing me to align with my interpretivist paradigm, constructivist epistemology and critical realist ontology, as I valued the uniqueness of individual experience, alongside	64 Hours approx. (Based on my Daily Practice Logbook)	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington Co. Durham DL2 1QT

			the value of capturing shared, mutual themes amongst the participants. Following this, I was able to discover 5 major themes within the research, which allowed me to capture the psychological well-being experiences of stakeholders in Para-Football. This well-being was impacted by the individuals' ability to find purpose and meaning within their role and personal life, with a balance between these 2 'worlds' key in sustaining PWB. However, stakeholders did often exhibit burnout, fatigue, lack of enjoyment, purpose, which was demonstrated by a lack of balance, lack of ambition/drive, and an inability to manage/balance the demands of their role with finding purpose and reprieve in their personal life. Moving forward, it was essential to further investigate these experiences and how their PWB may/may not play a role within their Para-Football Stakeholder role.		
Empirical Paper 2	Home Address	06-06-20 – 25-06-20	**Empirical Paper 2**	61 Hours	47 Teesway Neasham Darlington

			In light of the first empirical paper, and the paucity of research in the area of disability football, it was agreed that between myself and my supervisor, that a second empirical paper in the area would be of great benefit. As such, follow-up interviews were conducted with stakeholders to focus on how they develop PWB cultures within Para-Football. Findings revealed that Para-Football cultures were developed through: social and emotional support, managing roles and relationships, performance-well-being dyad, influence of elite disabled sport culture, and future development. As such, it was found that stakeholders effectively develop a culture through promoting humanistic, holistic well-being of the individual(s), an ability to offer empathetic, trusting, and honest support, and effectively balancing performance and well-being to both stretch and support players. Ultimately, this research looks to expand on an underdeveloped area and pioneer future research.	approx. (Based on my Daily Practice Logbook)	Co. Durham DL2 1QT

Dissemination					
Client details	**Location**	**Date(s)**	**Nature of the activity**	**Contact Hours**	**Placement Host details (if applicable)**
Julia Atkinson-Tait + Jane Spink (A-level PE)	Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form	22-10-18	Teaching and Training Case Study Prior discussion of session relevant to what is being covered currently on the A-Level curriculum. Decided that an initial session around 'stress management' that incorporated anxiety and stress management techniques would be most suitable. Session flowed very well with all students engaging in the material and the tasks set. They all appeared to be gaining a lot from the session, based on feedback during and after the session. When appropriate further discussion was opened up on key areas, with the lecturers pointing out how this relates to coursework and exams. Overall, even though half the content was discussed it provided a start-point to	2 Hours	Vane Terrace, Darlington DL3 7AU

			where future sessions can go and how much content and how to address it moving forward.		
Julia Atkinson-Tait (A-level PE)	Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form	06-02-19	Teaching and Training Case Study Julia and I had discussed before the session about how students were struggling with the area of 'Information Processing'. In particular we agreed I would focus on the areas of 'Working Memory', 'Selective Attention', and 'Long-term Memory', and supplement what was being taught in the curriculum by adding practical content and scenarios relevant to their *Learning Outcomes*. Although initial confusion from the students with the *working memory* model being used, once we overcame this they began to engage with the content and able to offer valid information, insights and examples to drive home the material I was delivering. With Julia adding further information relating to potential questions in their A-level exams; it provided a well-rounded lecture whereby	2 hours	Vane Terrace, Darlington DL3 7AU

			the students were guiding their own learning/discussions around the content and being able to relate the examples in professional sport I was providing, back to how they would need to answer potential exam questions. However, I feel that there were occasions where the content I was delivering was irrelevant to what was being taught in the curriculum, therefore causing confusion and reducing engagement from the students. This related to motor control and in particular *Quiet-eye* processing, whereby although I attempted to relate it back to *selective attention*, it did result in two students asking if this was relevant to their exam. Based on this feedback and also a few students reluctant to engage, it is crucial that I address my content for following lectures so that they are more engaged and interacted in the session for a better learning experience for all involved.		

Julia Atkinson-Tait & Jane Spink (A-level PE)	Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form	07-02-19	Following on from yesterday's session, I taught the second cohort of A-level students on 'Information Processing'. The session involved similar content to the one delivered previously, however it incorporated more information and examples from different sports (e.g. equestrian, dance, gymnastics, volleyball) in order to relate it to more of the students. With certain students struggling in the previous session to apply the content to their sport, I felt that they were not getting as much out of the session as they potentially could be. One area of this focused on 'Selective Attention' and how in equestrian sports both the rider and horse both may focus on relevant/irrelevant information and how this occurs and has an effect on performance. Additionally, the introduction of a 'cognitive bottleneck' of information and explanation/diagram around this provided the students with a clearer understanding of how	2 hours	Vane Terrace, Darlington DL3 7AU

			information is attended to in elite performance and filtered down. With areas such as these being addressed it allowed the session to flow much smoother and thus resulted in increased engagement from the students. Following the session, I discussed with Julia about the content to deliver over the following sessions. It was decided that models and theories within 'Information Processing' and 'Schemas' would be most beneficial to cover. As Julia had highlighted that the students responded best to interactive examples and physical tasks, I decided that as they were required to submit a certain amount of 'playing footage' in their sport over the year that, with their authorisation we would cover a few of the students' match videos and break them down in the session to get them to actively state when they believed each theory/model was relevant to each		

			area/period/play of their own game. Julia and I both agreed this would be a highly effective alternative method of teaching as the students would be viewing their own footage and likely engage more with their own performances. Furthermore, more practical scenarios/examples will be used to supplement learning.		
Enterprise Business Start-Up Event	Boho 6, Middlesbrough	16.04.19 - 17.04.19	16.04.19 The first day of the event focused around the qualities necessary to start and develop a successful consultancy business, and in my case as a sole-trader. This targeted involved me talking about the specific elements around the product and service I am offering (performance psychology in sport and business), and how I attract potential clients through a clear marketing and branding strategy and how I can learn from competitors within my field. This was presented to a group of 8. 17.04.19	13 Hours	Boho 6, Middlesbrough, TS1 1RE

			The second day of the event looked more at understanding the client/customer and forging/developing an effective relationship from start (contracting/payment etc.) to finish (reflection/follow-up service). The second day allowed me to deliver content on my business operations, day-to-day work, and the different audiences I attract/look to attract in the future with the provision of performance psychology services. Overall, the event allowed me to deliver to a lay audience not involved in sport, around my services as a consultant and practitioner. This showed to the audience what the necessary foundations from a start-up business perspective were, and how and what implementing psychology into sport and business as a consultancy looks like. This ranged from areas such as insurance, social media presence, expansion of clients and the fundamentals		

			relevant to building and developing a successful start-up business.		
Julia Atkinson-Tait & Jane Spink (A-Level PE)	Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form	13-05-19	With the student's exam period approaching, Julia contacted me requesting if I would be able to provide further support in the lead up to the exam period. This session focused around following on from the previous session I had took on 'Information Processing', as the students had been struggling within this area. The session itself flowed naturally with me leading the session around certain models, theories and how they related into practical examples and modern-day sport. Julia and Jane provided support around what area of the exam and learning outcomes I was teaching would relate to. As I had not studied this area of psychology for several years, there were certain occasions where I had difficulty projecting my understanding towards the students and this did cause some confusion at times.	1 Hour 30 minutes	Vane Terrace, Darlington, DL3 7AU

			However, my ability to summarise the models concisely and efficiently alongside relevant applied examples within sport, was recognised as something that would greatly prepare and benefit the students for their forthcoming exams and their ability to understand the question and answer articulately.		
		28-05-19	Following on from the previous session, I delivered a 'snapshot' session with the students around areas relevant for their upcoming exam after half-term. This focused around Attention models, Information Processing, Learning Theories and other areas. Although I was effective in delivering the session and constructing conversation/discussion around certain areas to increase understanding, there were occasions when I felt out of my depth. This was largely due to my knowledge of the subject area(s), whereby I had not studied them for 6-7 years, and	1 Hour 30 Minutes	

			therefore causing some confusion when highlighting and delivering certain definitions, concepts and information around some of the areas. However, after discussing with some of the students and Julia after the session, it was reinforced that although there were instances of misunderstanding, the students were furthered from being shown alternate approaches to learning and A-Level psychology. Moving forward, I need to create and establish a more effective psychology teaching and training programme for the students that will revolve more around an intervention-programme based approach. This will be made more effective than previous, by setting out clear start-end processes that incorporates various teaching methods to facilitate understanding (including practical, theoretical, individual and group). It will incorporate large amounts of		

			my previous work with the students, however, will have more of a clear-cut structure.		
Julia Atkinson-Tait (A-Level PE) Richard Sille	Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form	07-11-19 12-11-19 22-11-19	<u>Teaching and Training Case Study</u> Having been in contact with Julia over the past few months around sending out information to the students about my progression route, experiences within sport psychology etc., although I hadn't been teaching, I remained in contact with the college. Having spoken with Richard Sille (Prof. Doc student) around various ways to engage the students, I began to implement more variety within my sessions. This involved encouraging debates, topical case studies and buzz groups. Rather than death by PowerPoint, we would debate on areas such as aggression in sport, guidance and feedback, and anxiety in sport. This allowed the students to problem solve, collaborate, and arrive at a defensible standpoint. I was	Several 1 Hour Sessions	Vane Terrace, Darlington, DL3 7AU

			then able to facilitate thoughts and ideas from the students, and fill in any potential blanks at the end. My sessions also involved introducing case studies and practical tasks, whereby in our guidance session, we used a putting task to display visual, verbal, manual and mechanical guidance, to facilitate learning in an alternate way. The students highlighted that they were able to understand the learning outcomes from a different perspective, which linked into how they would be able to integrate this information into answering exam and coursework questions.		
Julia-Atkinson Tait (A-Level PE)	Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form	21-01-20	Session with AS- and A-Level groups on Attitudes These sessions consisted of an attitude's topic and key syllabus content: definitions, theories, applied examples, case studies. Within this, I directed students through the definition of attitude, triadic model, then	1 Hour 30 Minutes	Vane Terrace, Darlington DL3 7AU

			techniques such as verbal persuasion & cognitive dissonance. Activity-wise, the session involved exam-based questions, debates and buzz groups around the content – critically, I noticed a shift in my dependence (less) of PowerPoint and how creating and directing more interactive sessions; although initially awkward and thought-provoking, the feedback gained from students and staff around understanding was significantly greater as they were able to gain knowledge through other's understanding of the content, and by discussing and deliberating ideas they felt they gained more from the session.		
West Nottingham College – Sport HE Industry Day	DANCOP – West Nottingham College	12-02-20	I was invited as a guest speaker at the event, given I was involved in the Higher Education sports industry. I began by introducing myself alongside a community officer from Leicester City, and a marketing executive from Pure Gym.	6 Hours	West Nottingham College Derby Rd, Mansfield NG18 5BH

			Following this, I led groups in discussions and workshops around my experience and education within sport and specifically sport psychology, so that they could gain an understanding of the training and qualifications required within both my and their field going forward, both in and out of university. A group workshop followed, where I supported students in constructing and then delivering a university prospectus to teachers and staff, whereby they had to ensure they outlined key information about their course, entry requirements and content etc. Ultimately, the day provided an excellent opportunity to present to students around areas that were key to my development and key information and points around how they can access opportunities in sport and their own industries.		

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

WILLIAM CROSSEN

DSPORTEXPSY - CANDIDATE NUMBER: 648122

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE DIARY

Development of Philosophy of Practice

Key Role 1 (and 2)

Description: Throughout my training there have been multiple occasions where I have questioned my competency to deliver effective work with a client. My understanding of the effectiveness of my service during consultancy, teaching and other practical experiences, has long been an issue that I have considered but not fully engaged with. Hence, I have been left asking and reflecting upon the question, 'What constitutes effective work as a sport psychologist?'

To begin to understand what constitutes effective practice, I focused initially on what often underpins 'an effective sport psychologist' as an individual, and from this, whether it was consistent with my philosophy of practice and approach to the work I conducted. Broadly, effective sport psychologists are those who help athletes attend to their issues and achieve their goals (Cropley, Hanton, Miles, & Niven, 2010; Tod, 2017; Tod, Marchant & Anderson, 2007). Yet more specifically, it is the interpersonal skills and expert knowledge exhibited by the sport psychologist that are the most important characteristics for clients and practitioners (Lubker, Visek, Geer, & Watson, 2008; Woolway & Harwood, 2015; Zakrajsek, Steinfeldt, Bodey, Martin & Zizzi, 2013). With fellow peers, supervisors and other practitioners within the field emphasising the significance of their approach on how effective they were able to work with a client; it had been one area that I was highly aware of, however struggled the most to fully understand. Furthermore, with it often being viewed that the best sport psychologists are fully aware of their own practice philosophy (Fortin-Guichard, Boudreault, Gagnon and Trottier, 2018), it was imperative I understood how my philosophy informed and influenced my practice.

***Feelings**:* Although I continued to work within the field and research, it was only when presented with the question of 'How does my philosophy inform my practice?' in an interview,

that I realised my lack of knowledge awareness. These initial feelings of inadequacy and questioning of my competence were compounded by the fact that I was unsuccessful in the job interview. Regarding my philosophy, I maintained that my work was informed by *construalism*, whereby I felt a client-led, collaborative exploration and building of theory unique to the client, resonated most with my practice-approach. My 'philosophy' of *construalism* had been a result of a brief description I had read during my MSc. of Richard Keegan's 'Being a Sport Psychologist' (2015), but with little substance behind why I had adopted this particular philosophy.

Although I prioritised an effective working relationship and a tailored approach, quite often I had tended to adopt practitioner-led practice, whereby I had directed the questioning and lines of enquiry, and subsequently determined the intervention strategy. Therefore, how could I maintain a construalist philosophy of practice, yet often practice with Certaintist tendencies? - This incongruence and inconsistency had led to feelings of uncertainty and isolation, and a need to harness self-awareness of my core values and beliefs in order to live out my values in my work (Chandler et al., 2016).

As I progressed with my training, there was an increased amount of focus placed on evaluating applied practice. This generated my ability as a practitioner to be self-aware, reflective and self-critical, so that I could conduct more effective work moving forward (Keegan, 2015). At this stage of development, I felt that as I was actively listening to the client, designing an intervention with their collaboration (albeit practitioner-led), and then reflecting on my practice; I was displaying some of the implications highlighted by a *construalist*-based philosophy. Yet, there were still elements of my practice I needed to consider and actively reflect upon in order to be consistent with my values and beliefs.

Evaluations: I began to gain increasing amounts of applied experience through consultancy work, relevant CPD opportunities and dissemination (teaching, coaching etc.). Throughout these experiences, I had become increasingly accustomed to adapting my philosophical approach based on the circumstance and client I found myself with, yet having a consistent belief and value that I wanted to develop the individual as a whole, both on and off the 'pitch'. Adopting this *holistic* approach had been effective during my experiences within golf and football consultancy, and also within my teaching of A-level PE and Psychology. Moreover, I attended further job interviews within sport, whereby my *holistic* approach and how this could be incorporated into the organisation had been welcomed, and more importantly ran coherently with my own personal and practitioner-based values (Chandler et al., 2016).

These experiences had led me to conclude that I had experienced a common neophyte practitioner issue, whereby I needed to show self-awareness and ability to reflect on my experiences in order to develop as a practitioner and as a person (Cropley et al., 2010). Having discussed my concerns with my supervisor (Martin Eubank) and other practitioners (e.g. David Tod) around what I felt my philosophy incorporated, I began to evaluate these in comparison to *construalism*. It became apparent that merely constructing an intervention tailored to the client and it being a collaborative exploration did not justify myself being a pure *construalist*, and instead highlighted my openness to various influencing philosophies. Although exhibiting certain *construalist* characteristics, it was apparent that I had incorporated and negotiated my way through various other philosophies (Pragmatist, Fallibilism) that had led me to where I was, but had also unknowingly created confusion surrounding what philosophy I was informed by.

Analysis: The transition of my philosophy of practice has been instrumental in developing myself as a practitioner and awareness of how philosophy informs my practice. Having discussed and understood this through my supervisor, I was made aware of the continuum that

practitioner' philosophies operate on and that I was likely using a cognitive-behavioural approach that was informed by a holistic philosophy (Keegan, 2015). I structured my practice around the concept that the person's thoughts determine their feelings and subsequent behaviour (cognitive behavioural), whereby my approach focused on highlighting and challenging unhelpful, irrational thoughts and behaviours, so that they influence how the individual behaves. As I stressed the importance of developing the individual 'on and off the pitch' it reinforced my holistic approach to practice, with the belief that performance and wellbeing were inescapably linked (Brady & Maynard, 2010), and thus for personal growth and performance enhancement to occur, the individuals' experiences in and out of sport need to be understood and respected. However, as is often the case in sport and elite sport, there are occasions where pursuing/using an alternate philosophy will be more effective. This has been apparent when operating within pressurised football environments and coaches requiring quick and effective work where the need to be *pragmatic* was essential, and do whatever works to get the job done. Although atypical from my philosophy, I now understand that having a core philosophy (*holistic*) often requires deviation and room for manoeuvre in certain situations so that my work can be at its most effective.

Conclusions: Being in the early stages of my practitioner career there will be instances where I question my effectiveness and impact on the client, and whether the service I am offering is consistent with my philosophy (Keegan, 2015). Therefore, by encountering uncomfortable experiences as a practitioner and subjecting myself to as many experiences as possible and then reflecting upon these, I will likely continue to best develop as both an individual and as a sport psychologist. As I am now able to understand the contributing factors and characteristics to my philosophy and when certain other approaches may be more effective (although less comfortable!), I will now likely be able to offer a more productive and impactful service and experience for my client. It is only by being subjected to questions around my philosophy

within interviews and discussions with my supervisor and peers that I have been able to transition through certain philosophies and approaches to be able to best understand which one most effectively influences MY work.

Action Plan: Moving forward, I feel that similar cases and experiences will likely arise again throughout my practitioner career. Although content with where I am at with my current philosophy, I understand that it may change throughout future encounters, where I will need to be flexible within my approach and versatile to incorporate other philosophies and methodologies. I will need to be more proactive in issues surrounding my effectiveness in future, so that I am able to efficiently and effectively negotiate my way through them to produce the best practice tailored to the client. This will be done through reflecting on my practice experiences and ongoing discussions with those in my field (practitioners, peers, supervisors). By having an interchange of views and opinions with others, it will develop my knowledge base (*Knowles et al, 2001*) so I am more informed as I progress through my consultancy and encounter different situations in practice.

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We were just looking for someone with a bit more experience'

Key Role 1

What?

Following rejections and unsuccessful interviews at various organisations, and similar feedback regarding 'lack of experience', I felt it was apt to write a reflection once I successfully had my 'foot in the door'.

When preparing for interviews and employment in sport, emphasis is placed on the practitioner's ability in improving athletic performance alongside general well-being (*Woolway & Harwood, 2015*). Central to this, is the practitioner's underpinning experience, whereby their successful approach to practice will have derived from their training or knowledge competencies (*Poczwardowski, 2017*). Moreover, having been involved in several interview processes, I had begun to gain additional insight into what organisations specifically outlined as qualities they sought for in a successful candidate and practitioner.

Concerning my interview experiences, the interviewer (Academy Directors, Head of Sport Science, Lead Sport Psychologists) and organisations (England Powerchair Squad, Blackburn Rovers FC, Celtic FC) had emphasised a "*broader base of experiences*"; "*exposure across as many platforms as possible*"; and "*experience designing and implementing psychological support within an academy*" as the outstanding pitfalls within my practitioner skillset. Having designed and implemented psychological support within male, female and disabled football clubs and academies, I felt somewhat bewildered at the reasons for not 'getting the job' and begun to question if there was alternative reasoning for being unsuccessful. This was where I began to delve into the existential realms and meaning behind my experiences and my own authenticity, whereby I potentially sought after these employment opportunities due to the nature of the position and the calibre and status of the organisation.

My initial frustrations were a result of several unsuccessful interviews; and when considering work, I had conducted, and experience gained, alongside the continual reflective practice and self-reflection I had engaged in (*Anderson, Knowles & Gilbourne, 2004*), it had left me unclear how to best develop my practitioner capabilities. Furthermore, having been commended for content within my interview, my personal characteristics and actual interview performance (*Huffcutt, 2011*), the interview experiences had left me uncertain in my overall ability to practice, especially areas concerning my competency and philosophy of practice. Yet, what the interviews had done was open up the self-awareness and self-exploration I needed in order to take ownership of my existence and experiences moving forward (Ronkainen & Nesti, 2017).

So, What?

I, as many other neophyte practitioners, often get caught up in a never-ending 'catch 22' scenario, between needing more practical experience, and actually being able to gain this practical experience. What this experience and opportunity allowed me to do is consider more holistic aspects of my existence as both a practitioner and an individual in my day-to-day life and my relationships with other people. Merely taking the interview comments from the academy director(s) and sport psychologist(s) on board was what I believed was the key to developing my competencies and philosophy as a practitioner, so that I would be best suited for any future opportunities. Yet, what these 'rejections' had done, was instead allow me to consider these experiences as part of my broader life and how the world itself works. It reminded me of the existential 'self', whereby one is not stable and unchanging within their life world, instead they are part of an ever-changing and complex relationship between the human being and their being (*Kierkegaard, 1983, p.13*). What this meant to me was that the world is sometimes is a 'shitty place' and that bad things will happen; however, it is my

responsibility to overcome these experiences and make sense of them, in order to question my meaning and authenticity and be able to develop as a human being.

Given that experience can often be attributed as a product of learning, and not a product of time, early interview experiences and what most employers trust 'experience' largely to be, had caused conflict. Although I had concerns associated with gaining employment in sport psychology, I had begun to be more productive and proactive in reflecting on my experiences as part of wider life meaning. Through reflective practice and self-reflective living (reflecting on my experiences and events, successes and failures) (*Aoyagi et al., 2017*), I had begun to increase my self-awareness and develop my practice in preparation for potential future interviews. These reflections had largely consisted of professional interactions (applied experiences, supervisor meetings, peer consultations) alongside my personal written reflections and multidimensional self-growth (*Aoyagi et al., 2017*). Furthermore, having engaged in applied practice within diverse footballing environments, I'd had multiple opportunities to reflect upon my own philosophy of practice *(Poczwardowski, Sherman, & Ravizza, 2004*). Although initially unaware, these interview experiences presented the opportunity to recognise the diversity required in my training and have confidence in my ability to practice.

My holistic development and possession of the personal and professional characteristics considered essential within sport psychology practice, would begin to give a truer representation of myself as an individual and a practitioner (*Woolway & Harwood, 2015*). My subsequent consultancy work within golf, teaching within education, and research opportunities had allowed me to develop and 'work on myself' (*Simons & Andersen, 1995, p.463*), whilst 'exposing myself across as many platforms as possible' that was sought after by these organisations. Crucially, following discussions with critical friends and their alternative interpretations (*Smith & McGannon, 2017*), it gave me the respite I needed to reflect as a whole on why (truly!) I was applying for these jobs and opportunities, and wanted to work with these

teams and organisations. This process of engaging in reflective practice and learning through existential and holistic paradigms, had allowed me to fully understand what I was looking for within employment, both on a personal and organisational level. Given that successful practitioners are often heralded for their ability to be reflective and open to evaluation and progression of their practice approach (Anderson, Knowles & Gilbourne, 2004; Sharp & Hodge, 2011; Tod, Marchant & Andersen, 2007), I had truly felt I had taken a step towards fulfilling this.

Now What?

Having received an opportunity to showcase my abilities as a practitioner and an individual, my initial response was attempting to prove the organisations where I had been unsuccessful, 'wrong', and they had missed an opportunity not hiring me. My frustration at seemingly 'doing everything right' yet still being unsuccessful, had rightly or wrongly fuelled my desire to seek and develop myself holistically. However, having consulted with various networks and allowing extended reflection, it became apparent that this initial 'reaction' was not true or coherent with myself. Given that as a practitioner, I consistently reinforce the objective awareness of the place of sport and the athlete and individual in the 'bigger world' (Friesen & Orlick, 2010), I had not been true to my philosophy and approach that I so strongly adhered to. Yet, as practitioners, we are required to constantly learn more in order to practice optimally, admit to gaps in knowledge and accept the fact that our work is continually undergoing a learning process (*Gardner, 1991*), and this experience had helped greatly in my own understanding of that.

Having 'gained entry' so to speak, (which in itself is a 'universal step'; *Keegan, 2015*) I am now in a fortunate position where I not only am able to practise the JOB that I have dreamed of, but, also I am fortunate to understand the value of my initial 'rejections' and how

significantly they shaped my development. There is a 'gap in knowledge' (as suggested by *Keegan, 2015*) regarding how a practitioner in my position navigates their initial career experiences and service, however it is only by immersing ourselves as professionals in this, that we are able to develop. To finish, my initial experiences within sport psychology have (like many others' journeys) been uneasy, frustrating, and overwhelming, however, having experienced these and looking back, they have shaped a person and practitioner who is significantly more prepared for practice. Ultimately, it is worth remembering that 'before a practitioner can gain entry, it is necessary to overcome several barriers to entry' (Woolway, 2018, p. 18). Hopefully, I've overcome most of mine!

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CPD and Training Opportunities and Challenges

Key Role 1

What?: With the professional doctorate training equating to approximately £812.50 monthly costs, and with the current uncertainty and lack of opportunity around employment, I am left at risk of missing out on valuable opportunities to further my knowledge and skill-set. These opportunities have included: Mind flick/Spotlight training and accreditation (£1000), Mental Health First Aid (£300), Golf Psychology Training Programmes (£699), LJMU Football Conferences (approx. £200-£300), and various other BPS and DSEP conferences and events. Reflecting on the potential of completing these training and CPD prospects, and talking to others who have engaged in these opportunities, have left me feeling that I have missed the proverbial 'boat' and feeling helpless as I physically couldn't fund these training opportunities, and as a result, the 'ship has sailed'. Furthermore, given the importance of networking within the industry, it is the building of rapport and relationships with these potential key gatekeepers, of which may help with future employment opportunities.

So, What?: In my experience, Stage 2 training alone is no longer 'enough' to secure employment and satisfy an organisation's job profile. Subsequently, it is the additional CPD and training that a neophyte practitioner must complete, which will likely give them an advantage over their peers and others in the field. Literature highlights the need for sport psychology to gain a better understanding of competence, with implications for the training and development of its practitioners to become an accountable field (Fletcher & Maher, 2013). It remains questionable as to whether organisations, universities, and stakeholders are taking account of the demand for affordable CPD, and providing funding opportunities, or covering a certain amount of expenditure, in order to give those who are less financially viable a chance.

If you consider the price of a contract (car, mobile etc.), household bills, and even that of a mortgage, the cost of professional training is a significant monthly sum. Trainees who are not in employment can easily find themselves 'out of pocket', with their proverbial academic 'financial hole' getting deeper and deeper. When you also consider the various other expenses i.e., insurance, BPS membership, travel and accommodation costs amongst other 'necessities', it is easy to understand why trainees evaluate and question their chosen career path. We have decided to embark on this route (blindly or not) and have to take some responsibility for the financial repercussions, however, there is a slight feeling of profiteering and exploitation from businesses and organisations that offer CPD in the field.

Now What?: There is greater awareness and understanding around the need to further develop neophyte practitioners,, but affordable CPD opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, and attitude are needed by trainees at different stages of training (Elman et al., 2005; Fouad et al., 2009). It is noted that there has been a rise in 'free' opportunities for training (Advance HE teaching and training) and conferences (DSEP Northern Hub, AASP, BPS North East Branch) alongside subsidised costs of those on a recognised accredited training route. Having engaged in these, amongst various other events, there are significant benefits to be had for those on a budget.

Ultimately, I still feel that more work can be done in the field to offer trainees low / no cost opportunities for CPD. This will not only help allow these students access to relevant opportunities, but as a result, develop and produce more rounded and effective sport psychology practitioners.

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Diversity of Psychology in Performance Settings (Staffordshire Conference)

Key Role 1

What?: As part of my continued training within the Professional Doctorate, I must evidence an active commitment to continuing professional development (CPD) (Campbell & Moran, 2014). Moreover, on a personal level I was still trying to 'find my feet' with regards to my philosophy, approach, and the skills that would be core to my practice. Having continually marketed myself as a practitioner (with limited success), I became aware of conferences, training, and workshops available to me (at a price), which would be crucial as they often address topics not covered in formal courses and offer opportunities to interact with others (Wright, Trudel, & Culver, 2007). Subsequently, I began attending conferences to develop my experience, with the first being the Performance Psychology Conference at Staffordshire University. This conference had an array of guest lecturers and practitioners, who I thought may be able to help in further understanding myself as both an individual and as a practitioner moving forward.

So, What?: Going into the conference I assumed that I would be an inactive audience member, who would be 'taught' by professionals working predominantly in sports such as football (given its popularity and conversations with other students). However, what arose was individuals working with: the RAF in Motivational Interviewing (MI), managing trauma in high performance (based on work with the Marines), interactive consultancy sessions, 5-minute lightning talks, and Olympic practitioners and their work during high pressure situations. This was far more diverse from what I'd expected, and allowed me to begin gaining a different perspective to how psychology can be applied to and influence performance more broadly (Camire, Trudel, & Forneris, 2014). Specifically, within MI, I was exposed to how fundamental skills such as active listening (Ivey, 1983) and the 'power of silence' are crucial in 'pre-contemplation' and 'contemplation' stages within consultancy, and how it can help develop

more effective support and better relationships being formed (Breckon, 2015). The content and activities within the Managing Trauma workshop exposed me to how education and psychological support within the armed forces around areas such as mental health and performance; are of great benefit in promoting wellbeing and supporting individuals who transition out of the military and sport and into everyday life. Furthermore, the Olympic talk gave real depth into concepts such as 'Project Thrive' and how assisting individuals to not just 'cope' with pressure but 'thrive' on it, is critical to support in elite sport.

Now What?: While attending the conference and learning from its content allowed me to develop knowledge and skills necessary to be an efficient practitioner (Erickson et al., 2008; Wright, Trudel, & Culver, 2007), the most important part of the conference arose from my conversation with Dr. Jamie Barker following his 5-minute lightning talk. Having interviewed for the England Powerchair role earlier in the year, Jamie had sat on the interview panel. Although unsuccessful in the interview, my conversation with Jamie at the conference prompted him to say that I had delivered exceptionally well and that he was glad to see I was attending CPD opportunities to better develop myself and my practice. Following this, he stated that a position was becoming available to work with the England Partially Sighted Football Team, and that based on my previous interview and interest in disability sport, I should consider applying.

I interview for the job and was successful. Currently, I am approaching a year in my role having been to a World Cup and won a silver medal, and most importantly working with a squad who I have been able to fully align my philosophy with (Fortin-Guichard, Boudreault, Gagnon and Trottier, 2018). Looking back, the conference had provided me with an eye-opening experience to psychology's' diversity within performance, and moving forward opened areas of interest further down the line for me to explore. Furthermore, my attendance of the conference gave me the opportunity to meet with others in the field and understand their

experience and knowledge in the industry, and since then I have attended various workshop, conferences, events that have allowed me to continually develop my expertise and skill-set as both an individual and practitioner, but also my network. Moving forward, I strongly advise any individual within the field to maximise these conferences and opportunities to network with others, as you never know, they may result in you getting employment!

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3 i's - Teacher Training Qualification

Key Role 1

What?: Throughout my Stage 2 training, I have continually sought to gain further experience and qualifications within teaching, with this being an integral part of my professional development and a key competency area. Furthermore, when applying for teaching roles I have become increasingly aware of the diversity required when delivering psychological support in an academic setting. The 3 i's training (available free to LJMU doctoral students who support the academic curriculum) is a programme developed by 'Advance HE'. It allows the practitioner the opportunity to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to teaching, learning and the student experience through engagement in a learning process, involving research, reflection, and development, so that ultimately, I am in a more qualified, experienced, and informed position to deliver psychology within teaching. Subsequently, the training provided the opportunity to gain a valuable qualification, but also enhance the effectiveness of my support moving forward, whereby I had often found myself becoming 'stuck' within lessons and reverting back to the safety of the textbook.

So, What?: Having taught A-Level Sport Psychology at a sixth form for the past 2 years, I have looked to continually enhance my teaching effectiveness, and deliver to student-athletes in a meaningful and practical way (Gilbert, 2011). Prior to the 3 i's training I often found myself seemingly limited to regurgitating textbook content, and working within a programme confined by the multi-layered ecosystem of an educational institution (Biggs, 1993). This meant that I was rigid in my approach, whereby I felt that by sticking to the 'rules at each level, which were subsumed by the next higher level" (Kandlbinder, 2014; p.10), I would be demonstrating effective support. However, students would often remark 'are we covering this again?', and 'can't we just read from the textbook?' What these comments, alongside ongoing self-

reflection allowed, was the realisation that I was not providing support that was congruent to myself, nor was it allowing the students to connect to the program's content (Gilbert et al., 2008; Gilbert et al., 2006). As a result, I knew that my approach needed to be adapted, and demonstrate a range of strategies and methods to ensure varying levels of learning ability would be incorporated (Petty, 2004).

Now What?: The week-long course of 3 i's training was an eye-opening experience, which allowed me to understand the significance of a well-rounded support approach to practice, and how an in-depth understanding of oneself enables you to become more effective in your work with others. Specifically, dialogue between myself and my learners is imperative for any form of progression to occur. The course outlined the cognitive (knowledge, understanding), affective (attitudes, emotions), and psychomotor (mental activity) areas of support, whereby through a diversity in teaching styles and methods, I would be able to get the most from students during sessions (Reid, Stewart, & Thorne, 2004). This included the use of case studies, focus-groups, independent learning, buzz groups, and various other practical activities to maintain engagement and encourage inclusivity within the classroom. By being exposed to teaching in both small and large group scenarios, I was able to comprehend the ongoing difficulties I may experience in the classroom, and how I will be able to be proactive moving forward in order to enhance my support and get the most from the student. Ultimately, I now understand that although teaching may often incorporate a negotiation between a clear alignment of learning objectives with local and national standards (Forehand, 2005), I now look to adopt a 'non-classroom' based approach, in order to maintain engagement and promote development (Nesti, 2010). This will allow me to hopefully move away from the textbook based approach I have often felt comfortable and secure with previously, and instead be more open to enhancing the diversity of my teaching support.

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Performance in Interviews

Key Role 1

What?: Interviews matter, and how we are able to explain ourselves to others, how we justify our actions (or inaction), and how we present ourselves to others (McDowell, 2010). This, combined with my unsuccessful experiences in interviews, had generated a negative perception of what 'success' looked like in both interview and hiring terms. In previous reflections I have discussed how 'experience' has been a fundamental part of this apprehension and perception towards interviews, yet, there are elements that I can control before, during and after interviews in order to enhance my performance and chances of success.

So, What?: Due to my initial negative experiences in interviews, I begun increasing the amount of time I dedicated to reflection and active engagement in bettering my performance. A notable example was the webinar conferences I engaged in with Steve Ingham and 'Supporting Champions', whereby he outlined the skills that are often crucial to succeed and give you the best possible chance of landing the job. Steve outlined that the interview starts long before entering the room, and proceeded to provide various skills and considerations to engage with from his years of interviewing candidates. This incorporated elements around 'Plan, Deliver, Reflect' so that I would be able to breakdown the experience into several stages and focus more on a process-based approach to interviewing. This provided several valuable skills that I began to implement in my interview experiences, which I will now discuss.

Now what?: As I am approaching the latter stages of the Professional Doctorate, I find myself in the position of applying for jobs and roles on an almost daily basis. Reflecting on my previous unsuccessful applications and interviews thus far, although uncomfortable and largely negative experiences at the time, they have put me in a position where I am increasingly

confident of what a ‘solid interview’ looks like. Now, when approaching interviews, I consider 4 key areas that are crucial to how I perform on the day.

Firstly, the preparation for the interview: Am I aware of what the role is asking of me and how do my experiences and qualifications fit the job description? This involves collecting background information (Caldwell & Burger, 1998), specifically investigating the environment, culture, staff, and previous work in the area, in order to gain an informed understanding ahead of the day. This allows me to obtain accurate and often unique information, which may differentiate myself from other candidates. Secondly, in the days building up to the exam I prepare and go about my day in as much the same way as I will on interview day, in order to familiarise myself with the look and feel of the hours building up to interview. This is an area I have only recently begun to consider, with the realisation that if I prepare and condition myself as much as I can, and put myself in the situation before it arises, I will likely be less anxious, more prepared, and feeling less incompetent. In the interview itself, the rehearsal of information is key, however, as I have already prepared, I place more emphasis on my presence, and specifically my body language and verbal demeanour. Being enthusiastic (Cuddy, Wilmuth, Yap, & Carney (2015), delivering impromptu and relaxed speech, an upright posture, and appearing happier and less fearful of the situation (Nair et al., 2015), are key areas I have noticed through both research and reflection than can greatly enhance interview performance. Finally, following the interview, I look to reflect on the actual experience and my performance, in order to gain an understanding of how the interviewers may perceive my application and interview. A week or so following the interview, I contact the organisation and/or interviewers in an attempt to obtain feedback, so that, if unsuccessful I can identify what may need to be considered/altered moving forward.

Ultimately, my early interview experiences as a neophyte practitioner provided feelings of incompetency, inauthenticity, and ultimately feelings of doubt around my ability. Far too often,

I was not using the experiences of interviews and associated feelings and behaviours facilitatively, and instead reflected negatively on myself and the organisation for being unsuccessful. Recently, I have become increasingly proactive before, during and after interviews, so that both now and in the future I can acknowledge how these experiences have shaped me as both a practitioner and individual to grow and continually develop.

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Psychophysiology in Sport Psychology: Challenge vs. Threat

Key Role 1

What?: Whilst listening to a podcast by Dr. Dan Abrahams with his guest Dr. Jamie Barker, they discussed the role of psychophysiology in sport, and the physiological bases of psychological processes. This sparked an immediate interest in the area, whereby in the episode, Dan and Jamie discussed how psychophysiology plays a crucial role in that of 'challenge' vs. 'threat' states and situations in sport. Specifically, Jamie highlighted how meaningful performance is to the individual, yet whereas some athletes excel in motivated performance situations, others fail to perform (Jones et al., 2009). This brings in the notion of how the individual appraises the event at hand, which then prompts perceptions of danger or challenge (physical or esteem), certainty or uncertainty, and effort (physical and psychological) (Turner et al., 2013). Pertaining to psychophysiology, these appraisals determine whether an individual has the sufficient or insufficient resources to meet the demands of the situation. For example, in a 'threat' state, there is increased sympathetic adrenomedullary activity (SAM pathway), but it is accompanied by increased pituitary adreno-cortical activity, accompanied by cortisol release (Jamieson, Koslov, Nock, & Mendes, 2013). What this often means is that there is an activation (event) and subsequent response to short-term stress. The SAM pathway speeds up heart rate and raises blood pressure, oxygen is rapidly pumped to the muscles allowing for increased physical activity. As a result, the person is ready for 'fight' or 'flight', whereby they attribute threat or challenge to the initial event. Common characteristics of a 'threat' state are increased cortisol (overproduction) which constricts circulation, myopic vision (blurred/unclear), uncontrolled breathing, and low cognition. In a 'challenge' state, there is increased testosterone (increased muscle strength, aerobic endurance, faster recovery), broader vision, controlled breathing, higher levels of cognition, language-processing and deliberate thought (Turner et al., 2013). Therefore, by understanding and comprehending how

an individual view a situation, we can begin to understand, from a psychophysiological perspective, how and why they are able to perform successfully/unsuccessfully.

So, What?: The above prompted my interest and further reading in the area, whereby I began to understand that individuals who cope well with stress are able to draw upon a number of resources in order to meet the demands of the situation. In this regard, there are several key constructs the individual can rely upon, including confidence/self-efficacy, perceptions of control, achievement goals (what I want vs what I don't want), and social support. These resource areas ultimately mediate whether the individual appraises a threat or challenge state, whereby energy moves efficiently throughout the body in a challenge state, increases circulation, and prepares the mind for performance. Therefore, how am I able to use this to inform my own practice?

In personal terms, the beauty of psychophysiology is it allows for the actual measurement of certain areas, whereby psychology often suffers from not being able to display 'concrete evidence' and causality. In practice, athletes are able to 'see' where their performance decrements potentially come from, whereby a footballer who sees his team-mate miss a penalty in a shoot-out then has to prepare to execute a skill relevant to the situation. It is then how the individual appraises the event in these moments that is a strong indicator to how they will perform (Turner et al., 2013). As such, by beginning on the path of viewing how athletes and players I work with under pressure, I have begun to gain an idea when they are appraising a situation as a threat or challenge, and why.

Now What?: What psychophysiology has allowed for within my own cognitions and applied practice is the development for more challenged-based strategies, on both an individual and team level. Now that I have moved past the initial apprehension behind a potentially complex concept, I have now begun to understand the significance of the mind not 'working alone', but

instead working in conjunction with the body, and how they influence one another. In particular, in pre-match scenarios, I have begun to adopt performance behaviours, self-talk, and pre-match routines with players, in order for them to enter a 'challenge' based state, whereby they view the upcoming event as an opportunity to perform and win, and as such 'play to win' and not 'play to lose'. Moving forward, the success of this has been apparent, whereby I look to continue updating my knowledge around the area of psychophysiology and delving deeper into the subject area. From a research perspective, and heavily dependent on technology and equipment, it would be highly beneficial to implement such measure in disability sport and view how those with a disability appraise stressful situations, and potentially compare within-population, or against those who are able-bodied.

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Wearing 'Multiple Hats'

Key Role 1

What: During my time working with the England Partially Sighted Football Team, although conducting highly effective work within my role as sport psychologist; I increasingly found myself being asked to do tasks that seemed unrelated to what I believed my role as a practitioner was (Collins, Evans-Jones, & Connor, 2013). This included partaking in training and coaching drills, providing advice on nutrition and exercise regimes, and analysing technical and tactical feedback within the game. This occasionally resulted in confusion as to when I needed to 'set aside' time to consult with players, and whether this was blurring the lines of what my role within the squad was (Reid, Stewart, & Thorne, 2004). This heightened during match days, when during pre-game build-up I would be asked by several coaches to assist with the set-up of drills, sorting kit, and warming players up, yet this was when players were at their most susceptible to experiencing pre-match nerves, anxiety, frustration, and other emotions, which unless addressed could prove detrimental to performance (Hanin, 2003).

So, What: Early on in my time with the squad, I believed that by adopting these 'multiple hats' it would be the most effective way to demonstrating my value to the squad, and familiarise myself within the organisational set-up (Brown et al., 2005; Weinberg & Williams, 2010). Yet, was this 'sacrificing' my principles as a practitioner, with 'trying to fit in' being prioritised over the opportunity to conduct effective work within an elite environment. I questioned whether it devalued my professional status to players when they saw me clearing up after training (Reid, Stewart, & Thorne, 2004)? Given I had been employed for the role of 'Sport Psychologist' I wanted to ensure players, staff and the organisation understood the value of me being there as a sport psychologist, while integrating me effectively within other areas of the set-up. This very much brought to the fore the notion of being 'a part but apart' of the squad.

Given that the World Championships in Turkey were approaching I wanted to assist and support all members of the squad in any capacity in the build-up, but what would be the most effective way of doing this?

Now What: Given that practitioners often engage in nonprofessional related activities in efforts to assist the team, such as putting away training kit and helping out with sessions, it is an important opportunity for the practitioner to 'bond' with athletes and coaches (Reid, Stewart, & Thorne, 2004). Subsequently, I begun to acknowledge that situations may arise where I may be required to integrate myself and adopt different roles. Through reflective practice and self-reflective living (Poczwardowski, 2017), I revisited discussions at and away from camps where I saw clear progression on the conversations I was having with players and staff. Furthermore, through talking with the players, information and discussions of psychological skills were monitored (Cox, 1997), which exhibited that the players themselves felt I was having a beneficial effect on individual and squad performance. This often came in the form of being a 'pressure valve' and 'being someone to talk to about things other than football', which allowed the players and I to build and develop meaningful relationships, which was underpinned by high levels of trust. This evidenced that effective working relationships were being established between the players and myself (Poczwardowski et al., 1998), which could drive confidence in my own ability moving forward to Turkey. This demonstrated that amongst my concerns around being ineffective, 'fitting / mucking in', and knowing my role, meant that I had been building effective relationships and providing effective support, and it had not gone unnoticed by others within the squad and organisation.

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Being more than 'the 1% difference'

Key Role 1

What?:

Early on in the Professional Doctorate I attended a BPS conference, with Paul Hughes presenting as a guest lecturer. Paul discussed his experiences within elite sport, and specifically how aligning both his personal and practitioner-based values (Chandler et al., 2016), had effectively contributed to the individual who stood before us. Central to this, was the journey he and clients would go on, stating that by beginning any relationship with both the start and end in mind allows the practitioner to understand 'what am I going to need to do now with the athlete?' and 'where do we want to go?'. This involved accepting that the direction of support may not always be known, and to be open and versatile enough to adapt as the relationship with the client develops. However, within this relationship there are often difficulties in understanding the significance of the impact you may (or may not) have on an individual or team. This then prompted the strapline 'We are worth more than the 1%'.

So, What?: As a sport psychologist, there are various (and often conflicting) 'intentions' from the practitioner upon entry into a new environment and culture. Paul outlined that dominating themes can centre on a need to: 'Be Seen A LOT'; 'Be Authentic'; 'Build Great Relationships'; and 'Engage Coaches'; yet, the practitioner can often lack understanding, misinterpret, and over-obsess on these elements, which may restrict the impact they have in that environment. Subsequently, an 'any win' approach can often be adopted, with the practitioner sacrificing their own principles regarding pre-agreed support in order to evidence that they'd had an impact (Keegan, 2015, p.12). This often incorporates the '1% gain' sport psychologists may promote themselves as providing, whereby a focus on providing the cutting-edge difference in performance may lead to the practitioner sacrificing their approach and values to prove to both

themselves and others that they are competent and can enhance performance (Tod, Hutter, & Eubank, 2017).

Now What?: In spite of this, Paul highlighted that the experience of these encounters and accompanying emotions is common within neophyte practitioners. This brought discussion around trainees often being distracted by their own thoughts and cognitive activity in addition to listening to clients, whereby they are subconsciously coaching themselves through sessions and forget about the support they are offering (Tod, Hutter, & Eubank, 2017). This prompted the 'future proofing' Paul looked to instil across sport psychology practice and the 'STOP', 'START', 'CONTINUE' approach. STOP consisted of practitioners ending the promotion of '1% difference' slogan, and practitioners adhering and being authentic to their core sets of values and philosophy. START concerned 'the big picture' and psychologists becoming leaders within their field as opposed to conforming to what others expect. CONTINUE discussed our ability to impact performance by developing 'people' not just 'performers', which signified a more holistic approach and long-term development of the individual on the pitch (the athlete) and the individual off the pitch (the person) (Friesen & Orlick, 2010).

Ultimately, the conference was highly thought-provoking and challenged various common beliefs within the domain of sport psychology and how we integrate ourselves within organisations and cultures. Moving forward, I began aligning myself further with my approach and philosophy so that I had a more coherent and rounded idea of what my support looks like in certain cultures and how I may react when my principles and values may be challenged.

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Referrals: Knowing when

Key Role 1

What?: Within sport psychology applied practice, it is becoming increasingly vital to explain, from the outset, your role and limitations/boundaries as a practitioner in that capacity (Keegan, 2015, p.26). This is a standard emphasised heavily in the BPS guidelines (2009, p.21), whereby the psychologist must 'Be honest and accurate in advertising their professional service and products, in order to avoid encouraging unrealistic expectations'. However, given the 'blurred areas' that we occasionally operate in within sport psychology consultancy, it is often difficult to fully understand exactly when a referral should be made, with this often being challenging to delineate from the outset, and its effect on the relationship with the client (Keegan, 2015). Subsequently, when considering my philosophy and approach alongside this, and holistic long-term development that incorporates the 'whole person' (Friesen & Orlick, 2010), I often find myself tapping into the client's wider-life, which for me has brought about further issues around boundaries and referral.

So, What?: The current reflection is particularly relevant, as having not yet made a referral at the time of writing, and solely having clients referred to me from other disciplines, the knowing of if/when I may need to direct the individual to another professional is something that worries me. Thoughts around 'Should I have referred that individual?', 'Was it appropriate to discuss that issue?', and 'Would I handle the situation differently retrospectively?' circulate, and provide concerns as to whether I am able to align with best practice, and adhere to the guidelines and regulations of my discipline. Hutter et al. (2015) identified a 'Know-how' (how to do the job) and 'Professional Development' (reflective practice, ethical dilemmas and philosophical issues) framework of consulting practitioners, where I feel competent in terms of 'know-how' and my reflective practice and philosophical underpinning, but less so about

ethical dilemmas, where I still feel the need for further understanding and experience. In practice there are signs of trepidation and cautiousness creeping into my work, whereby previously I may have been opening to discussing any issue (within reason, and unless extreme), and now I am left pondering if this discussion should remain between myself and the client, or whether it should be (re)directed to another more suited professional.

Now What?: As I have become more aware of the relevance and significance of referral procedures, I now comprehend that it my ability to evidence due diligence (Brown & Cogan, 2006), in order to explicitly understand why I am able to work with the client at hand. A critical part of this (which I am already a keen advocate of!) is an in-depth and coherent intake process with the client. On occasion, when engaging in reflection, I highlight that I may have spent 'too much time' in the intake and needs analysis stages in my consultancy. However, what this time allows is for a thorough understanding from both mine and the client's perspectives, of what our relationship looks like, how we will likely work with one another, including ethics of practice, and what the support will likely consist of. This highlights a 'contextual intelligence' (Sternberg, 1985, 2005), wherein I am proactive and help shape the environment to suit myself and the client in our encounter(s). This allows for clarity from the outset, and is something that will greatly benefit me moving forward if/when my time for referral does come. Through having an in-depth understanding and awareness of the client's issues/areas of support from the onset, and using this time to build rapport and a relationship, it will likely allow prospective clients to more readily understand that a referral is necessary or by agreeing that no further intervention is needed (Moore, 2003). As a result, ultimately, I feel that although I have not yet referred a client or individual within my consulting practice, I am ensuring that I am operating within the guidelines, and if/when the matter does arise. I am equipped to engage the correct ethical decision-making process based on a clear understanding of ethical principles and in the knowledge that I have explained this to my client.

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Development of Consultancy Business

Key Role 1 (and 2)

What: Increasing numbers of sport psychology practitioners are turning their attention towards business and how the core principles for promoting athletic excellence can be transferred to consultancy (Ievleva & Terry, 2008). Given I had worked across multiple disciplines and reflected upon these experiences to better understand the effectiveness of my practice (Andersen, 2000), it seemed pertinent to explore the possibility of setting up a sport psychology consultancy within a business context. This would likely provide the opportunity to brand myself and my services in order to attract a diverse range of clients, which would allow me to engage in further applied practice and develop my competency as a result.

I began to attend various networking meetings and conferences, whereby a steady flow of potential clients had accumulated. However, I encountered numerous difficulties in attempting to convert these 'interested' individuals into successful clients. As there had been significant interest around integrating techniques from sport, in order to create a more productive healthier workplace (Lloyd & Foster, 2006), I persevered and began looking more into the service I was offering. Furthermore, although there remained concerns relating to branding, terms, payment of service, and developing an ongoing consultancy process, they provided early indication of the need to have a strong grip on understanding myself and my consultancy, before trying to offer it out to others (Schneider, 2014).

Given my experience within sport and the premise that practitioners should be competent working with a wide range of individuals and their particular needs (Barnett et al., 2007), although I experienced these initial difficulties I grew increasingly confident in transferring my skills and ability as a sport psychology practitioner into a business domain. When presenting at a golf day, the incorporation of a sport-business hybrid consisting of a highly-competitive, results-driven focus was welcomed greatly by the audience (Ievleva & Terry, 2008). Therefore,

given the early indication and interest I had received, I felt it highly appropriate to transfer my knowledge and competencies to a different applied environment.

So, What?: Given the nature of competence perceived as both an enforceable standard and an aspirational principle (Barnett et al., 2007), I sought to demonstrate this by showcasing my ability away from sport. I felt that being able to deliver core psychological principles within business (e.g. stress management, leadership, high-performing teams, 1-1 work, organisational issues; Jones, 2002), would show versatility and more crucially, my competency in operating within diverse applied practice settings. However, during this period I began to engage in frequent self-reflection in order to understand the justification behind my decisions (Anderson et al., 2004).

At this point I realised that my initial 'concerns' had been misconstrued, as I had been directing attention away from why I wanted to begin working in a business-context, and instead focused on what I needed to do to become successful. This caused conflict with my core values and beliefs (Owton, Bond, & Tod, 2014), whereby I was moving away from my holistic philosophy of improving the 'whole individual' and the quality of living for the person behind the professional (Friesen & Orlick, 2010), and toward sole performance improvements and a more pragmatist approach (Keegan, 2015). This pragmatist philosophy potentially heightened any subsequent irrational thoughts and behaviours, as I was focusing on implementing psychological support that was underpinned by a conflicting philosophy.

After consulting with my supervisor and interchange of discussions with others within the field, I became aware that the emergence of these provocative questions was due to a) being inauthentic and a conflict between my philosophy and practice delivery, and b) being unprepared in applying my skills and knowledge into a different domain. Therefore, although I had progressed as a trainee obtaining some core skills and knowledge that I could transfer

effectively to the business world (Gordon, 2007), my desire to get out into the field and get my hands on some ‘real’ paying clients (Schneider, 2014) had clouded judgement and being able to rationally consider why I wanted to do this.

Now What: Based on these experiences, I do feel there is a considerable overlap between sport and business domains, with sport psychology being applicable within these settings. The competitive nature of both industries and emphasis on ‘marginal gains being the difference, shows that if clients feel more like athletes who are able to perform in a competitive environment, then they may be more open to exploring their capacity to reach their full potential (Ievleva & Terry, 2008). Having begun to understand how psychology operates within business, it is crucial that I appreciate and respect the naivety I may have as a neophyte practitioner. Although there has been interest with my services, I need to continually expose myself to experiences to develop my competency and fully understand that if I were to transition into a business-domain, it needs to be consistent with my values and beliefs as a practitioner (Poczwardowski et al., 2004).

Moving forward, I have begun developing my consultancy (branding, networking, services), and more importantly understanding what service I look to offer as a whole. Therefore, if and when I begin to move into a business arena, I am able to be competent in identifying and understanding what areas I look to offer support on and managing expectations and roles from the outset (Keegan, 2015, p.26). Learning from these previous experiences within sport, alongside deliberate self-reflection, I have ensured more clarity on my part, of what type of practitioner I look to be and what consultancy I offer.

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Gaining trust whilst knowing the 'boundaries'

Key Role 1

What?: Having attended two camps with the England PS squad and built and developed relationships with the players, I began to understand elements of the sport and culture of the environment I was operating in (Windsor, Barker, & McCarthy, 2011). This was inherently due to the fact I spent copious amounts of time 'hanging out' with the players and staff in order to familiarise myself with the environment, and subsequently provided an entry point into service delivery (Andersen, 2000). This had led to players and coaches becoming comfortable and familiar with my presence, and as a result, I began to receive a greater amount contact outside of camp. I initially used the IDP (Individual Development Plan) that each player received by the coach, as a 'way in' to discussing the player's assessment of how they were currently feeling both at and away from camps. The IDP outlined the *technical, tactical, social* and *psychological* elements of the individual, whereby I had provided my initial thoughts on what I had observed in the player from a social and psychological standpoint.

As conversations became increasingly regular, they began to divert further and further away from the IDP, and instead toward issues that had been 'bubbling under the surface'. These 'issues' had been affecting how the individuals' approached their time at camp and also time away in-between camps, whereby 'rifts', 'arguments' and ethical dilemmas became increasingly apparent. In particular, concerns around depression and eating disorders blurred the lines as to what I felt I could and could not discuss with the players. Moreover, given I had 'hung out' with the players and subsequently built and developed a trusting relationship, this had facilitated the 'safeness' they felt within sessions and subsequently influenced how much they were willing to divulge (Bickley, Rogers, Bell & Thombs, 2016). Therefore, although the players raising these issues had maintained they were of common knowledge, I still approached the encounters and subsequent discussions with a hint of trepidation.

So, What?: These experiences had evoked a sense of confusion around the parameters and limits of what I should discuss with players. On one hand, I felt progress was being made and the players were increasingly trusting of my intentions and that our conversations would go no further (unless harmful to themselves or anyone else where confidentiality may be breached). On the other, there was a sense of being a 'fraud' and not being ethical or true to my discipline or my own values and beliefs. I have a responsibility as a practitioner to show awareness of the processes I should use to deal with ethical dilemmas in my service delivery (Andersen, 2000). Although I spoke to my supervisor around my concerns in this scenario, I still found myself approaching subsequent conversations with players unclear about my approach. I feared that being too rigid would not allow me to take the approach I wanted with the players, and being able to work through some of the issues they were experiencing, but moving too far away from the IDP structure would not enable me to deliver on the objectives I had been given,

Now What?: I have begun to engage more with the staff, and in particular Sport Psychologists within the England Football set-up. They have provided 'real' insights into their work within the England disability football set-up and their experiences and encounters within their work. This has been hugely beneficial to me in dealing with the 'difficult boundary issues' I was experiencing, allowing for increased honesty, openness, sharing of information and improved communication (Windsor, Barker, & McCarthy, 2011) and more effective integration within the MDT. Moving forward, I have begun to understand the "chaotic reality of different applied settings" (Gilbourne, & Richardson, 2005; p.652); therefore, by engaging more with practitioners 'in' the disability arena who understand my dilemmas, it will allow for better clarity of support to be offered. Furthermore, moving forward, collaboratively evolving an issue with the players will likely facilitate behaviour change (Polk & Schoendorff, 2014), but also allow for mutual understanding of our roles within the process. Alongside this, continued interaction with my supervisors provides an experienced wider perspective, providing the

knowledge (mixture of tacit and implicit) needed to be more effective with my decision making and increasing my understanding and knowledge of how I engage in certain 'areas' with the players and coaches.

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The Power of Silence… Active Listening

Key Role 1

What?: During my training I have continually reflected, developed, and adapted my practice approach and philosophy. I have explored *Pragmatism* in seeking a delivery fit for purpose, to *Fallibilism* and taking a cautious, deliberate approach to select the appropriate intervention; *Certaintism* in the form of a 'practitioner knows best' approach, to *Construalism* and a 'Client knows best' ethos (*See* Keegan, 2015; p.53-55). At one time or another I've adopted each of these philosophies into my approach and work with clients, however, one core skill has remained central to any effective work I have conducted… active listening (AI). 'Active listening' (also referred to as empathetic listening, reflective listening, dialogic listening) involves restating a paraphrased version of the speaker's message, asking questions when appropriate, and maintaining moderate to high nonverbal conversational involvement (Weger et al., 2014). Although appearing relatively straightforward i.e. 'just listening to the person', AI predominantly consists of 3 elements critical to effectiveness. 1) Expressing interest in the speaker's message by displaying nonverbal involvement in the form of back channelling (McNaughton et al., 2007); 2) refraining from using judgement, and paraphrasing the speaker's message; 3) asking questions to encourage the speaker to elaborate on their beliefs or feelings (Paukert, Stagner, & Hope, 2004). It is through use of these three elements that the speaker may begin to appreciate that the practitioner (listener) is genuinely interested in what they have to say, which serves to strengthen the relationship between practitioner and client.

So, what?: In my own practice, active listening has allowed me to take more of a 'backseat' within sessions and give the client ample opportunity to talk about their situation or how they are feeling. Early on in my training, I was so keen to exhibit my skills and abilities as a practitioner and show my competency (Tod, Marchant, & Andersen, 2007) that I often took control over sessions and was not providing a comfortable, open environment for the client.

This meant that I tended to dominate and operate on a client-led approach, with it seemingly crucial to 'give' the client an area to work on prior to our next session. As I began delving into the literature around effective practitioner skills in sport psychology delivery (See Poczwardowski, Sherman, & Ravizza, 2004; Tod, 2010), I became aware that clients benefit from a session where they are able to open up to a non-judgemental, experienced and professional individual, who is willing to listen to what they have to say. Following this, I attended a Performance Psychology Conference at Staffordshire University, where Dr. Jeff Breckon led a talk around motivational interviewing (MI). Jeff highlighted that reflective listening (AI) presents an opportunity for both parties to learn (Fortune et al., 2019), which benefits the practitioner-client relationship moving forward. As a result, I began to actively apply techniques to incorporate AI into my approach.

Now what?: As I begun to accommodate AI into my practice, I noticed through both reflective practice and client feedback that clients had not only divulged increasing amounts of information, but more importantly felt a 'weight lifted off their shoulders' following our sessions. I chose to include Socratic Questioning as part of AI, with 'What do you mean by this?'; 'Why is this important?'; and 'What are you basing this on?' central to exploring client' situations and issues in more depth. This depth resulted in feeling more competent within sessions than ever before, and not proactively worrying about my own concerns and issues rather than the clients. Ultimately, my discovery of AI has benefited me two-fold: 1) I have prioritised clients' thoughts, feelings and behaviour over mine, which for a long time I was not doing; 2) I have gained significantly more competence and fulfilment out of being comfortable with 'silence', and that it is no longer something to be feared, but instead something to be embraced.

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Transference and Countertransference

Key Role 1

What?: Being a Sport Psychologist practitioner often affords the ability to talk about deeper issues away from training and performance, which the athlete may often not be able to do with other staff and individuals (Stevens & Andersen, 2007). Given my own core beliefs, and the value I place on interpretivism in promoting empathy and connectedness with the person in front of you (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009)., I have often needed to remain aware of how transference and countertransference impacts how clients and I project our interpersonal issues onto one another. Being aware of transference (direction/conveying of a client's feelings on an issue/person to the practitioner) and countertransference (redirection of practitioner's feelings towards a phenomenon, presented to the client) and how it impacts the building of rapport and relationships, alongside the effectiveness of my work, has enabled me to maintain professional levels of support and practice.

So, What?: When beginning a support role, it is imperative that the client and I establish the setting of boundaries and parameters of the working relationship, so that we can operate in a 'safe space' whilst also being spontaneous with our discussions (Gabbard, 1995). From a personal perspective, this reflects that I am 'a part but apart' from normal service providers and staff within the environment, whereby I often find myself 'between roles' and between the players and coaches. Subsequently, it is crucial for the player(s) to be able to trust and confide in me, yet understand the parameters to our practice and not become 'too reliant' on my support. However, this can often be easier said than done, with countertransference itself often finding itself 'hugging the line' on whether it is always deleterious to the therapeutic endeavour, or can be used in a positive and informative way (Mann, 1997; Meyers, 1986).

Now What?: I have established greater awareness of how a practitioner/therapist's unconscious reactions to a client's transference (Kernberg, 1986) doesn't always have to be something that is negative. Within my own practice, I actively promote a holistic identity of both myself and the athletes I work with, so ultimately we all understand that I, and they, are a person first, and professional second (Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004). This awareness and understanding has been highly beneficial within my practice, with wider areas away from the pitch allowing me to act as a 'pressure valve' in critical moments and challenging situations during matches and tournaments. Moreover, I feel that there is a great deal to be gleaned from the reasonable emotional responses to the client's transferences and to the reality of the client's life (Stevens & Andersen, 2007), which has been instrumental in my player support for family issues, disability sport, and also performance concerns. Ultimately, I feel that this investment in the client is essential, with transference and subsequent countertransference central to this, whereby as long as boundaries and parameters are clearly defined, I will continue to promote this relationship with my client(s).

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Disability in Sport: What can we learn?

Key Role 1

What?: My work in disability sport has had significant impact on my development throughout the Professional Doctorate. Over the past 30 years, an 'emancipatory' approach has been adopted that has revolutionised how disability has been researched (Oliver, 1992). However, given the 'extra hurdles' any person with a disability has to navigate to get to the same place as a person without a disability (Bundon et al, 2018), there remains a lack of awareness of how much value disability sport can give to the 'able-bodied'. Moreover, sport (specifically at an elite level) often excludes athletes with a disability because they do not have the financial and practical opportunity to obtain the results demanded to qualify, or have the ability to train enough hours due to their disability (Sørensen & Kahrs, 2006). As a result, this only serves to bridge the gap between able-bodied and disabled sport, with the very definition of being 'disabled' dominated by what the individual 'cannot do' (Lundquist-Wanneberg, 2014*)* as oppose to what the individual can do.

So, What?: Psychological need fulfilment is important for human flourishing (Inenttä & Corban, 2014). Within Self-Determination theory, three basic psychological needs are emphasized, including feeling competent, a sense of autonomy, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Need thwarting of these basic psychological needs can lead to ill-being, and need fulfilment can actually be a greater challenge in disabled individuals. However, during my time with the England Partially Sighted Squad, the power of these three basic psychological needs has been crucial.

My experience within this branch of disability sport has emphasised that relatedness is important across boundaries that often separate individuals, and that no matter the race, form, or look of an individual, support in disability sport signals a strong sense of unity (Kenttä &

Corban, 2014). Given able-bodied competition is often the source of envy, despair and selfishness (Arnold, 1989), it may learn from disabled sport's unity and how one person's victory doesn't necessarily have to be another person's defeat. Furthermore, the need of autonomy and competency provides the understanding that support from others and experiencing stressors are crucial to both development and success. With disabled athletes often not independent from the technology or support they employ (Kenttä & Corban, 2014), it educates them on the impact of external stressors and how overcoming issues unrelated to their own personal ability can be vital to success. From an able-bodied perspective, a lack of exposure to external stressors and situations out of their control may result in a lack of awareness and potential struggle to adapt to setbacks and grow from them moving forward. When linking this to resilience and in particular the 'growth through adversity hypothesis' (Haidt, 2006), having to cope with adverse events allows an individual to develop strategies to adapt more effectively with environmental and situational demands. If applied to a sporting context, it could be suggested that athletes having to overcome adversity, in particular physical disability, may exhibit different psychological skills profiles to able-bodied athletes who have not experienced a similar life event.

Now What?: Disability sport has made significant developments over the past 30 years, and continues to offer a credible reference point for its able-bodied counterpart. Given the exclusion to society that is often prominent in those with a disability, it is reassuring that it is being made evident that Olympic and Paralympic (able-bodied and disabled) athletes are more similar than different (Dieffenbach & Statler, 2012). This emphasises that the mental approach necessary for pursuing elite competition found among athletes with disabilities are analogous to the findings in able-bodied sport literature (Dieffenbach & Statler, 2012). Subsequently, moving forward, in consideration of the areas outlined above, it may be worthwhile researchers and

practitioners increasing their understanding of the impact disability has in both able-bodied and disabled sport, because I for one have learnt a great deal from working with this population.

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Key Role 1 – Ethical Reflection (1)

A Case for Referral? - Eating Disorder in Sport

An eating disorder is a potentially life-threatening condition, with a mortality rate that is one of the highest of all psychiatric conditions and yields significant health consequences (Neumarker et al., 2000; Beals, 2004). Furthermore, given the considerable amounts of pressure and stress elite athletes may face to be able to deliver consistent high-level performances, it is unsurprising that the prevalence of eating disorders in elite athletes (13.4%) is higher than in the general population (4.6%) (Martinsen et al., 2010). Thus, it is crucial that those involved within sport (staff, coaches, sport psychologists), are aware of the presence of subclinical and clinical mental conditions, encourage help-seeking behaviours, and/or provide or refer athletes for evidence-based interventions (Schinke et al., 2018). As such, the current reflection provides an authentic account of a neophyte sport psychologist's interaction with an England international disability football player, and how pivotal an understanding of the referral process is, even if referral is ultimately not required.

Client

The client in the current encounter, was a 24-year-old England disability futsal player, whom I had been working with for just under 18 months prior to the current case. Previously, I had provided support to the player around issues with injury, emotional regulation, and also pre-performance anxiety leading into competition and tournaments. Our previous experiences had led to the development of a strong and professional practitioner-client relationship, which helped provide a solid foundation when engaging in one-to-one sessions together (like the current one) (Gilbourne & Richardson, 2006). Fast forward to the current case, whereby the player had messaged to arrange a 'catch-up' and reconnect following postponement of National sport due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Issue

Given our previous experiences and the emphasis placed on my holistic approach to psychological support both on and off the pitch to sustain the long-term development and growth of the individual (Friesen & Orlick, 2010); the client felt that this aligned with the ongoing challenge he had experienced regarding his eating habits and his physique/appearance relating to these. Following a brief catch-up, the client was eager to progress and divulge the details of the challenges he had been facing regarding the aforementioned issues. I used this opportunity to remind the client of the boundaries of confidentiality, which related to the BPS guidelines surrounding breach of confidentiality 'where clients may present a risk to others or to themselves, or be at risk from others whom they wish to protect' (*See BPS Practice Guidelines, Section 7.2*). I relayed this, alongside the limits of my competence and potential need to refer on to another professional (*See BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct, Section 3.2*). The client understood, and was aware of the possibility that if either issue relating to his physique or eating disorder transcended into a clinical issue (involving a psychological state consisting of a variety of problematic cognitive, emotional, or behavioural characteristics pertaining to a specific disorder) (Lardon & Fitzgerald, 2013), then the process of referral would need to be undertaken.

We began to discuss the past experiences of the client's issue(s) surrounding eating and physique. The client explained that he had never been formally diagnosed with an eating or mental health disorder, but had experienced symptoms relating to feeling a lack of control over eating behaviour (on occasion), being 'obsessed' with tracking his calorie intake, and constant monitoring of his physique through progress pictures. These had begun to impact his relationships with others due to his need to be 'in control' of his diet and intake at all times (for example, he would become anxious if an unplanned, spontaneous takeaway was brought home). We discussed some of these experiences in the session and what the client viewed as a

‘good physique and diet’, how did his current behaviour relate to this, and where he would like to get to, with the client highlighting it felt ‘good to unload’ and gain a different perspective. Following the session, I contacted my supervisor to explain the client’s situation and to assess whether referral at this stage was required. From a personal perspective, there were slight connotations relating to bulimia nervosa, however, there was an absence of regular, self-induced vomiting/laxatives/diuretics to prevent weight gain, or recurrent episodes of binge eating over a lengthier period of time (Currie, 2010). As a result, it was agreed between myself and the supervisor that as the client was not a threat to himself or others, and was not displaying severe factors pertaining to an eating disorder, that I could continue to support the athlete if I felt comfortable. However, I needed to be wary of the referral process within the FA, and that both I and the client prioritised this moving forward.

Education Phase

As I had no previous involvement with a client with a mental health related-issue and as such not had experience of ‘how’ and ‘when’ to refer, I revisited the referral pathway to enhance my understanding and also engaged in literature relating to eating disorders and muscle dysmorphia. The referral pathway for the FA and both internal (Jenn Ghandi and Pippa Bennett) and external clinical psychology support (Sporting Bounce), allowed me to understand the welfare programme set in place should my support with the client transcend into clinical and sub-clinical areas. As a result, through my discussion with other England Disability Sport Psychologists alongside the internal FA contacts, it was outlined that *clinical* would consist of the individual possessing clinically relevant symptoms and meeting the criteria for DSM-IV Eating Disorder Classification (anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and eating disorder not otherwise specified), with *subclinical* consisting of clinically relevant symptoms, but does not match the criteria for a full-blown Eating Disorder Classification (Wonderlich et al., 2007). This provided a guided-process to base any referral queries upon,

whereby the client was residing outside of the clinical and subclinical areas at present. Ultimately, a referral to either internal or external clinical support would be considered if there were any signs and potential symptoms that required formal diagnosis and an appropriate intervention (Roberts, Faull, & Tod, 2016). Moreover, given the blurring of the lines regarding when a referral should take place (Herzog & Hays, 2012), I comprehended that alongside the above, my own self-awareness and integrity as a practitioner would be crucial, and understanding the limits and competency level based on the training I have received (Roberts, Faull, & Tod, 2016). These addressed the initial 'how' and 'when' of referral.

Given my neophyte status, it was likely that due to a) my inexperience in the area, and b) the potential grey area surrounding referral, I was likely anxious from the outset about the client's changing circumstances and my ability to operate both professionally and ethically (Eubank, 2016). Furthermore, with previous mental health frameworks (i.e. the classic medical model) outlining that an athlete either does or does not have a disease or disordered state (Murphy, 2012), it demonstrated the value of this education phase and how this would benefit me moving forward. Guided questions throughout this stage around Tod and Andersen's (2015) decision-making process, allowed me to ensure maximum clarity that I was operating within my competence and in an ethical and professional manner. These concerned '*How long has the issue existed?*' (approximately 2-3 weeks) '*What is the severity of the issue?'* (it had begun to affect the client at 2 or 3 points during the week, for example, they would get slightly anxious before a takeaway and feel slight guilt afterwards) '*What role does the issue play in the person's life?'* (the client is able to function as normal in day-to-day life) '*Are there displays of unusual emotions or behaviors around the issue?'* (no, as he has always liked to be in good health and fitness, with a good physique and diet central to this) '*How well are the athlete's existing coping strategies developed'?* and '*Does the practitioner have the competencies, knowledge, skills,*

and experience to address the issue?' (athlete is aware of the issue, but a lack of knowledge around how to approach in a rational and healthy manner).

Following Sessions

In the following session(s), we explored the client's experience deeper, with it becoming increasingly apparent that the problematic behaviour centred around his physique and not an eating disorder. This provided the notion that the client's well-being and being in 'good mental health' was somewhat contingent on how he looked (if he looked good he was happier, if he didn't look good he was unhappy (but not depressed). This prompted me to introduce the EAT-26 and MDDI (Muscle Dysmorphic Disorder Inventory) as a means of a) providing psychometrics to understand the potential severity of the client's comments (and any prevalence of mental health disorders), and b) to gather more understanding of potential areas of support moving forward. At this point, through my discussions with Leon Outar, who worked and had published research in the area of exercise and specifically disordered eating and muscle dysmorphia, I discovered that the appropriate means of support would be delivered through Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT).

REBT would enable the client and I to challenge/change unhelpful cognitive distortions and behaviours, improve emotional regulation, and develop appropriate coping strategies to help assist with any irrational thoughts/beliefs. It became apparent that the client was having self-deprecating thoughts (I feel out of shape) and low frustration tolerance (I must maintain a good physique), whereby they felt that they were producing less and fewer 'results' than they thought they should (Turner & Barker, 2013). Therefore, we began to psychoeducate the client through the core components of REBT (including A-B-C-D-E Model), by moving through the core irrational beliefs and behaviours surrounding these. This led the client to dispute and challenge the irrational beliefs he was having (above) and having them dissect them (Where am I? Who's there? What are the feelings… is there guilt?). As such, we begun to establish a

more effective B-C connection (Beliefs and Consequences), whereby unconditional self-acceptance emerged and prompted the client to replace a 'demandingness' of thoughts/beliefs/behaviours, with 'preferences' – this displayed that although the client had some negative thoughts, when viewed rationally, these were healthy to his development as both a person and an athlete (e.g. healthy negative emotions (anxiety or concern) took him closer to his goal of being more comfortable inside his own body). My support with this athlete is currently ongoing.

***If/When Referral is Needed**

At present, although referral has not been necessary for the client (due to the reasons outlined above), I remain aware of the matter that at any point (as with any psychological support) it may be a case for referral. As such, I have found the mental health continuum outlined by Schinke et al. (2018) to be of great use. The continuum highlights that the mental state and wellbeing of an individual is not a discrete fixed state of mind or mood, but rather one's status may be best understood on a continuum from: a) active mental illness, to b) sub-syndromal illness (frequent symptoms), to c) normal (occasional symptoms), to d) good mental health (asymptomatic), and to e) peak performance (flow or zone states). This has allowed me to understand that the client prior to the current challenge/issue often resided within zone 'd' and possessing good mental health and behaviours to deal with any challenges or issues. However, over the recent weeks they had found themselves operating at zone 'c' – 'b', which had provided a 'culture shock' to their usual good mental state. As highlighted, this was due to certain irrational beliefs/thoughts/behaviours pertaining to low frustration tolerance and self-deprecating thoughts associated with his diet and physique. As these thoughts and challenges did not display clinically relevant symptoms, had not been prevalent for a long(er) duration of time, and was not impacting the day-to-day psychological, cognitive, social functioning of the client, it did not warrant referral at this or any stage leading to the present.

In sum, with the culture of sport often dictating that "mental toughness and mental health are seen as contradictory terms in the world of elite performance" (Bauman, 2015; p. 1), it can often result in athletes being unwilling to access support external to performance concerns. As such, when the client above approached me for support around his wellbeing and dealing with this in a healthier and more rational manner, it resulted in an immediate 'alarm bell' that this client was suffering from some form of eating disorder and/or muscle dysmorphia, and as such would require clinical referral. As a result of this, I experienced initial feelings of uncertainty and incompetence, whereby referral is often met with scepticism by an athlete (Morton & Roberts, 2013). Alongside this, 'imposter syndrome' was rife within my own cognitions and that I felt the best possible service to the athlete would be through me, as we had built and developed this strong athlete-practitioner relationship. However, once I had experienced these, and following discussion with my supervisor and other key professionals, I understood that if this was clinical or subclinical, the most ethical and effective manner of supporting the athlete would be through referral, and that I have an obligation as a sport psychology practitioner to operate within the remit of the BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct. As such, I comprehended that, I, as a Sport and Exercise Psychologist, am required to "refer clients to alternative sources of assistance as appropriate, facilitating the transfer and continuity of care through reasonable collaboration with other professionals" (British Psychological Society, 2009; p. 19).

As outlined above, my philosophy of practice focuses on both performance and well-being, which has allowed me to demonstrate confidence and competence in dealing with the client's experiences, ultimately influencing the decision not to refer. As a profession, the referral process can often be blurred, therefore, I and those involved within the FA look to ensure that athletes are not being referred too early or indeed unnecessarily. This case highlights the need to potentially review and reform the current guidelines surrounding mental

health and referral for applied sport psychology practitioners, perhaps suggesting that applied sport psychology practitioners may benefit from working alongside clinical psychologists (Rotheram, Maynard, & Rogers, 2016) rather than referring and ceasing support altogether. Moving forward, I will continue to review this case on an ongoing basis and whether the case for referral is warranted for the best interests of the client.

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Key Role 1 – Ethical Reflection (2)

Working with/through a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) when dealing with ethical situations

Given the increasing diversity and use of sports science support by elite athletes, as Collins et al. (1999) suggested some 20 years ago, there still remains a requirement for support staff operating in these environments to consider and understand the dynamics for most effective work. Relating to the current article, this concerns issues of role conflict and confidentiality in an elite sport environment, and how as a neophyte practitioner, I have negotiated these challenging areas through understanding my own role alongside the value of other support staff in my environment.

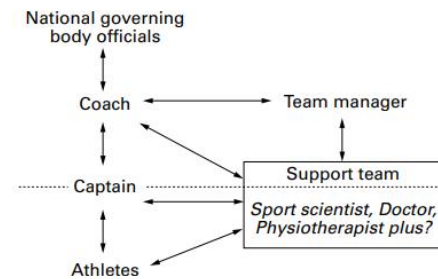

Figure 1 Basis of role conflicts between athletes, officials, and support teams.
Collins et al. (1999)

Figure 1. highlights the key roles and stakeholders involved within an elite sport environment. In brief, those above the dashed line have power of selection (real or perceived); whereby as a member of the support team, my areas of support are often guided by the interactions/areas athletes wish to disclose depending on their approach to confidentiality, and the potential of myself to act as a communication line to those above the dashed line (coach, team manager, captain etc.). As such, previously this may have limited disclosure and affected the communication process between myself and an athlete, with information potentially being passed on. As a result of the above, I have reviewed my approach to practice and how I look to: a) cultivate a psychological culture in the environment which can be integrated alongside other key disciplines, b) provide an informed understanding around disclosure and confidentiality to those involved in the environment (players and staff), and c) if/when this may be broken to provide the most ethical and effective support for the athlete.

(a) Psych. culture within an MDT

The current case relates to my work within an England Disability Football Team, whereby my consulting philosophy centres around construalism and a collaborative exploration where players are assisted in trying to understand their own experiences and building a theory/approach unique to them (Keegan, 2016). This philosophy often incorporates an eclectic approach, with elements of humanism (unconditional positive self-regard - helping players live meaningful and purposeful lives) and cognitive-behavioural (not the event but our perception and challenging rational/irrational beliefs (REBT)), combining alongside systemic tendencies (understanding the player in relationships with others and different contexts). These have allowed me to integrate my services into a high-performance environment as part of a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) and a systems-based approach, where I operate alongside other key members of support staff within the environment (Reid, Stewart, & Thorne, 2004).

As I have gained experience within my role, I have attempted to understand the environment and culture of elite disability football as much as possible, by building working alliances and relationships with individuals (Tod & Andersen, 2012). This involves the wearing of 'multiple hats' and occasionally doing tasks (visibility during training: sorting equipment, helping athletes at meal-time) that may appear unrelated to my role as a practitioner (Collins, Evans-Jones, & Connor, 2013). However, this 'high-vis' approach as coined by Mellalieu (2017), provides important opportunity for me (a practitioner) to 'bond' with athletes and coaches (Reid, Stewart, & Thorne, 2004). This area concerns point 'a' and how I have begun to cultivate a psychological culture in the environment which can be integrated alongside other key disciplines.

With my role as a sports psychologist, 'buy in' can often be a major challenge, however, through the above, players and staff have been able to see that I am a person first and sport psychologist second (Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004). Alongside this, my work within

the MDT, centres around the nature of psychology and how players have them as coaches work on their physical (S&C) development or technical skills (passing, tackling, etc.), and my role in supporting players with both challenges (performance or wider-life) and also promoting growth, learning, and performance. Subsequently, we have now begun developing a systems-based approach, where psychology is integrated into the other disciplines to provide a more rounded approach. One key area is on that of language and terminology, whereby through my work with staff, consistent psychological language and terms are displayed across the MDT. For example, coach education focuses on developing an increased understanding between players and staff, where psychology is implemented through performance behaviours and the values staff want to exhibit/promote during their sessions. We then reflect on these to evaluate their pre-agreed session goals and if they are being authentic and consistent within their practice. This is one method of how I have begun to operate within an MDT, and become increasingly accepted by players and staff in relation to integrating psychological support alongside technical and physical elements.

(b) Providing understanding around disclosure and confidentiality within the MDT and (c) Breaching of confidentiality and disclosure if/when necessary

Operating with a high-performance environment as a neophyte practitioner undoubtedly presents numerous challenges around ethical concerns. In the current environment, this centres around disclosure and confidentiality within the MDT, with potential clients ranging from athletes, to coaches, to support staff (Anderson, Van Raalte, & Brewer, 2001).

Initially I begun to address this when building and developing relationships with the various stakeholders, and relaying disclosure and how confidential information may be shared (Stapleton et al., 2010). With confidentiality central to trust on which the client-practitioner relationship is built, clients (players) must understand the limitations to their confidentiality if they are to make informed decisions about whether to enter into support and/or whether to

disclose personal information during sessions (Glosoff et al., 2000). As such, I have made it clear to those in the environment of their ability to disclose information to myself and my professional roles and responsibilities as a BPS accredited practitioner. This involves the uphold of 4 key values: **Respect:** Dignity and inherent worth of all; privacy/confidentiality, shared values, consent, impact, **Competence:** Ability to provide services to a requisite professional standard; limits, advances in profession, **Responsibility**: Accept responsibility for what is within my power or control; professional accountability, and **Integrity**: Being honest, truthful, consistent in actions; setting self-interest to one side and being objective; challenging one's behaviour in context; avoid conflicts of interest. As a result, all involved in the environment are aware of the confidential nature of conversations between myself and client(s). With this in mind, the client(s) understands that confidentiality will be maintained unless it is either: a) mutually agreed that certain information can be shared amongst the layers of the organisation, and/or b) the client is at risk of harm or poses a risk to the harm of others – these are in line with the BPS Code of Conduct (*See BPS Practice Guidelines, Section 7.2*).

Moving forward, I continually reflect on my experiences and record decision-making processes when confronted with any potential 'ethical issues' – this allows me (and others) to go back and revisit if necessary. In these circumstances a degree of contextual intelligence is required to understand how the organization works in relation to the various tiers of authority, line management, and accountability that exist, thereby alerting myself to understand whom the secondary clients may be in certain contexts (Mellalieu, 2017). Furthermore, the use of checks with other practitioners (internal) in the Para-Football network, alongside those who are external (supervisors), are able to act as critical friends in this nature, where I can share my challenges as a practitioner for discussion and consideration. Ultimately, through understanding how (a) I can operate effectively within the MDT and integrate psychology support within others' roles, and (b) display clear transparency of the disclosure and

confidentiality process within the environment, have allowed me to more readily consider and understand the dynamics for most effective work. Moving forward, I look to continually monitor and update my understanding around ethical processes involved within sport psychology. This has allowed and will allow me to clearly identify potentially challenging ethical issues and thus how-to best approach dealing with them, and if the consultation of other staff members are needed.

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<u>Experience of my first paying client in Golf Consultancy</u>

<u>Key Role 2</u>

Description: An initial intake meeting and needs analysis had been conducted with a golf client, with pre-agreed support areas providing understanding of what the consultancy would consist of (Keegan, 2015). This would involve work around his short-game play, with performance often debilitated under pressure situations. Our work would look to alleviate the negative anxiety associated with pressure (Nicholls, Holt & Polman, 2005), and allow the individual to think coherently and structured when in performance situations. A major part of this was being able to transfer performance in his practice work into competition. With the client's long game (driving, iron play) being a stronger area of his game, the shortcomings in putting and in/around the green were beginning to have a negative impact on these areas. With the client willing to pay for my services, it presented an opportunity to deliver effective consultancy, but as I was a neophyte practitioner at the beginning of my Professional Doctorate. Naturally, this consultancy was accompanied by self-doubt about my competence.

Feelings: Within the initial session, there was initial apprehension/worry on my part, with a tendency to rely on my prompts/notes more heavily than expected. Although I had previously built up rapport with the client and was more than comfortable outside of the session discussing issues relating to psychology in performance; when in the session I led the discussion too much as opposed to it being a collaborative encounter (Keegan, 2015). I became distracted by my own thoughts and cognitive activity, forgetting about the support I was offering (Tod, Hutter, & Eubank, 2017) and wanting to 'have an answer' ready' in my response. This was a result of me feeling I needed to justify my worth in terms of my practitioner knowledge and ability. Although the client was satisfied with what we were discussing, I felt I could have displayed greater interest and empathy through active listening (Ivey, 1983).

Evaluations: Having experienced various negative feelings about my work, I increased my contact and collaboration with fellow peer trainees and supervisors to share my observations. The common theme within these discussions was the notion of 'generally feeling like a rookie' (Gardner, 2001), whereby feeling new, inexperienced, and often out of place, is a perfectly natural encounter to undergo. As a result, I begun to redirect my attention to focus on positive elements of the consultancy: a strong rapport (Speed, Andersen, & Simons, 2005), solid intake that identified the client's needs and process we would engage in (Keegan, 2015), and continual reflection on the effectiveness of my service (Knowles et al., 2007). As a result, I grew in confidence and feelings of competence, and in the subsequent sessions I maintained use of these solid common elements of service delivery, while looking to adopt a more client-led approach to determining the goals and outcomes of each session and intervention (Katz & Hemmings, 2009).

Analysis: In the subsequent session, my initial concerns around confidence and competency begun to diminish, as I allowed the client more time to discuss and work through their issues, and ultimately I became comfortable not knowing exactly how the conversation would develop. I highlighted that my service would incorporate on-going feedback involving on-course session management, accompanied with practice to competition applications, and a portfolio that tracked all performance statistics over the period and beyond our work. As a result, I highlighted that the previous session was a complimentary (free) intake, and that moving forward, each session would be priced at £25 an hour, or 5 sessions for £100. Having been highly apprehensive prior to the session(s) around payment, the client was relieved I had mentioned it at that point, as they were unsure how the contract and payment plan was structured (as I hadn't addressed it). This demonstrated the significance of clarity and personal openness in consultancy (Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007), and how ensuring both practitioner and client are on the same page early on within the relationship.

Conclusions: Although an eye-opening, and often uncomfortable experience that tested both counselling and consultancy skills, it revealed what areas are critical to an effective consultancy going forward. It demonstrated how personal feelings of doubt and incompetence, should not be allowed to interfere with what is being discussed DURING sessions. Often, this provides an ineffective service that serves the needs of the practitioner and their inadequacies, as opposed to that of the paying client. Through this reflective experience of my consultancy, I have learnt that is common, as a neophyte practitioner, to focus on the negative, and potential pitfalls in your consultancy, forgetting to consider the positive strengths that will also be there. Having spoken to fellow peers and supervisors, this is a perfectly normal experience

Action Plan: In future, I would be clearer from the outset of (based on the needs analysis) what the client looked to achieve through engaging in the consultancy process (Keegan, 2015). I would then reach a more informed idea to whether the relationship could materialise, and that I was best suited to helping the client achieve their goals. Outlining the charges of service immediately will allow me to feel more relaxed and committed to the session, as opposed to worrying about how to negotiate a fee, and other interfering personal emotions. In combination, these areas would have given me a clearer idea of what required more attention initially and how this would advance through the consultancy period. Yet, when now reflecting upon the consultancy experience, it demonstrates how an effective service can be delivered, irrespective of concerns around personal inadequacies and competence. Ultimately, the client and I systematically negotiated our way through the consultancy process, whereby the pre-agreed support goal of alleviating performance anxiety was achieved.

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10%... 10%... 80% 'rule'

Key Role 2

What?: Sport psychology has long struggled with 'buy in' from athletes and those involved in sport (Nesti, 2004), with athletes often approaching a SPC with apprehension for fear of being stigmatised by others as having psychological problems (Linder et al., 1989; Van Raalte et al., 1992; Wrisberg & Martin, 1994). Subsequently, as a proposed loose 'rule of thumb' around client 'buy in', '10%' embrace the idea of sport psychology and getting on-board, '10%' are not willing to engage in SPC services, and '80%' remain 'down the middle' and undecided on the role and effectiveness of sport psychology. This stresses that a majority of individuals are fundamentally undecided on sport psychology's value in the organisation. As a result, when going into consultancy I am often faced with the dilemma of where to direct my attention … Is it towards those who are more or less likely to buy into my services, and can I convert the latter? Whichever is the case, it is important to find out why this stigma exists.

So, What?: It is often difficult to directly observe the impact sport psychology has in practice. Emphasis placed on results, means that performance receives precedence, and is more 'observable', with the happiness and wellbeing of the person sacrificed (Andersen, 2005). Given my holistic approach to developing the 'whole person' and their long-term development (Friesen & Orlick, 2010), this presents potential 'clashes' between my principles and decision making in relation to the 80% 10% 10% rule. All being well, I seek to fit effectively within the environment, establish trust and rapport, employ a good work ethic, and offer useful and relevant expertise (Partington & Orlick, 2010). However, this requires prolonged periods of time, a luxury not often afforded in sport. As a result, 'being seen to be doing something' and taking extended time to ensure effectiveness provides a dilemma within my practice.

Now What?: When discussing this 'rule' with those involved within the SPC field, it is a common occurrence across sports, ages, and levels. Acceptance of Sport Psychology is often a 'hit' and 'miss' with the receiver, with some clients buying in and some not (Earle & Earle, 2013). In turn, that is perhaps something we, as practitioners, also need to accept. Moving forward, remaining authentic, relatable and non-judgemental (Chandler et al., 2014; Mapes, 2009; Sharp & Hodge, 2011) are personal qualities that I perceive as being congruent to my service. and it is important that I remain true to my principles (that will likely promote and maintain an effective service) rather than trying to deliver a results-based approach that attempts to 'please everyone', and is not congruent to my philosophy and approach. Within my approach, this enables me to eradicate negative stigma (e.g. athletes who receive psycho-logical support are mentally weak) and promote the benefits of sport psychology for well-being and performance (Earle & Earle, 2013).

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Working with Youth Athletes and Parents

Key Role 2

Description: Harrison arrived to me as a promising talent in golf, representing the County team and playing in National golf competitions on a regular basis, including the English Boys Championships. Initial contact was made by his father, with him outlining that Harrison had been having difficulties with his short game when in high pressure situations. This mainly concerned his inability to cope with high anxiety and tension whilst putting in competitions, and a deterioration of performance under pressure (Mellalieu, Hanton, & Fletcher, 2006). During initial discussions with his father (who was insistent on being in the meetings), he mentioned that Harrison's anxiety and pressure occurred when he had put himself into or within a few shots of the lead, where he was in contention to win. Yet, over several recent competitions, although starting well and putting himself towards the top of the leaderboard, towards the latter stages of the round and in the following rounds, Harrison began to faulter and would begin making simple mistakes and misplacing shots that would usually be 'tap-ins'. As this had become a recurring theme across several competitions, with his driving and iron play 'almost faultless', it was seen as crucial to explore the use of my help in order to address any potential issues to progress his game.

Feelings: Having worked with several golfers prior to Harrison, I felt comfortable in discussing his game and actively listening to his experiences (Tod, 2007) and where he felt I could fit into enhancing performance. Playing at a high-level, Harrison had a solid understanding of his sport and how psychology may play a role within golf, which was underlined by him wanting to be able to "think clearly and perform under pressure consistently". Therefore, I clarified that Harrison would be highly involved in the decision-making process, instead of providing potential solutions led by myself, on how to resolve his issues (Tod, Andersen & Marchant,

2009). However, before this I needed to first overcome initial issues regarding parental involvement and address who's needs I would be serving (father or son), in order to understand where I would appropriately and effectively fit into the support network (Gould et al, 1991).

My main concerns centred around the external pressure from his father that appeared detrimental, with this expectancy for his son to 'deliver' seemingly affecting Harrison's performance and the enjoyment he got out of playing. Although both dissatisfied at recent performances, it became apparent that his father had become increasingly frustrated at Harrison having not shown much progression over the last few months. Therefore, when initiating the consultancy, it was crucial to get the father to understand that effective work would only arise if it was driven by Harrison, with myself and him offering practitioner and parental support alongside. Although not appearing significant at the time, later in the consultancy process it became apparent that immediately assessing the most effective method to build rapport, facilitated the future decisions and approach I made and enhanced the nature of the consultancy experience (Knowles et al., 2001).

<u>Evaluations:</u> Due to the nature of the current consultancy and the dilemmas initially faced, the intake and needs analysis process were extensive so that both Harrison and I could collectively understand what areas he looked to work on, and the most effective method of offering support. Harrison identified an ability to 'take a step back' in pressure situations and think his way freely through the shot. It became apparent that he wanted a specific process of being able to approach, play and reflect on the shot facilitatively so that he was able to move on to the next, but knew what he was doing so that he understood how it worked. Subsequently, over the following sessions we constructed practice around the areas of performance (negative tension and anxiety) that led to a decline in performance behaviour (Gardner & Moore, 2005). As our working relationship developed, Harrison became much more open in engaging with the process and drills that I offered. Coming out of one of the sessions, after discussing what had

been covered, Harrison opened up about the 'external pressure' he faced from his father, and that although appearing like a confrontation at times, it was this 'pressure' alongside his own desire to succeed that motivated him to perform and play golf to the level he was at. This was accompanied by equal levels of support shown by his father, and Harrison identified that he was glad his father still had a role within our work together. As a practitioner, this provided a turning point in our working relationship, where we had built and developed a trusting relationship where he felt he could express his true emotion and thought processes. By encountering initial uncomfortable conversations and experiences with both parties, it allowed me to evaluate and document my own effectiveness at this stage in the consultancy *(*Anderson et al, 2002).

Analysis: Subsequent sessions provided open encounters and interactions between myself and Harrison; as I was able to reflect on my initial session experiences which allowed me to take responsibility in evaluating my effectiveness (Anderson et al., 2002). As I begun to understand the client in more depth, his father, initially felt to be a negative influence, was seen as imperative to any form of success. With Harrisons' strengths lying in his long game and iron play, we progressed towards attempting to get Harrison into similar thought processes with a putter in his hand as with his driver. He stated little conscious thought went into his game until he came onto the green, and therefore we set about employing pre-performance and breathing routines that addressed Harrison's tension and anxiety in competition. This involved working alongside an England Golf coach who supplemented the consultancy, where we underlined the importance of subconsciously having a routine in place, whereby he would approach and play his putts in both practice and high-pressure situations in a flow-like state.

In his subsequent feedback, Harrison stated that although he had reduced the pressure he put himself under due to the techniques we worked on, he was still struggling to maintain complete focus in high pressure situations. Therefore, our later work focussed more on directing attention

away from anxiety and tension and relocating it elsewhere during putting execution. This was a method advocated within golf research (Nicholls, Holt & Polman, 2005), whereby Harrison's attention switched from internal (anxiety/tension) and external (pressure) towards purely internal focus (pre-shot routine/breathing), so that his attention was diverted away from what was proving detrimental to performance. Yet, this was only reached after several trying sessions, whereby after the initial intervention was unsuccessful, I began to question my effectiveness. Following this, I immediately began offering various different methods in an attempt to alleviate any anxiety, and mainly justify my involvement and effectiveness (Tod, Andersen & Marchant, 2009). However, it was only once we sat down and talked through his performances and thought processes at different stages that I began to truly understand how and why the performance breakdown was occurring, and we could progress with the consultancy.

Conclusions*:* Ultimately, my consultancy with Harrison, has only been successful through experiencing various setbacks and dilemmas, which have often questioned my competency (Tod, Marchant, & Andersen, 2007). A strong collaboration has been at the heart of this, and through reflection upon what could have been offered differently with support, it allowed me to improve and the construction of ideas for change going forward (Knowles et al, 2001). This has resulted in the consultancy being accentuated through various channels (Keegan, 2015), with Harrison having one-to-one formal and informal sessions, phone calls following significant competitions, tracking online performance statistics, and group sessions/discussions with both his father and England coach. Thus, the consultancy has and continues to provide a unique opportunity for myself as a neophyte practitioner, with Harrison progressing towards the top level of his sport, which when combined with initial clashes in support with his father has allowed me to adjust and develop sessions accordingly to ensure maximum effectiveness for all parties involved.

Action Plan: If a similar case arose again in relation to parental involvement, I feel I would look to address the impact of the support networks (i.e. the father) on the athlete's performance sooner, and raise awareness and understanding of how each party may be affecting the other. Additionally, I would be more proactive in my formal (written reflection after sessions) and informal (discussions with player and supervisor), reflections to facilitate an interchange of views and opinions with others, so I am more informed in my knowledge and practice as I progress through my consultancy and encounter similar situations.

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Dependency: Fostering autonomy in a player

Key Role 2

Core question: How am I able to ascertain increased autonomy and independence in a client who has become very reliant on my support and service?

1.0 Description of the Consulting Experience

1.1: Phenomenon: The current reflection concerns a player I was working with who was involved within disability sport in the lead up to a World Championships. My support followed the staged-process of consultancy highlighted by Keegan (2015), whereby we had begun developing rapport and a working relationship in the initial stages, which eventually led to more fulfilling support and the development of an intervention both during and after the World Championships itself.

1.2: Causal: As our mutual understanding developed, it became apparent that the player required support around areas of self-confidence and identity. The player was on the fringes of the starting line-up and had represented England several times, yet found significant difficulty maintaining a positive self-image of himself and consistent, authentic behaviour on and off the pitch. This was debilitated further by teammates and coaches' interactions with him, with a challenging, and at times uncompromising culture being created, where players were unsure how to best develop and showcase their ability.

1.3: Context: Within the current experience, the influence of the vice-captain, head-coach, and manager all impacted the player (albeit often negatively), whereby various ongoing conflicts were a major challenge and something that potentially undermined both individual and team cohesion and performance (Carron & Hausenblas, 1998). With stakeholders and social support being key areas in maintaining any form of support (Morris, Tod & Oliver, 2016), it was crucial

to be able to allow the player to become both more independent, but increasingly self-aware of the impact others may have on him.

1.4: Clarifying: The key issues in the current encounter was the player's lack in self-confidence and identity awareness, and the role of others (stakeholders) on his performance and underlying behaviours. This had gradually worsened over time, with the player unsure of whose 'needs' to serve, and ultimately what type of person and performer he wanted to be.

2.0: Reflection

2.1/2.2: What was I trying to achieve/Why did I intervene as I did?: The player had initially approached me due to a lack of game-time, believing that his performances had been of a high enough standard to warrant a place in the starting line-up. He felt that others were to blame, with the vice-captain in particular responsible for constantly berating him and 'getting on his back' and 'going to have a go at me', contributing to feelings that he was going to have a bad game.

2.3/2.4/2.5: Internal/External factors influencing actions: The external factors influencing my actions were how key stakeholders were having an impact on the player and his performance and behaviour. The vice-captain saw high levels of potential in the player and wanted him to fulfil this, but at times his frustration with the player at not realising this potential 'boiled over' and resulted in criticism. The head coach saw him as an impact player, where his youth and 'naivety' would be of great use in the World Championships. However, he felt that player was not yet at the standard to be starting every game. The head coach was unsure of the best way to deliver this information to the player. It was clear that key stakeholders felt positive about the player's potential and value to the squad, but the delivery of this message was blurred and unclear, and as a result meant the player was unsure stakeholder perceptions, his own status, and therefore what he needed to work on psychologically to improve. Understanding these

internal and external sources of influence although a lengthy process, informed my own comprehension of what the stakeholders wanted from the player, and what the player needed to do to enhance his own development.

3.0 Consequences of Actions

3.1: What were the consequences of my actions for?: I began supporting the player in terms of enhancing his self-confidence through the use of self-talk and performance behaviours. Alongside this, the construction of a holistic, coherent identity allowed the player to model his own behaviour and values as opposed to others, and led to a more congruent sense of 'self'.

3.2/3.3/3.4: Personal & Athlete feelings about this experience?: With disability sport creating different degrees of dependency on personal support (Kenttä & Corban, 2014), I understand how the player, when provided with the support he was seeking, could became dependent on it. Once I began to deliver the support and intervention, I was conscious of a need to gradually increase autonomy in the player, and get him to promote (within himself) our work in his values and behaviours. This included the introduction of the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2012), whereby client autonomy was crucial to achieve ongoing impact and change. This autonomy begun to take shape in the form of pre-match routines, performance behaviours, and a regime that maintained the client's identity and confidence on and off the pitch. He felt that by having a 'physical' plan it would be easier for him to adhere. He subsequently invested more autonomy in maintaining the belief that he played for England (so was up to the standard). He had his own pre-match warm-up (consisting of stretching, conversations, training drills, and 'rituals') to get him into the correct mind-set going into the game. Performance behaviours of 'acting confident to inform feeling confident', promoting super-strengths of solid physical conditioning, being a role model, and trust in own ability provided an autonomous approach to the build-up for, performance in, and reflection on games, which mirrored his behaviour away

from camp. Subsequently, the player begun to feel more in control of his thoughts and subsequent behaviours.

4.0 Alternative Tactics

4.1/4.2/4.3: Could I have dealt with the situation better? And other viable alternatives: The time taken to understand the player and their experience was crucial in getting to the root of their thoughts and behaviour. Subsequently, by encouraging autonomy and independence, the player knew I had a vested interest in understanding him, and he was more willing to engage in the work I proposed as a consequence.

5.0 Learning

5.1/5.2: How have I made sense and now feel about this experience?: When reflecting retrospectively on the encounter, it is apparent that encouraging increased autonomy within the client is of paramount importance. Monitoring of an intervention often provides an indefinite period of time with impact and results often not immediately visible. Consequently, it is crucial to debrief to the client and have them comment how they have implemented my support. Through gaining specific feedback related to the consultancy, its content, and the relationship, I am able to better understand how the client has digested and then integrated my support, of which will benefit in increasing client autonomy. Through the debrief meeting(s), the discourse provides an opportunity for them to see how they have altered their cognitions and behaviour related to the initial issue, in order to empower them to adhere to the intervention and feel empowered to carry it further. Ultimately, I was able to offer support and guidance to the client, but I relayed to them that moving forward, it would be up to them to take increased ownership in order for the intervention to be its most effective.

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Golf Consultancy: Constructing an effective intervention in a sport with many 'experts'

Key Role 2

What: Sport psychology consultancy within golf is uniquely challenging, with its duration, interrupted pace of play, and excessive 'thinking time' critical factors, and it being the only sport in which practice and competition take place in different environments (Clark, Tofler, & Lardon, 2005). One challenge within the sport are the extended periods of down time, which often result in distraction and amplification of pre-existing negative self-perceptions, performance anxiety, and over-arousal (Singer, 2000; 2002). The psychological demands of the game are significant and the potential for sport psychology to have a positive impact is high. While I have been approached for psychological support by players, in my experience they tend to prioritise physical and technical improvements rather than being willing to spend time on the mental side of the game, anticipating that they will receive a quick fix if they do.

An example concerned a client who sought to improve his putting performance under pressure, whereby he would often, (in his words) 'choke' and 3-putt several times throughout a round, with it intensifying under pressure. Having watched the client across several rounds and footage of his putting from coaching lessons, we discussed his routine of approaching, playing, and reflecting on the shot, and areas around focus, emotional regulation and physiological arousal (Clark, Tofler, & Lardon, 2005). Mutually, we agreed that there were various self-deprecating thoughts (e.g. 'I'm going to miss to the left'), and an over-evaluation of the importance or risks of the shot, with these leading to self-doubt and fear of failure (Singer, 2002). Therefore, we agreed on implementing a pre-performance routine that would look to prepare for the task at hand, involving imagery, self-talk and breathing techniques, that when combined allowed a clear uninterrupted focus, and gave him a process of approaching, playing and evaluating shots in a more purposeful and effective manner.

So, What: Having had a few sessions, the client begun to notice feeling more physically and mentally relaxed and enjoying the experience of playing well through achieving the pre-agreed support goals (emotion regulation, arousal and approach/playing/reflection of shots) (Cohn, 1991). Despite this, playing partners and coaches repeatedly brought attention back to the physical movement of his putting and working on his stroke, grip, and posture, transferring his attention away from our psychology work. The client reported that this had resulted in more tension when putting and becoming more outcome-focused. His focus towards irrelevant information concerning his stroke/mechanics, the consequences of missing the putt, and other player's opinions of him, were all creating a distracting debilitating environment for performance (Wine, 1971). This meant that rather than approaching the shot in a calm, process-focused manner, the conflict in thought process meant that he was highly distracted and outcome-focused in terms of importance of making the shot ('I must'), and having a good round (Clark, Tofler, & Lardon, 2005).

The mental component of golf regarded as regarded as the toughest part (Leadbetter & Simmons, 2004), so it is often easier for players to concentrate on improving physical sides of their game, with short-term solutions emphasised at the expense of addressing the underlying longer-term issue. The influence of significant others, and what is more important to work on to enhance athlete behaviour and performance, in golf and more generally in sport, is an ongoing issue for sport psychology consultancy, and can influence 'buy in' from the athlete (Nesti, 2010). Therefore, in my work with this client it was critical I maintained structured support adhering toward the pre-agreed objectives, and by allocating the client's attention to the critical relevant task information, it may protect him from the debilitating effects of performance and influence of others (Wilson, Causer, & Vickers, 2015).

Now What: Through our following sessions, the client and I discussed these matters at length and how they were impacting his performance. What emerged, was that all these conflicting

thoughts and views were being stored and brought into action when he moved to standing directly over the putt. The client stated that his routine, posture, viewing the putt, breathing and eventual stroke, were all being completed within a short period of time, and that it totally overwhelmed what he was doing. Thus, we began to focus more on being in the situation before it arose (Davies, Collins & Cruickshank, 2017), whereby having the client approach the green from 20 yards back, it replicated the approach to the green and consider some of the longer-time processes within golf (before/after shots) (Davies, Collins, & Cruickshank, 2014). As we had identified the need for the client to not think about the putt until being stood over it, we decided on a 20-yard rule on approach to the green, where he would 'collect-receive-and process shot information' (Davies, Collins & Cruickshank, 2017). This allowed the client to complete the majority of his routine before being stood over the ball, whereby conflicting thoughts were minimised through the clear-process focused approach we instilled.

Over the following weeks, the client-maintained adherence towards our programme, and this perseverance had allowed him to develop autonomy in himself and his routine (Nesti, 2004; p.9). He highlighted that others still offered advice and opinions on his game, but by allowing this to naturally enter and exit his thoughts he was able to resort back to a focus on the psychology work.

Through this consultancy experience I became aware of the impact and potential hindrance significant others can have on your sport psychology work. Irrespective of the client and success of the consultancy and proposed intervention, it is highly likely that others will offer opinions to the client about what they think s/he should be working on, rather than working together in an integrated way to achieve agreed collective objectives. Thus, it is crucial to accept that in the absence of a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) support structure where 'experts' work in silos, this is an inevitable part of the territory of sport psychology consultancy. The development of a trusting relationship between client and practitioner is

important to minimise the 'interference' of others, and facilitate the value and confidence the client feels to undertake the work being proposed.).

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Stakeholders – Respecting the influence

Key Role 2

What?: With the ever-changing dynamics present in sport, sport psychology practitioners in a high-performance environment may often find themselves attempting to negotiate who's needs are being directly served (Andersen, Van Raalte, & Brewer, 2001). Stakeholders range from parents to nutritionists, carers to coaches, with it increasingly common to see just as many staff members on a bench as there are players (McCalla & Fitzpatrick, 2016). Subsequently, it is crucial for me as a sport psychologist to establish 'the client' in work as part of a high-performance team (Gustafsson, Holmberg, & Hassman, 2008; Reid, Stewart, & Thorne, 2004).

So, What?: I have found this both effortless and/or extremely difficult to sustain with certain members of staff, however it is crucial to understand and respect the influence that individuals may have on the athlete or even on your job! From a coach perspective, I have worked in organisations where I have responsibility to support both players and coaches. When individual coaching styles and philosophies are prioritised over the organisations', it presents a 'clash' in support for the athlete, and instead of reinforcing a message, it weakens it. One coach may offer a process-based, player-centred approach, whereby reassurance and empathy are core skills at their disposal. This may become an issue when another coach treats the same player in a more results-focused, pragmatic-based approach, where if the player isn't 'up to standard', their time in the team is limited. This also applies to other staff members, parents, and potentially teammates, where if personal goals and styles are prioritised above the collective, shared goal, it causes conflict and performance decrements. Therefore, developing a shared vision and trust, creating an atmosphere for change, encouraging communication, and clarifying roles represent diverse but real challenge (Reid, Stewart, & Thorne, 2004). Subsequently, as a practitioner I look to understand who's 'needs' I am directly serving at that

moment in time, if these may conflict with other goals and values, and how moving forward I may look to adopt a consistent approach.

<u>Now What?:</u> When done well, a synergy exists among the various professionals within the organisation, as they work together to help the athlete fulfil their potential (McCalla & Fitzpatrick, 2016). In my experience, it is crucial for myself to be ‘a part but apart’ from both coaches and players, and offer a bridge between the two, and every individual involved. This seeks to respect everyone’s knowledge, experience, and attributes, in order for everyone to feel valued and that they are contributing to the end-goal. Within this, I aim to understand the various levels of organisational structure and who I am ultimately ‘working for’ (Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009), so that when practicing I understand what the influencing factors may be.

Through my experience in diverse sports and cultures, I have begun to grasp an understanding of the culture and potential sub-cultures at play within an organisation. Through my diversity in approach, methodology, and theory, I have learnt that a ‘one size fits all’ approach does not go down well with stakeholders, and that acknowledging and understanding confidentiality and role clarity (Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009), alongside a clear referral process, (Heaney, 2006) is invaluable. At the centre of this is my holistic, long-term development of the individual both on and off the pitch, where taking adequate time to build rapport and a relationship has enhanced my effectiveness in my role. Being aware of, and subsequently respecting the influence of all involved (stakeholders) rather than working solely with one individual/department across a range of teams has served me well and is something I will pursue in my future work.

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Organisational Culture: 'Who's needs am I serving?'

Key Role 2

What?: Sport organisations are commonly associated with specific values and a variety of symbols, stories, myths, and rituals (Maitland et al., 2015). Within this, organisational culture is regarded as a complex phenomenon (Alvesson, 2011), which presents practitioners with a 'battleground of competing paradigms that influence how they conceptualise phenomena, use methods to collect and analyse data, and represent any findings' (Taylor, Irvin, & Wieland, 2006, p.305). Having attended a virtual session with Dr. Kate Hays on 'The high-performance system', it demonstrated various challenges associated with working within an organisation and significant difficulty in understanding 'who's needs are being served?' As I am currently working within an organisation (The Football Association), I felt it was vital I began delving deeper into the area in order to facilitate my support moving forward and its effectiveness.

So, What?: Kate highlighted that there are a distinct number of stakeholders' present once you begin moving away from 1-1 work. This concerns the athlete, their family (support system), teammates, coaches, staff, squad, organisation. Subsequently, it can often be difficult to manage your time effectively, as your support will not be adequate enough to support solely 1-1 work. Given that our contact time is often limited as a psych (in comparison to coaches, staff, family etc.) we need to ensure that we are being as efficient as we can in the moments we are given and the support we offer. One key area is 'shared understanding', which focuses on several key principles to ensure that everyone is on the same page'. This concerns working with and through coaches and staff, where the language is shared and understood (e.g. staff implementing psych. terminology within their work). This helps ensure 'buy in' from those invested in the organisation, so that you are then able to collaborate more effectively with others, which likely will lead to more impactful support. Additionally, it is imperative that we

hold the ‘middle ground’ between athletes and management, whereby if/when asked, both parties would feel or advocate that the psychologist is ‘on their side’.

Many Sport Psychology practitioners currently working in high performance sport advocate that a shared culture is the most impactful, whereby a process of identifying the problem – obtaining multiple perspectives – formulation – action planning – intervention delivery – evaluation helps demonstrate a mutual understanding of what is going on with a specific player or the team as a whole. As such, once this support process is mutually understood it enables the athletes themselves to begin comprehending support more readily, and will assist in performance and well-being enhancement.

Now What?: I have begun framing an understanding of how key principles can allow me to optimise my support within my FA role and how it can supplement the organisational culture. I am now beginning to highlight values of open co-operation, a focus on performance process and a whole-person approach, supported by the FA’s goal of developing younger athletes (Henriksen et al., 2010, 2011). Previously, I placed too much emphasis on developing the holistic identity of the player, and as such often neglected the performance-oriented environment I work within. I have begun compiling ‘non-negotiable behaviours’ with key stakeholders that will represent the cultural values across the squad, so we begin to achieve collective togetherness and commitment that can drive the team forward and enhance performance. At the same time, I am looking to promote individual super-strengths and what each individual brings to squad to establish how these strengths can inform team identity, and individual perceptions of value and self-worth. Ultimately, I feel that organisational culture has become a more prominent consideration for my practice within the last few months, with an emphasis on establishing a clearer definition and operationalisation of culture, how it informs relationships and enhances my support (Maitland et al., 2015).

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Cultural Language in Sport

Key Role 2

What?: Due to the dynamic nature of sport performance and its underlying determinants (Vaeyens et al., 2008), there has long been a need for practitioners to be able to fit into their environment (Partington and Orlick, 1987) and be versatile within their practice approach. One key determinant of adapting to the environment in which they work, is that of cultural language and the power it gives to meaning to social life (Booth, 2004). From personal experience, there are distinct figures of speech, word usage, and slang, which bind people together and ingrain a shared understanding of the environment. With these environments ranging from golf to football to athletics, male to female to disability, there have been various opportunities to attempt to understand how significant these nuances are to underpinning core values and behaviour. For example, within disability partially-sighted football, there are narratives relating to the actual game, narratives of the rituals and practices that precede the game, and narratives about the origins of the game (Parratt, 2000). This focuses on the emergence of the sport in 1980 (Macbeth, 2009), the early disaggregation and 'ghettoisation' of disability football (Aitchison, 2003, p.958), and the social and political factors that combine to prevent partially sighted footballers from experiencing a 'normalised' career path (Macbeth & Magee, 2006, p. 445). Subsequently, the cultural language involved within this environment helps those involved understand themselves and their societies through textualization (Berkhofer, 1995).

So, What?: Understanding how central 'the language' is to ascertain 'buy in' from athletes and key stakeholders is important (Nesti, 2010). In particular, it is how, why, and when the language is used, which has demonstrated a symbol of unity and togetherness amongst the teams I have worked with, and specifically that of disability football. When I first walked into the environment there was both a naivety and lack of knowledge of the individuals I would be

working with. This was demonstrated through replying by text message as oppose to voice message, tossing the players drinks rather than handing them, and bypassing 'basic' support on team walks, meals, and trips. However, being new to the partially-sighted environment, I was initially unaware of the importance of these 'minor' areas, and this was just a 'given' within the environment.

As I my time in partially-sighted football grew, it was the cultural language that began to emerge, which was and still is a key focus of conversations and support with the players. Firstly, the metaphor of 'fighting' had clear connotations and meaning, with it symbolising the nature of a 'comeback'. "You've got to fight for every last ball, if you want anything in life or on that court, you're going to have to fight for it" (Player one); "When we're in those difficult moments and it hurts, every last yard, every last ball, they have to be fought over" (Player two). Similarly, the use of the metaphor "exclusion" rang true with a lot of players and how they are 'boxed off' within society. Being 'boxed off' within football, and even 'boxed off' within Para-Football was a theme felt by the head coach. The strength in this language symbolised the unity and togetherness needed. "They are continually cast aside. They are amateurs with an expectation of being elite. They have mental health issues, they have disabilities, they are probably on minimum wage, and it's a real challenge for them to do the simplest of tasks. But you know what… that is probably what unites them all, they'd sacrifice themselves for the team on that pitch… and that is everything". What these metaphors provide is an insight into the cultural language of those invested within the environment, and how this impacts their work, behaviour, and conversations with one another.

Now What?: The passage above signals the powerful ways in which metaphors operate within a specific narrative to shape the experiences of those involved (Smith and Sparkes, 2004). Telling stories and relationally constructing different metaphors are important aspects in any act of (re)storying a life (Smith and Sparkes, 2004), with the significance of intersections

between sport, language, and culture revealing significant implications on the support offered (Meân and Halone, 2010). With sport remaining pervasive and constantly evolving, it is becoming increasingly important for the practitioner working in these environments to understand the factors that contribute to effective support. Within my own experiences alongside the literature, the cultural language of an organisation, squad, team, and individual is a key factor to negotiate and understand in order to attempt to enhance the effectiveness of any support you do.

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‘We must win Gold’ – Turkey World Championships 2019: Winning without ‘Winning’ Key Role 2

What?: Given that the IBSA Partially Sighted Futsal World Championships was my first experience travelling with a squad as a Sport Psychologist, there were various situations, dilemmas and presenting issues that I encountered for the first time. Alongside this, being the first sport psychologist to work with the squad and obtaining ‘buy in’ from players and staff would need to be considered (Nesti, 2010; p.56) before any support could begin to materialise.

Self-reflection throughout the Championships (Cropley et al., 2007) provided the opportunity to assess progress and any potential success, through the core values that where established pre-tournament. These values related to the ‘process’, which we as a squad had engaged with during the build-up: *be true to yourself* (give 100%, stick to your principles); *respect and appreciate the value of your teammates; winning through losses; never give in.* What this allowed was the squad to be reminded that during difficult situations and when faced with adversity, they and the team had the mind-set and ability to achieve success (in whatever form this took). These values incorporated the holistic longer-term development of the individual on the pitch (player) and the individual off the pitch (person) (Friesen & Orlick, 2010), to enhance both wellbeing and performance. On a personal level, this informed my own professional judgement and decision making during the tournament (Martindale & Collins, 2007).

So, What?: During the 3 days at the start of the tournament, I experienced incongruence towards my holistic philosophy, with my ability to be versatile and adopting a pragmatic approach (Keegan, 2015) crucial to initially ‘firefighting’ issues. This included injuries, deselection, commitment, and ad-hoc issues (one player spilling boiling coffee over another), whereby players, coaches, and staff frequently asked, ‘what are you going to do?’ This solution-focused approach was a stance firmly opposed by the squad in the build-up to the

tournament, yet that stance seemingly went 'out the window' when critical incidents occurred. With the coffee spill, I sensed immediate pressure and responsibility to act and 'resolve' the situation. Yet, having worked with the player over the previous 4 months, I recognised that space was needed to vent his issues inwardly, before any form of discussion. Following dinner, I waited for the opportunity to drop a line of support, and we agreed to meet after he had gone for a shower and changed. Our discussion brought up anything other than the coffee spill, with the player struggling to adapt to the pressure placed on him and the squad. Being a 'sounding board' in this situation and actively listening to him (Ivey, 1983), allowed him to open up on his concerns that any pre-tournament discussions and work tends to go out the window when at the tournament. An obsession with winning 'gold' is prioritised over everything, which then greatly affects team cohesion and results in a bad atmosphere. This was something that needed to be addressed both player and squad wide, in order to ensure we were being congruent and true to our principles and one another.

Now What?: Over the following days, and having got two games under our belt, I began structuring one-to-one conversations around "what got us here"; "memorable/standout experiences", "what they wanted from the tournament", and "what would give us the best chance of success". These areas allowed dialogue to be opened up on past camp experiences both on and away from the pitch, which brought in consideration of what other players and staff had done throughout the journey. This focused more on the process and that through our own sessions or through self-discovery and actively working it out themselves (Van Deurzen, 2012), as an individual or team we couldn't guarantee winning the gold medal, and subsequently how it would be a waste to invest all our resources in ensuring that. Instead, conversations began to resort back to being true to yourself (why do you want to be here?), respecting teammates and the value they bring, and that winning doesn't have to be defined on whether the gold medal is won or lost.

Following these conversations, I provided some of the quotes (under the player's discretion) that went in/around the dressing room and on the water bottles, which in 'critical' situations may have assisted the player. I began perfecting the bus-ride consult, the 10-minute breakfast table team building session, and confidential sessions in the hotel lobby and pitch-side (McCann, 2000; p.211), so that players not only understood that I was a person first and sport psychologist second (Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004) but that they also understood this about one another, especially during critical moments.

Ultimately, the tournament resulted in a Silver medal for the squad, which in itself was a best ever finish. However, acceptance came alongside this, and when going back to our process and revisiting our own squad values and principles, we had in fact 'won' in maintaining congruence and authenticity to our own morals for performance and wellbeing. Moving forward, this tournament provided a significant learning curve in terms of being not only my first tournament away with a squad, but also adapting and sustaining a level of service that adheres to everyone's best interests.

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Confronting your weaknesses in practice – avoid or embrace?

Key Role 2

What?: With increasing literature in the field of sport psychology aimed at monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of sports psychology consultants (SPC), athletes often highlight the fact that effective SPC's are able to know the limits or boundaries of their knowledge and expertise (Cropley et al., 2010). As such, within my own practice, I believe that being aware of and actively accepting what my own weaknesses or limitations are as a practitioner guide me to 'knowing what I know'. This view is shared in a narrative review of literature, whereby Fortin-Goichard, Boudreault, Gagnion & Trottier (2018) upheld the view that the best sport psychologists are aware of their own boundaries and limitations. Therefore, accepting at this stage potentially what I may not be able to currently do or offer, will allow me to move toward promoting and focusing on my strengths and what I can offer.

So, What?: Throughout my early experiences I have seen practitioners of varying ages, levels and disciplines outlining an ability to be able to work with 'any client', whether that be elite or amateur, sport or military or business, youth or senior, able-bodied or disabled. I feel slight unease and uncertainty with a SPC who 'claims' to be able to work effectively with all populations. Subsequently, I often find myself wondering if these individuals really are 'that good', or merely seeing each and every client as a 'moneymaking opportunity' and thus doing both the athlete, themselves, and the discipline no favours. However, on the other hand, I wonder if I'm missing a trick by not seeking as many opportunities as possible, and being wholly pragmatic and 'spontaneous' with my methods to just do something that works.

Now What?: I often find myself referring and resorting to the acceptance of my weaknesses/limitations. These include: (1) Lack of knowledge/exposure to implementing psychometric measures – this has often caused me issues within interviews and my ability to

provide ‘concrete, measurable’ results for the organisation. (2) Narrower of diversity of experience across different sports and athletes – my work has heavily involved a football population and being within that environment, with the exception of other occasional experiences in golf and athletics. This means that I potentially don’t have the diversity in sports/populations that employers are looking for when viewing my application. (3) A potential over-reliance on core features of what I do know: identity, resilience, well-being, anxiety – trying to seemingly ‘shoehorn’ clients and approaches into these areas may be problematic; simply because I am familiar with the methods employed doesn’t mean it applies to every other individual. I am actively working on the development of these areas, and have the time to do so in my remaining training and beyond, and I believe that striving to learn, as a life-ling process will keep pushing me forward in my development. On an ethical and moral level, I personally find myself disagreeing with the SPC who takes a ‘one size fits all’ approach to working with (any) client. I think I would rather remain congruent to my core beliefs and values and the industry’s ethical guidelines when selecting clients, rather than seeing ‘anything that moves’ as a viable way to ‘get my foot in the door’

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Building 'character' with my clients

Key Role 2

What?: The word 'character' is a term I often come across within my work and research, with it being used interchangeably to describe individuals, teams, organisations, and, more often than not, something that coincides with performance virtues. However, within these uses, a common issue is the 'genericness' of the word, with little understanding to its actual meaning. In a sporting context, character is said to comprise of six key qualities: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship (Omar-Fauzee, et al., 2012). These emphasise good, moral virtues, which enable an individual to cultivate Aristotle's concept of practical wisdom, to help make the 'right' choice in all kinds of scenarios. Yet, within my personal applied experiences, it is the amoral 'bad qualities' that character is often attributed to, with players, coaches, staff etc. highlighting 'he doesn't have the right character to make it' or 'she is very out of character, somethings not right'. What these examples hopefully illustrate is that the use of 'character' is often a turn of phrase to explain why the individual has not performed, and crucially, is often a 'throwaway comment' with no specificity or substance behind it.

So, What?: Within my own consultancy, I have always attempted to maintain a clear emphasis on the individual's character throughout the relationship. This allows me to incorporate my holistic, longer-term development of the individual (Friesen & Orlick, 2010), whereby supporting the client to develop their values, morals, and integrity alongside our more specific work has allowed them to maintain a stronger adherence to my support, and a knowing, understanding, and acceptance of the 'self' in their personal experiences (Petitpas, Giges, & Danish, 1999).

To depart from consultancy for a moment, there is an increasing realisation within schools that they have become too narrowly focused on academic achievement, where the increasing importance of teaching to develop good virtues is apparent (The Psychologist, March 2020, p.22). As such, it is increasingly important for teachers to help establish the ethos and culture of a school to ensure individuals understand why character virtues are important for their own and others' flourishing. Subsequently, sport can learn a great deal from initiatives where character education is promoted. In sport, academy structures that attribute time to developing 'good young men/women' who not only reflect a good example of the club when they are 'off-site', but also demonstrating, good, moral character when no-one is watching would represent an example of where we can do better.

Now What?: From experience, the development of character within my consultancy has been an area that has massively benefitted athletes. Core work around: discipline, integrity, commitment, professionalism, authenticity, amongst other powerful, emotive themes, have enabled the individual to form a basis and foundation for their thoughts and behaviour. These foundations then allow the player to both understand they have the 'tools' and 'skill-set' to deal with the matter at hand, but also continually look inwardly and ask themselves, 'what are the reasons I did that, was it for myself or for others?', 'what does this mean in the grander scheme of things?'. Examples such as these provide the notion around perspective and realism, whereby the individual can begin to form an understanding why they acted in the way that they did, and what are their moral underpinnings for that.

As Theodore Roosevelt famously said, 'To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society'. Therefore, like the education system has begun to discover, sport can learn a great deal from producing 'better people' rather than adopting too narrow a focus on individual performance and achievement (The Psychologist, March 2020, p.23). Subsequently, by adopting a stronger adherence and focus to fostering 'character' and building

feelings of self-worth (Chandler & Goldberg, 1990), we may be able to produce individuals who are not only performing better, but also living more fulfilling lives.

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Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Intervention(s)

Key Role 2

What?: CBT seeks to alter dysfunctional performance-related behaviours into functional behaviours (Gustafsson, Lundqvist, & Tod, 2017), and is widely viewed as the most-evidence based treatment for a number of psychological syndromes in different environments (Hofmann, Asmundson, & Beck, 2013). To give the current reflection context, I have long been an advocate of CBT as a viable approach that can be client-led, whereby attempting to support and allow the athlete to view a situation in a different, more facilitative manner for both their behaviour and performance, is crucial. Although initially explored due to its popularity in practice and being based on relatively simple principles, delving deeper into the therapy allowed me to begin understanding why clients were so receptive of its content and potentially why I considered it in the first place.

The scope of the approach in its 'cognitive distortion' techniques, and addressing inaccurate thoughts that reinforce negative thought patterns or emotions (Grohol, 2016), enabled me to feel confident in the fact that no matter where the consultancy went, I would likely have the necessary tools to offer adequate support. Common sporting issues in: filtering (focusing on the negative, ignoring the positive), catastrophising (expecting worst case scenario), control fallacies (assumes only others are to blame), overgeneralisation (assumes a rule from one experience), and musts (self-worth contingent on performance) were just some of the areas I noticed CBT could be applied to, in order to help deliver support. As a result, it has over time, became an approach I am comfortable to draw on in my consultancy.

So, What?: In understanding the tenets of CBT, I have found it has potential to support the golfer suffering from high-levels of debilitative anxiety in their putting, the student experiencing catastrophising effects of exams, the marathon runner adopting polarised thinking

in their view of risk of injury or the footballer looking to blame others for their deteriorating performance and well-being. CBT allows the opportunity to approach such client work using a consistent approach to help with a variety of presenting issues, and can be aligned with my underpinning practice philosophy when used as a client-led approach, or a more integrated, pragmatic approach where this is combined with Mental Skills Training interventions. I was able to systematically progress through the consultancy process, (Keegan, 2015), using CBT as the intervention of choice to understand the client's thought processes, how these formed into patterns of behaviour, and then how these patterns had a significant impact on their experiences, and were subsequently altered (Martin, 2016).

Now What?: As CBT can be based on an empowering relationship between practitioner and client, working as a team to identify issues and then actively solving them in collaboration with one another (Martin, 2016), it allowed for the incorporation of both client- and practitioner-led support. However, what became increasingly apparent for me was that a reliance on this form of approach to sport psychology support will not fit comfortably with all clients or context, and may limit my effectiveness with clients if it is my only 'go to' therapy. As I began to uncover strength-based approaches, which allowed for a more positive emphasis on what the client was doing successfully and enhancing these, there were occasions where solely attempting to 'find' and then 'focus' on an 'issue' was discouraging and ineffective to both myself and the client. Furthermore, Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT) provided another viable but complimentary alternative, whereby rather than always attempting to alleviate and 'remove' negative thoughts, I increasingly found that the existence of these behaviours was crucial for performance and well-being. For instance, with anxiety I began to comprehend that for some athletes, the experience of high levels of anxiety is important. It has meaning to them, so a therapy approach that allows them to accept these thoughts more readily and embrace them within their personal and professional spheres is useful.

By expanding the diversity of my support and ways in which I could work with client(s), I have begun to approach consultancy encounters with an increasingly open-mind of where the session(s) could go. Subsequently, this allowed me to have significantly more focus on being in the present with the athlete in our conversation and display effective skills such as active listening (Ivey, 1983), as opposed to deliberating over which CBT intervention I could seemingly 'shoehorn' the current 'issue' into. This enhanced both the quality and effectiveness of my sessions, through client affirmations around my investment in them as a person and as an athlete and my prescription of the intervention or support method. I feel that CBT has benefitted me greatly in developing my consultancy path, but as I have trained, read, and gained experienced, the awareness and subsequent incorporation of other approaches and means of support has allowed my consultancy to evolve and mature.

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Motivational Interviewing

Key Role 2

What?: Within a counselling and consultancy setting, motivational interviewing (MI) has become a prominent method in promoting behaviour change in individuals (Markland et al., 2005). The principles of MI emphasise a 'client-centred, directive method for enhancing intrinsic motivation to change, by exploring and resolving ambivalence' (Miller & Rollnick, 2002, p.25). The presence of ambivalence is commonplace due to the benefits and costs associated with either changing behaviour or staying the same, with this conflict resulting in the individual often stuck in a state of 'between-ness' (Markland et al., 2005). In a sport setting, consultants have often implemented MI as an intervention to physical activity, and providing key components that support psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 1985). However, it is the work of Mack, Breckon, Butt & Maynard (2017), which has seen an emergence of how sport psychologists understand and use MI. This has heralded the therapeutic alliance (Andersen & Speed, 2012) as integral to purposeful work within the practitioner-client dyad (Hatcher & Barends, 2006). As such, my approach to consultancy throughout my training now places a stronger emphasis on forging a therapeutic relationship and mutual understanding of how psychological support is conducted.

So, What?: Within consultancy, sport psychology interventions have often placed greater emphasis on intervention content than on the processes of relationship-building (Mack, Breckon, Butt, & Maynard, 2017). In my own consultancy, I have often found myself 'siding' with one area of the conflict, whereby I actively encourage an individual to maintain alignment with the beliefs and values that they uphold, against persuading an individual of the need for change. This often leads to increased resistance and a reduction in the likelihood of change (Miller & Rollnick, 1991; Rollnick & Miller, 1995). As a result, MI demonstrates how finding

a consistent approach of understanding, applying, and reflecting upon the client's and my behaviour will foster better understanding and effectiveness of how we work with one another.

I began asking myself MI-oriented questions around 'when I first start working with a client, how do I begin to build a relationship/alliance with them?" and "which specific communication skills do I employ to underpin my work?" This allowed me to understand that I had used elements of the approach within my practice, yet had not fully immersed myself within what the approach involved. These elements consisted of open questioning, complex reflections, and affirmations (Apodaca et al., 2016), and through empathy and reframing of concepts I had been successful in producing behaviour change in the individual. However, I still felt that I was 'missing a trick' with regards to merely 'cherry picking' what was relevant, and that moving forward it would be more beneficial to myself and the athlete if I engaged in MI training.

Now What?: The MI process is composed of the following: (a) a relational component (MI spirit); (b) a technical component (micro skills), which mobilises the relational component; (c) four processes (engage, focus, evoke, plan), within which the relational and technical components exist; and (d) sensitivity to the language of behavior change (change, sustain and resistance talk) (Mack, Breckon, Butt, & Maynard, 2017). In itself, this approach is one I've not exclusively engaged with, and akin to other therapies and approaches like CBT, REBT, and ACT, I run the risk of (a) not fully understanding the approach I am utilising and engaging with, and (b) not aligning my values and beliefs, and ultimately practising what I preach (in regard to congruency). Therefore, although I understand MI is similar to other approaches, in that of eliciting information from the person, rather than telling the person what to think and do; there are gaps in knowledge and application of the approach in my work, yet I appreciate there is real value in what it can enhance in terms of a therapy. At the current moment in time, while I am encountering other techniques that I wish to understand more about, I don't want to

run the risk of being a ‘jack of all trades’. I need to ensure that through better discovery, I maintain the use of approaches that resonate with my practitioner philosophy.

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The need to be able to (performance) profile

Key Role 2

Description: From my initial interview experiences, Sport Psychologists often need to possess a firm understanding of how to implement psychological / performance profiling (including confidence profiling) in their role. Psychological Profiling measures provide a valid and reliable indicator to help visually represent data from various sources in a lay-able format for stakeholders to discuss and explore. These methods often ask the athlete, practitioner, and/or others to identify the attributes essential to their development and performance and then rate themselves/the individual on those attributes. Subsequently, this allows the athlete to become more involved in the evaluation of their performance capabilities, identify perceived strengths and weaknesses, and thus facilitate engagement on how to improve (Jones, 1993).

Feelings: With the use of psychometric measures, and that of a more Certaintist-based approach being far removed from my own Construalist-based philosophy (Keegan, 2015), I have often struggled to fully adhere to the use of profiling measures, as I maintain that more often than not, "you cannot measure something as unique as psychology" (Keegan, 2015, p.53). Instead, I seek a process-focused approach to explore, understand, and then assess the client's thought-processes and behaviour, in order to provide effective support moving forward. I have often felt that by putting a psychological profile in front of the support receiver was something that went against my own personal and practitioner-based values (Chandler et al., 2016).

Evaluation: I began to notice a requirement in job applications and interviews for the interviewee to have a solid understanding of psychological / performance profiling measures. Organisations cite the ability of profiling in being able to provide athletes with goal setting (Butler, 1997; Butler, Smith, & Irwin, 1993), raise self-awareness (Butler & Hardy, 1992), build confidence (Butler, 1997), and to assist with athlete profiling and talent development. As

a consequence, I have begun to explore, pragmatically accept, and actively incorporate profiling within my 'toolbox' as a practitioner.

Analysis: Within my own practice, I have begun to implement profiling as a potential measure to compliment the support I am doing with athletes. For example, with a golfer who was having issues with anxiety under heightened pressure and as a result performing poorly, we identified through the use of profiling areas of self-confidence around their 'ability to remain self-focused' and 'freedom over movement/thinking' that were inhibiting their ability to stay on-task and maintain composed under pressure. Furthermore, by encouraging the athlete to think about their reasoning behind a particular confidence rating, additional sources of confidence were identified (Hays et al., 2010). As a result, the profiling process had allowed the athlete and I to understand and become aware of what sport confidence looked like for him on both a 'good day' and on a 'bad day' in order to help reinforce their positive attributes, and alleviate or alter the dysfunctional debilitating thoughts and behaviours.

Conclusion: Although not a prerequisite of my philosophical approach and an area that I am not a huge advocate of, the use of profiling has certainly begun to make an impact on my applied practice. Within consultancy, when employed, athletes have stated the profiling's' effectiveness in having the ability to show 'where I need to improve', and as such, the visual format and presentation of our work has remained effective. When used in conjunction with other key areas of my approach, including CBT, ACT, identity, etc., profiling offers a tangible resource that evidences, with more clarity and transparency, the work the athlete and I have done together. From an interview perspective, given that profiling was a major sticking point with regard to applications and interviews, as I am increasingly aware of its use, and incorporated it within my practice, I can cite and demonstrate credible experience of its use.

Action Plan: I am now in a more informed position to demonstrate how I would look to apply the use of profiling within a sporting environment, through use of examples such as confidence profiling and personality profiling. However, I am still aware of the limitation of profiling, where its use may often be counter-productive and damage an athlete's confidence in an area they thought they were excelling in. Furthermore, the use of profiling can also result in individuals representing an unrealistic portrayal of themselves, and rating their ability significantly higher/lower than is the case. As a result, there remains some caution around the use of profiling as a psychological tool. However, moving forward, my action plan is to continue to include the use of profiling (when appropriate) in order to supplement my client-led consulting approach and to evidence its use and application to potential employers.

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Consultancy Philosophy Continuum

Key Role 2

What?: An ongoing negotiation across my stage 2 training has been to fully understand the consulting philosophies at play within my work. In brief, practitioners may draw from (or adopt exclusively) a range of theoretical approaches and philosophies that guide the work they conduct with a client. I find it useful to revisit key philosophical principles on a regular basis to locate my work, and I have engaged frequent reflection on my philosophical positioning and evolution throughout the duration of my training.

Feltham & Dryden, (1993) offer a philosophical continuum consisting of four constituent parts, detailing pure, hybrid, integrated, and eclectic approaches (that detail the principles and values practitioners base their practice on. At one end, eclecticism refers to the practitioner drawing from all/any approach (Young, 1992), where they move between different styles in order to suit the client or situation, with these being independent from shared values. Alternatively, a practitioner may practice using skills founded on consistent values but work across linked theories and approaches, and as such takes a more integrated approach. Thirdly, a hybrid practitioner would likely practice using different applied approaches that are based on one single theory, Finally, at the opposite end to eclecticism, is what is characterised as a pure philosophy, where practice is grounded exclusively by one theoretical orientation.

More recently, Keegan (2015) has provided a comprehensive overview of the philosophies of science (Certaintism, Construalism, Pragmatism, and Fallibilism) and translated their implications for sport psychologists:

Certaintism: This philosophy characterises practitioner-led, consultancy, where the practitioner will promote a 'practitioner knows best' stance (Keegan, 2015, p.53), with the applied practice and intervention itself having to be measured objectively and be theory-led in terms of support offered. It views the practitioner as expert, where theory informs practice and the use of quantitative psychometric measures are a prominent feature. Ultimately, the practitioner dictates the consultancy, with the client a recipient of their knowledge.

Construalism: This philosophy sits in direct contrast with that of Certaintism. The construalist practitioner will follow a client-led approach to consultancy, with the use of humanistic, person centred and Socratic principles forming the foundations of support. A theory is built unique to the client, where they know best, and ideally the client arrives at their own solution. The practitioner assumes a less directive and more facilitative role, where assistance may be offered to better understand the clients' experience, with the client evaluating any effectiveness.

Pragmatism: As a philosophy that sits between Certaintism and Construalism, Pragmatism follows a highly outcome-focused ideology, where is the practitioner will flex their approach based on other factors e.g., the client and / or context to ensure objectives are achieved. It is often a trial and error experience, where there is ambivalence towards a guiding theory, with one only being used if they appear useful. Ultimately, results are monitored to demonstrate effects, but the key factor is that the client believes the intervention has worked.

Fallibilism: As a philosophy that also sits between Certaintism and Construalism, Fallibilism is concerned with a critical evaluation of evidence, theories, and practical ideas to determine what is done. The consultant, you can be more flexible in approach, with the practitioner

continually critically evaluating, with more data being gathered in order to determine if effectiveness is beginning to be established.

So, What?: In regard to the development of sport psychologists, Tod (2007; Tod et al., 2009; Tod & Bond, 2010) highlights that over the initial years of consulting, trainee practitioners will frequently experience transition in relation to their philosophical positioning as a consequence of practitioner development, evolution and growth. At the start of the professional doctorate I found myself operating on a practitioner-led approach, with the perceived need to establish power and competence being imperative in my consultancy. I would align myself with Certaintism, in that I would be heavily theory-led, with the client being supported through my ability to tailor an intervention based on theoretical underpinnings. However, as I grew in my practice experiences, I noticed a gradual shift toward a more client-led approach (construalism), where I'd became increasingly confident of my competence, and as such I would allow them to lead and offer support when necessary. More recently, I have evolved to be able to flex and adopt a more pragmatist approach when my support is governed by the performance-based tendencies of organisations. This has required a versatility within my approach to practice and accepting that occasionally I will need to deliver in a way that may not be fully congruent with my holistic, humanistic approach of developing the 'whole person'.

Now What?: Keegan (2010), highlights a consistent pattern in practitioner development, wherein neophyte practitioners, given the strive to do what works for the client, may adopt an approach to practice that is eclectic. Given that Tod & Bond (2010) outlined practitioner training and supervision in Sport Psychology was in its embryonic stages at that time, and didn't give practitioner philosophy much consideration, it is to no surprise that practitioners developed approaches that were designed to be knowledge driven, skills focused and needs driven. When exposed to richer philosophical thinking, I initially felt lost, incompetent, or incongruent in terms of locating my practice philosophically. Some may argue (to which I

wholly agree), that it is necessary for the practitioner to experience conflicts and struggles regarding consulting styles and philosophical orientations in order to be a better practitioner (Keegan, 2010). For me, it was this, alongside reflective practice (Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004) that enabled me to capture key tensions and experiences regarding the philosophical approaches I have engaged with.

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Doctorate Level Writing

Key Role 3

What?: Strong indicators of doctorate-level research concern the depth of criticality in research areas, and the ability to convey ideas as coherently and compellingly as possible (Eastman & Maguire, 2016). In light of this, the challenge surrounding how to transmit complex ideas with clarity and how to write with critical depth (Eastman & Maguire, 2016), which have often dominated my thoughts and whether I am able to consistently deliver research outputs to the standard required. As a doctoral student I am required to make 'original contribution' to the knowledge of my field, with this being an 'entry-level test' of my readiness as a scholar (Paré, 2019). Having not (yet) published any form of research material, and continuing to witness fellow peers and colleagues readily submit and publish theirs, there remains an eagerness to submit and begin publishing my studies.

So, What?: At the centre of the challenge of writing at doctorate level is my own existential issues and anxieties. As noted by researchers (Ivanic, 1998; Kamler & Thompson, 2014), writing is identity work, and assignments such as a research paper present the author with some fundamental questions: who am I in this text? with what authority and freedom do I speak? with and to whom am I speaking? (Paré, 2019). Subsequently, as I attach significant time and meaning to my writing experiences, it can often be difficult to separate myself from the text and provide a more objective stance. As I am undertaking a professional doctorate that requires D level competence in research and practice, it is this perceived 'gap' between being a neophyte researcher/practitioner, and being that of an 'expert', which is daunting. If anything, I have learnt that writing at a doctorate level requires a 'deeper participation' (Prior, 1998, p. 103) and being held more accountable for my ideas, and in a research-informed practice sense, what I write about is likely to have an impact on those within applied settings.

Now What?: The professional doctorate promotes 3 key areas of focus for research to consider: originality, significance, and rigour. In writing at this level, I have begun to compile key aims of my own research that align with these criteria moving forward. (a) *creativity* – as I have often lamented the loss of my own voice in writing (Paré, 2019), I have learnt to accept when my own voice needs to be negotiated with others, in order to more readily benefit the reader. Too often I have been concerned around 'losing ownership' of ideas and the authenticity of my sense of self, however I have begun to understand that in order to reach a wider, more diverse audience, I need to respect when my ideas need to be shaped and potentially restructured. (b) *impact* – this links in with research-informed practice, and always being aware of where my research could go. This provides a sense of purpose to my research, in knowing that, if I pursue it, I may be able to begin impacting others' thoughts and behaviours as a result of my research. (c) *identity* - tying back in with the notion of identity in writing, I have become more attuned with the idea that identity is both our sense of self, and also the ways in which we are seen by others (Paré, 2019). Therefore, as long as I am consistent in my understanding of both, and remain congruent to my own ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology, I will produce work that I will ultimately 'be proud of'.

Although quite a convoluted reflection, I have attempted to provide some of the key challenges faced by early-career professional doctorate students in terms of their writing at a doctorate level. In my personal experience, it is learning how to write at this level, including the language, structure and content of my work that has required significant negotiation. Alongside this it is the staged process of beginning, carrying out, and extrapolation of my research that has presented various hurdles. This ties in with 'ownership' of research, maintaining a consistent and authentic approach, and negotiating with oneself and the relevant parties to get worked published. Having previously relied heavily on the supervisor-supervisee relationship, I have developed a greater appreciation and web of support for myself by drawing on the expertise of

others, in fellow peers, students, athletes, and others within the field (Paré, 2019). Ultimately, through maintaining adherence to both the doctorates' and my own core values of research, I feel I have begun to master 'how' to write at doctorate level.

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Doing a Systematic Review – Trials and Tribulations

Key Role 3

What?: Conducting a systematic review is a 'journey where you want a companion who knows what they are talking about' (Boland, Cherry & Dickson, 2017). In light of this, although experiencing various setbacks within my systematic review journey, having experienced and empathetic supervisors helped the journey become a significantly smoother one. Systematic reviews are considered the 'gold standard' in synthesising findings of mass amounts of literature, in order to locate, appraise and synthesise the best available evidence in a certain area (Boland, Cherry & Dickson, 2017). When conducting the systematic review, it was this appraisal and synthesis of studies and research that proved most problematic. From the outset, you need to be clear about why you are carrying out the systematic review and how you reached the final list of included studies. However, having begun the journey with a view to explore identity in disabled sport literature, I later found that there is a means to conducting a literature search in a professional manner, which resulted in several months 'seemingly wasted' on an initial wrong decision I took and my potential lack of awareness.

So, What?: The lack of awareness begun with including/excluding studies based on a Google Scholar literature search, whereby there was no clear purpose or direction, let alone validity in why I was including or excluding certain studies. This resulted in approximately 200 studies being included in my EndNote, which I then began to whittle down through: title-abstract-full text stages of reviewing each study. As a result, I ended up with 17 final studies to write-up a systematic review. It was at this point that my conversations with supervisors enabled me to (rather frustratingly) find out that there were questions over the systematic and transparent methodology I had engaged with (Chalmers et al., 1989). My process related to more of a 'literature review' in nature, with it being a study that assimilates and describes the findings of more than one study (Boland, Cherry & Dickson, 2017). There was no evidence that I had

engaged in the appropriate process to conduct a systematic review that led me to the final 17 papers, and as such I had to restart. Although initially highly frustrating, following several meetings I reached a similar stage in the systematic review within 2 weeks. Suddenly, the apprehension and feelings of having wasted months of my work and time faded into insignificance, and allowed me to appreciate that engaging with the correct process had resulted in a more rounded and professional write-up.

Now What?: Having now completed the systematic review I can appreciate the impact of having conducted it incorrectly first time round. The standards for doctoral research translate to the work being of publishable standard. Within this, the requirement to engage in the correct process throughout your work is crucial. Looking back, I now recognise why there are Systematic Review guidelines and boundaries to abide by. When engaging in the correct process, my review provided a more fluent, concise, and effective summary of research in identity in disabled sport literature. Do I regret 'wasting' months conducting a write-up in an incorrect manner? Maybe… but having done this I now understand (even more so!) the value of supervisors who are both knowledgeable and empathetic in what they do. Ultimately, I feel that the systematic review process has been a fundamental learning curve of my professional doctorate qualification, and something I will undoubtedly take forward with me.

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Identity – The foundation of my research

Key Role 3

What?: Identity has long been a heavily studied area of psychology, with sport and athletic identity defined as the degree to which and individual identifies with the athletic role (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993). From a personal perspective, the role identity plays in those with a disability in sport has been a primary area of interest during my neophyte years. How individuals recognise, construct and look to others for assurance of that identity, and in particular 'when do people consider themselves to be persons with a disability?' (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013), has provided me with research findings that have informed my practice. Subsequently, when gaining a position as Sport Psychologist to the England Partially Sighted Team, it presented assurance that the research I was conducting had not only 'got me noticed', but also provided potential valuable areas of work with the squad further down the line.

So, What?: With my practitioner philosophy pertaining to the holistic long-term development of the individual on and off the pitch (Friesen & Orlick, 2010), exploring the identity in research participants has always felt to be compatible. Subsequently, by understanding how/why the individual identifies with a certain 'self' both in and away from sport has often influenced both levels of performance and of wellbeing. Specifically, my research into the role of disability identity on wellbeing provided the understanding that if an individual has an overreliance on being defined by a certain identity, it can result in self-worth and wellbeing being contingent on whether this identity is fulfilled. Subsequently, if this identity is stripped or taken away from the individual, there can be negative repercussions associated with both performance and wellbeing. Having understood the impact of identity, I have been successful in balancing the influence of on and off the pitch 'self' and how understanding "the identity, perception, and

value of the individual" (Sparkes, 2005; p.195) provides a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of identity in sport and specifically disabled sport.

Now What?: My interest in identity in sport has opened up various opportunities from both a research and applied perspective. Having initially conducted undergraduate research into identity in Cerebral Palsy football, it has led to my current role within the England Disability football set-up. Moving forward, the approach of research underpinning practical work, and practical work underpinning research has facilitated current best practice in the realm of disability sport. therein providing substance to the means and methods I use to approach work with players, I feel reassured that the work I do with them is ecologically valid. Moreover, the foundations of my approach and philosophy, investing in both the 'person' and 'athlete' is something I know will always be at the epicentre of my practice.

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Doing Meaningful Work

Key Role 3

What?: What makes work meaningful?.... Until recently, this question had rarely (if ever) crossed my thoughts, let alone was I in the position to answer it. However, a simple question around 'how do you know you've had an impact?' during a fellow prof doc. peers' research study, prompted an 'inward look' at essentially, why do I do what I do? Although, the question related to applied practice (an area I felt confident in having an impact) I felt encouraged to explore in a research sense, how I judge my work as 'meaningful'. Symon & Whiting (2019) highlighted the nature of meaningful work as 'messy', with it being dynamic and requiring the negotiation of tensions. But what does this 'messy negotiation' involve or require?

So, What?: Meaningful work has often been recognized as 'when an individual perceives an authentic connection between their work and a broader transcendent life purpose beyond the self' (Bailey & Madden, 2016, p.55); with it largely conceptualised as a positive individual subjective evaluation (Symon & Whiting, 2019). In personal terms, I felt that this was the result of conducting work that was meaningful and authentic to my personal and practitioner ethos, where I strengthened my understanding of a research area for the purpose of assisting the organisation and stakeholders, and if helped athletes, that was a bonus.

However, when I contrasted this with my research-informed practice, I noticed a lack of congruency, with my work with athletes often involving aiming for a greater good, regardless of whether that contributed to an organisation's bottom line. What I mean by this is I often conducted research for the purpose of broadening my understanding and allowing the organisation to state it delivered 'research-informed practice'. Yet, following deeper and more meaningful conversations and sessions with players within the organisation, I soon discovered that their interests were at the epicentre of my work, and that I was offering support that at

times may have conflicted with the organisation's views and goals. This refers back to the 'messy' aspect of meaningful work, where I had subconsciously been demonstrating two opposite, but meaningful, pieces of support and work. This consisted of supporting players around wider-life issues (including identity, employment, relationships) outside of the sport and organisation. During this support, the players often arrived at whether their role in the squad and time in the sport was truly appreciated. They felt that there were increased amounts of sacrifice being made, they were not paid for their contributions, and that the sport was becoming less and less enjoyable. This provided a slight conflict with my role within the squad, where I was brought in to enhance performance and give us a real chance of winning a gold medal. However, what begun to rise above this, was my obligation to support the players through personal and meaningful issues and areas, and be aware that this may occasionally conflict with the organisation goals.

Now What?: I began to appreciate what Symon & Whiting (2019) highlighted as 'having to work at it, work through it, and work to produce it', as it is something that we need to negotiate between us and with ourselves. In this sense, meaningful work in my personal sphere has been based on several journeys, involving being initially vulnerable to exploitation within consultancy due to my eagerness to attract clients (paying or non-paying), transitions within my research ethos, and in terms of my philosophy and pedagogy. These contested meanings (Choi & Majumdar, 2014), have allowed me to potentially come 'full circle', where-by I often refer back to initial points made around authenticity and moving beyond the self. As such, I now find myself aligning with Rosso et al. (2010), who state that work is meaningful when it resonates with our beliefs or values, bolsters our self-efficacy and self-worth, is purposeful and significant, provides a sense of belonging, and echoes wider cultural understandings of meaningfulness. As such, my role within the squad has since provided an increased alignment between the support I offer to players and what the commitment to the organisation is. The

organisation and its members have begun to understand and more importantly appreciated the issues the players face on a daily basis, and have started to put in place increased support out of camp. Although this will take time to develop organically, the players feel that they are more valued and integral to the organisation than ever before. Through my work with them, they understand the camaraderie and fulfilment the squad gives them, and this is something that is at the epicentre of our work moving forward. As a result, although I will undergo further deliberations around what constitutes ‘meaningful’, it is only through reflecting on my ongoing experiences that I will grasp a firmer understanding of what ‘meaningful’ looks like to me.

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Data Analysis in Qualitative Research

Key Role 3

Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted

(Albert Einstein)

What?: As Einstein once famously stated, it can often be difficult to measure what is important. For me, chosen the qualitative paradigm, method and data analysis protocol has been the most difficult to fully understanding. Personally, these challenges surface the most when presented with the abundance of potential data analysis methods, which include (but not exclusive of): content analysis, conversation analysis, discourse analysis, ethnographic content analysis, thematic analysis, grounded theory, phenomenology, and ethnography. As such, with such a wide area to cast my metaphorical researcher net over, I have reflected on three qualitative data analysis approaches that have had the biggest impact on me during my training.

So, What?: Qualitative analysis largely follows an inductive approach to generate new theory from the data that is present within the research (Mayer, 2015). In light of this, and the number of different analysis methods available, it is the manner in which data is extracted that I have had to update my understanding of to become a more effective qualitative researcher over the duration of my training.

Content Analysis, to Grounded Theory, to Phenomenology

Prior to understanding and fully appreciating the significance of the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of my research, I had predominantly conducted research in a method-led manner (Grix, 2002). This involved adhering to a semi-structured interview, which was thematically content analysed in order to discover the key themes across the research-base, with this then effectively leading me to constructing a research question. Essentially, this was

a combination of both naivety and lack of awareness, and also an ease of conducting research in an established manner which I had become heavily familiarised with.

As I grew as a qualitative researcher, I became increasingly aware of how data analysis' approaches influenced the content that emerged from the data. The key issue was a lack of understanding and inability to comprehend why I came to think about and conduct research in a certain way (Grix, 2002). There was a distinct lack of validity and reasoning behind why I was conducting research in the current format, which potentially was leading to incongruent methodological approaches and how I was going about acquiring the knowledge which exists (Hay, 2002).

Within my work within disability football, I began implementing grounded theory to develop theory through data analysis (Punch & Oancea, 2014). However, I soon became aware of the time-consuming nature of grounded theory (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009), and more importantly I begun to realise the impact of how a particular view of the world, ultimately affects the research process (Grix, 2002). This brought in the need to explore my key ontological and epistemological philosophies more closely, and how these inform the research process I engage in, and ultimately how I came about collecting the results I did.

More recently, Phenomenology provided an approach not oriented towards finding 'patterns' and 'commonalities' within human experience, or 'shoehorning' data into a theory or paradigm, but instead seeking to discover some of the underlying structure of that experience through intensive study of individual cases (Thorne, 2000). For example, in the consultancy case study assignments, rather than explaining the stages and transitions to athletes as a whole and their psychological support, a phenomenological approach uncovered that individual's experience. This explicitly avoids cross comparison to other individuals in a similar 'boat', and instead gathers an exhaustive, systematic, and reflective study of that athlete's experiences as

they are lived (Thorne, 2000). As such, this involves drawing entirely new descriptions and conceptualisations, and disregarding preconceptions prior to the research/work.

Now What?: The current reflective experience has enabled a significant development in my research practice approach moving forward. As I continue through my training and research/applied experiences, I am becoming increasingly exposed to the ways in which practitioners collate meaningful data through their own selected methods. Given that all these approaches have their strengths and weaknesses, for a qualitative researcher this requires careful, thought-out selection of a particular approach. This selection needs to consider both the particular objective of the research, and also the view of the world of the researcher (Mayer, 2015), which both has important influence on the findings that are drawn and extrapolated.

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Axiology Reflection

Key Role 3

What?: Given the focus attributed to ontological and epistemological principles within research and practice, it is the emergence of axiological principles that have become an integral part of understanding my own research practice. The axiological assumptions refer to the extent that my own values influence my research process (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Specifically, I am concerned with how I continually update and inform my understanding on how I am dealing with my values and how these may influence my research. Heron (1996) argues that, simply put, our values are the guiding reason for all human action, and therefore awareness of this is crucial. In personal terms, my axiological stance has incorporated interpretivist principles, and how by understanding and then communicating the phenomenon it allows for individuals to further their understanding of social science. However, this interpretivist approach has not been without personal scrutiny, and I have found myself questioning how other approaches may be adopted combat the inadequacies of interpretivism.

So, What?: Within my research experiences, I have always remained aware of how my own personal values and interpretations may form an active part in the research process (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). This is often due to the empathetic stance I take with participants or individuals, whereby investing in both the person and the professional allows a more informed understanding of their experience(s). However, it can be challenging to remain 'neutral', and enter the social world of the participant and understand the world from their point of view (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Central to this is how I may focus on my own cognitions during a session, interview etc., whereby I become pre-occupied with how I am interpreting the experience, and 'forget' about the support I am offering to them and their experience (Tod, Hutter & Eubank, 2017). Subsequently, I often find myself interrogating this

approach to research and practice, whereby a more objectivist, ontological realist philosophy may allow for more conclusive research to be conducted. By focusing on the discovery of truth, and observing and measuring the phenomena, it allows for a more detached axiology and minimal interference of my own cognitions with those of the participant or athlete.

Now What?: Having maintained a keen interest in the area of research approaches and philosophies, I have continued to be proactive in informing and updating my understanding of how my core research principles influence my practice. From an axiological perspective, although an interpretivist approach may reflect interpretations of the researcher (myself) onto the experience, it allows the participant and I to understand how these interpretations can provide a basis for making judgements about what research I conduct and how I then go about doing it (Heron, 1996). My choice of research philosophy reflects my values, which then predicates my data collection techniques, and although other approaches may provide a viable alternative, my approach is one I connect myself with entirely, which informs the whole process. I place great emphasis on personal interaction (interviews), and by showing empathy and connecting with the person in-front of you (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009) it allows for a richness and deep understanding of experience and data. Moreover, only by negotiating this ongoing journey and its trials and tribulations have I been able to appreciate and understand how a heightened awareness of my personal values plays a significant role in my experiences.

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Bridging the research-practice gap

Key Role 3

What?: Sport psychology has a history of failing to address a notable and problematic 'gap' between research and practice (Hassmén et al., 2016; Hutter, Oldenhof-Veldman, Pijpers and Oudejans, 2016). This has often been due to a discrepancy and lack of alignment with research and applied practice approaches, with research often viewed as 'incomprehensible, pointless, and boring, while practice is pseudoscientific and ineffective' (Vealey, 2006, p.148). Subsequently, practitioners, like myself, can often find great difficulty in attempting to negotiate the tightrope that is this 'gap', so we don't fall into the metaphorical 'abyss' of uncertainty, ineffectiveness, and incongruence. Within my own experiences, I have encountered various situations that only work to further cloud my judgement in this area. Certain, experienced practitioners have highlighted a 'get the job done approach' and just 'do something' (Keegan, 2015, p.53), with there being no need to refer to scientific theory or evidence. Conversely, other equally experienced practitioners will stress that behaviour is only evident if it can be measured, and 'development only occurs through accurate measurement tools (Keegan, 2015, p.53). As a result, although I'm not expecting a 'one size fits all' approach, it is crucial to understand why appreciating contrasting approaches, and also attempting to align myself with both, is most effective for my own service delivery and empirical underpinnings moving forward.

So, What?: To fully understand the research-practice gap, the different aims and activities of each side, and skill-sets required in each domain need to be understood (Hassmén et al., 2016). Research itself, often relies upon a controlled, stable environment in order to gather data, which subjects itself to repeated analysis and manipulation checks in order to establish validity and reliability. Yet, applied practice offers this messy, dynamic, and ever-changing environment,

whereby the practitioner needs to constantly adapt and evolve to the situation at hand (ad-hoc), which likely forms part of a greater ‘plan’ or approach in the wider organisation/scheme of work. As such, practitioners exclusive to both, in ignoring the other’s value and effectiveness, risk missing a significant opportunity to advance both research and practice (Norman, 2010). Therefore, within my own realm, I always attempt to recognise and appreciate others’ knowledge and experiences, and that although I may not agree with their stance ‘per se’, I understand why they have adopted the approach they have.

Now What?: Through appreciating and adopting research-informed practice, I feel that I have given myself the best possible chance of delivering effective work in terms of both research and applied practice settings. As Keegan et al. (2017) highlights, I feel that a notable disconnection between ‘scientific’ research and applied practice can work to undermine the professional image of the field, and reduce/weaken the confidence those seeking psychological support have. Therefore, the onus on taking and linking key processes engaged in by applied practitioners and understanding the philosophical, empirical underpinnings behind these processes affords an opportunity to advance knowledge and understanding (Poczwardowski et al., 2014). In personal terms, I have already been a promoter and recipient of this approach, whereby my research into identity, well-being, and anxiety have benefited and enhanced my support within my applied practice encounters. As such, I see this as a necessity within modern day practice, with applied practitioners and researchers working in unison and research-informed practice and practice-informed research becoming a common occurrence within the field. Unless this is greater recognised and appreciated, it makes it much more difficult to train future practitioners, as there is no consistent vocabulary, no strong models of practice, and thus no way of understanding what practitioners do, or why (Keegan, 2016).

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Writing for Publication

Key Role 3

What?: Over the past several months I have become increasingly aware of a need to attempt to publish my research and studies, from both a self-fulfilment perspective and also a desire to advance understanding in the area. The advancement in any field of science is the result of persistent devotion and careful attention from those who make up that domain (Baker, Robertson-Wilson, & Sedgwick, 2003), subsequently I feel that the time and attention I have committed to creating, carrying out, analysing, and evaluating my research warrants it to be seen by a larger audience. In particular, I would like to publish my systematic review investigating identity in disabled sport, my empirical research exploring stakeholders' well-being in Para-Football, my teaching and training case studies highlighting a neophyte practitioner's experience in academia, and my consultancy case studies detailing the ongoing trials and tribulations of working with athletes from inception to completion.

So, What?: I rarely considered writing with a publication end-goal in mind. I merely wrote my assignments for the purpose of 'passing my training', and although they were to be of 'publishable quality' I never thought of a reason why others, far more qualified than myself, would want to read about a young trainee and his experiences. However, when considering the Ortega hypothesis (Cole & Cole, 1972), science as a field advances through the contributions of average scientists. The hypothesis also postulates that whilst breakthroughs by exceptional scientists and practitioners often lead to leaps in understanding, these breakthroughs are built on a pyramid of smaller discoveries by 'mediocre' researchers. As such, I begun to consider how a 'mediocre' researcher such as myself (if that!), could seemingly make smaller discoveries and advance understanding on a minor scale, in order to help achieve these 'breakthroughs' in the area I researched. This led me to adopt a different, more purposeful

approach to my work, whereby there was actual meaning to the hundreds of hours I spent locked up trawling through every 'nth degree' of a paper, in order to find a 'slight glimmer' of how I could advance understanding in the area. I finally had a purpose!

Now What?: When exploring the options for publication, there are various areas and steps one must consider, prior to even dreaming about being given an interstice of space in which to broadcast their ideas. Firstly, who is your audience, both in terms of the journal and the reader? Reading the journal's scope gives you an initial understanding of is it the 'right fit' for your piece of work, and if it emphasises research, applied practice, or both. Second, if submitting, be aware that you need to fit the journals' 'vision' of how they look to advance understanding and promote research ideas, so, who would be receptive of your work? If it is a systematic review, perhaps the 'International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology' would be a fitting journal to tailor your research towards. Other key considerations are that of 'Impact Factor', which measures the average number of citations received in a particular year by papers published in the journal, and essentially how large the audience will be of your work. Also, 'Special Editions' are often provided by journals, which focus and hone in on a specific area.

Journals do set a standard and guidelines around how research can be extrapolated from one individual's thoughts and write-up, to how it then actively contributes to advancing understanding within the field with the ability for it to be seen by thousands. However, by no means does not 'publishing' a piece of research deem it 'pointless' or 'unworthy'. If there is key learning from my research and practice training, is that in the write-up of documents, studies, reflections, and research, if you have furthered understanding within the area, this represents impact. The task is then to convince the journal and its reviewers of the same thing!

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Significant Literature and Authors across the Prof. Doc.

Key Role 3

What?: Reading copious amounts of literature and talking to a copious number of people has not only informed my training, but has made it a much more meaningful and richer experience. This reflection provides some examples that best represent this experience for me.

Applied Practice

When beginning my training there was a strong emphasis and desire to work within golf, due to my experience in the sport and it being an area I felt could form the foundations of my consultancy on. Having undergone extended periods of uncertainty, a lack of direction, and a struggle to fully understand what I could offer, I discussed this with my supervisor and sought some support from Dr. Brian Hemmings, who is renowned and well respected in the field. However, what I did not expect was the amount of support, advice, and training that followed. Brian invested his time into me and put me on his training programme, which allowed me to access key literature relating to 'Think ALOUD', psychological skills training for pre-shot routines, and networking opportunities to help bolster my client base. As my client base and success of my work began to increase, the following literature informed the relevant strategies and interventions I implemented within my practice: Cotterill (2010), Davies, Collins & Cruickshank (2014, 2017), Milne & Morrison (2015), and Nicholl, Holt, & Polman (2005). As such, I begun to develop and scaffold my understanding from an initial overemphasis on pre-shot routine/approach, to the use of cognitive behavioural interventions, coping effectiveness, and support away from the golf course. Ultimately, Brian's support was invaluable in crafting my knowledge within golf consultancy, and providing the foundations to applied practice moving forward.

As my consultancy grew, I began working with athletes from different sports, including two ultramarathon runners who were due to run 10 marathons in 10 days in Gambia. Central to this consultancy was Keegan's (2015) definitive outline of the staged process of consultancy, which we discussed at length in LJMU taught sessions, and I was able to understand with more clarity how the consultancy process with an athlete should flow. Crucially, the guided process allowed for increased rigour and method checking, providing reassurance that the decisions I made were based on empirical underpinnings.

As highlighted in previous reflection, my role with the England Partially Sighted Squad was preceded by countless unsuccessful interviews and learning experiences. As such, when I began working within this role, it was literature and in-situ 'supervisor-esque' psych support that led the way in integrating myself successfully. Support from Dr. Martin Turner from his with futsal work, where, as a similar decision-making sport, players needing to operate instinctively. As such, 'disrupting the flow' was a key part of his work, where a person-centred approach to understanding players away from the court allowed them to understand the appropriate strategies to implement in high-pressure situations. Alongside this, Dr. Jamie Barker reinforced this notion of performing under pressure from his work within Para-Football, where understanding the culture, norms, values, and learning styles of those involved would be key to progressing my support down the line, and where I would be able to implement myself effectively. Key literature within this context came from Nesti (2004, 2010), who discussed the significance of 'buy in' within football culture, and how going beyond psychological skills and towards existential issues such as critical moments, identity crisis, transitions might all becoming fundamental support areas… which they did.

So, What?: Practitioner development literature has, in my time as a trainee, become more extensively published to help guide early-career sports psychology practitioners such as myself. There are three papers specifically that have allowed me to understand practitioner

development within my own experiences, and how I have grown throughout the training process: Namely, these are Partington & Orlick (1987), Chandler, Eubank, Nesti, Tod, & Cable (2016), and Tod, Eubank, & Hutter (2017). Central to this literature base was the emphasis on the importance of relatedness, establishing trust, and being knowledgeable and interpersonally skilled to practitioner effectiveness. Subsequently, I then explored the organisational demands that a sport psychologist may face within their work and the personal qualities that can aid them in addressing these demands – this gave me understanding of how my own nuances and personal challenges would influence my work within an organisation. Finally, this then caused me to investigate the characteristics that would be specific to my practice, with active listening, authenticity, empathy, and integrity representing fundamental parts of my work with athletes within these organisations, and how I could support and develop them moving forward.

Having begun to complete research, applied work and teaching within academia, I realised that I needed to explore the alignment between what I delivered in these settings and my philosophical underpinnings and practitioner identity (personal values, beliefs and qualities). I gradually aligned myself within an interpretivist paradigm, ontological critical realism, and epistemological constructivism, which emphasises that reality is multi-layered, complex and open to interpretation, whereby individuals experience, share and interpret reality differently. My reading of Grix (2002), Weed (2009), and Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill (2009), helped my scaffolded understanding to inform my philosophical stance and approach. Although a lengthy process, in attempting to understand how my own stance influenced the way I conducted research and practice, the literature provided clarity and reassurance, that in the main, my research-informed practice was congruent and consistent.

Now What?: As I move forward, I see my researcher and practitioner ethos and approach as a mainstay that will guide my work for the foreseeable future. My use of holistic philosophy (Friesen & Orlick, 2010) has taught me one ever-consistent theme… we are all people. As

such, by respecting the longer-term development of the individual, and how their wider life influences and affects professional sporting life, I am able to gain a heightened awareness and understanding of how I can change these individuals lives for the better. My use of Identity theory and concepts (Williams & Andersen, 2012with both athletes and my own identity, has probably been an area of research and practice that has shaped me the most during my training, with it allowing me to understand and then craft what characteristics and traits ultimately, make me… me. This has allowed me to begin supporting athletes and individuals to best understand themselves within their own context, and the values they base their beliefs and cognitions upon, which then influence their performance and well-being. My use of Reflection (Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004) has taught me that it is through continual reflection and evaluation of the practice and approaches I engage in that allows me to understand myself and the choices I have made. Reflective practice has afforded the opportunity to continually develop my practitioner- and research-based skill-set, with supervisors, peers, applied experiences, and literature enabling me to continually develop effective practice with athletes and stakeholders.

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Sport Psychology in the Military

Key Role 4

What?: Having attended a performance psychology event at Staffordshire university, a highly informative talk by Steve Eaton (ex-Royal Marine) around managing trauma in high performance provided the basis for an extended reflection. This related to how I could promote my service more broadly, in terms of working with clients in other high-performance contexts, and helping me to translate some of the key learning into my work with athletes. Steve discussed how a soldier is able to maximize their performance by mastering specific thinking habits and emotional and physical states (Zinsser et al., 2004). These methods, which have derived from the domain of sport psychology, enable the individual to find a 'competitive edge' to excel in situations when under severe amounts of pressure. As such, Steve looked at the key elements to thriving under pressure, which brought about the use of DNA TRIM (Trauma Risk Management) and how individuals are able to build resilience amongst other core mental skills in the military, emergency services, and corporate worlds. This focuses on how exposure to psychological trauma can be highly impactful, and how through experience and engagement, strategies to overcome the accompanying stress and adapt to the situation can be developed successfully. Subsequently, I feel there is a distinct cross-over between sport and the military, and how certain elements (to an extent) can be extracted from the military sphere and applied into my own practice and the way I promote my service.

So, What?: Methods utilising performance psychology within a military setting contain various elements pertaining to goal setting, cognitive control, and stress management (Zinsser et al., 2004). In particular, this included empowering individuals and organizations through cognitive foundations (understanding the psychology of high performance and being in the 'zone'), attentional control (selectively attending to important cues to streamline execution),

stress management (how stress operates in the human system), and imagery and visualization (seeing, feeling, and experiencing desired outcomes to determine behaviour). This illustrated the parallel between athletes performing out on the pitch, and surgeons performing in surgery or soldiers being on the frontline etc. However, what these other disciplines also offer is perspective. This perspective has provided me with the knowledge that in comparing performance on the pitch to performance in a warzone, both professionals need the mental capacity to carry out their duties to a high level. Military personnel make good use of fostering cognitions and behaviours that typify the hardiness of an individual's response to stressful circumstances, which can translate effectively to hardiness and resilience in sport (Bartone, 2006). Further, when an athlete remarks about it 'being the end of the world' after a performance or mistake, my experiences of listening to individuals like Steve has helped me to work through issues more effectively with athletes by making better use of cognitive strategies such as perspective taking and rational thinking.

Now What?: I have begun implementing elements of the 'military-esque' approaches and methods to applied practice. For example, with athletes who have struggled to stay on task and process information effectively, by exposing them to questioning and methods relating to 'Where is the ball going to end up?' 'Where are my team-mates/opposition?' 'Where is my movement going to take me?' 'What am I going to do if it doesn't go to plan?', individuals begin experiencing and training a higher processing speed under pressure through becoming more aware of the relevant information going on in their visual and mental field. Furthermore, the literature pertaining to breathing techniques in military snipers can offer information and clarity on how athletes are able to control their breathing under pressure and recover to perform well after exerting themselves. Ultimately, I will continue to revisit the military literature and potentially engage in the DNA TRIM training. There are lessons that can be gleaned from

psychology work in military settings and applied to sport to help performers deliver to a high level more consistently.

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‘The Water Bottle’ and useful practical techniques

Key Role 4

What?: In my experience working with youth athletes in a Teaching and Training context, I have always looked to move beyond the ‘classroom-based ‘mass delivery’ approach’, and inform my teaching approach by considering the physical, cognitive emotional, and social development of the learner and their associated learning needs (Barker & Winter, 2014). As part of this, I actively seek various methods of teaching to cover varying levels of learning, and be both teacher- and student-centred as appropriate (Petty, 2004). This includes case studies, buzz groups, debates, and practical activities, so that my support is able to enhance understanding across a range of abilities and levels. With this in mind, following a guest lecture by Danny Ransom (current LJMU Prof Doc student working at Manchester United) and Lisa O’Halloran (former LJMU PhD student working at Coventry University and Coventry City) I became increasingly aware of some of the differing practical examples I can use in order to engage a younger audience. These examples have since facilitated my effectiveness as a Teacher and Trainer, especially when working within larger and younger group settings, and has helped me to maintain learner interest and interaction.

So, What?: Danny and Lisa discussed a structured process of how they look to deliver sessions with youth athletes/individuals, who often suffer from distractibility or irritability towards learning, in particular with psychology. The process began with gaining understanding of what the audience (youth athlete) perceive sport psychology to be, and then bringing in named examples and case studies to emphasise the importance of athletes using psychological skills training, for example, in game situations. This then brought about the use of ‘the water bottle’ technique (amongst others), which allowed the athletes an accessible way of relating a practical example to stress and anxiety. The practical involved two members of a group holding onto

water bottles, with one being full and the other with a small amount of water in it. The class then continued to engage in a classroom debate, whilst the selected individuals kept the water bottles raised. Danny and Lisa engaged a reflective task after 2-5 minutes, asking the two individuals how it felt to keep hold of each water bottle, with the individual carrying the heavier bottle stating that it was difficult to maintain control as it was heavier and weighed them down. This allowed Danny and Lisa to apply the feedback to stress and anxiety, and how athletes who often 'bottle up' emotions and thoughts may often find themselves struggling the if they don't deal with stress and anxiety. This prompted Danny and Lisa to ask the group what it would feel like to keep hold of the filled water bottle for 5 minutes, 1 hour, a day etc? The athletes gained an understanding that the longer they kept hold of things and attempted to deal with everything themselves, the more difficult, exhausting, and potentially impossible the task becomes.

Now What?: I used this example, amongst others, in my following sessions within both teaching and applied environments. What I soon began to discover, was that as much as theoretical knowledge is crucial for awareness and learning to occur, ultimately engaging effectively with the audience is imperative (Barker & Winter, 2014). Alongside this, becoming familiar with the sporting language whilst engaging in these tasks and incorporating it throughout, enhanced my ability to personalise my support to the audience at hand. Reflecting on this, the use of a simple technique with an associated and relevant metaphor has greatly benefitted my interaction and engagement with younger audiences and my ability to convey a powerful psychological message suitable to the audience. Moving forward, I continue to incorporate this technique (and many others) to ensure versatility in my approach, and accessibility for varying levels of ability and age.

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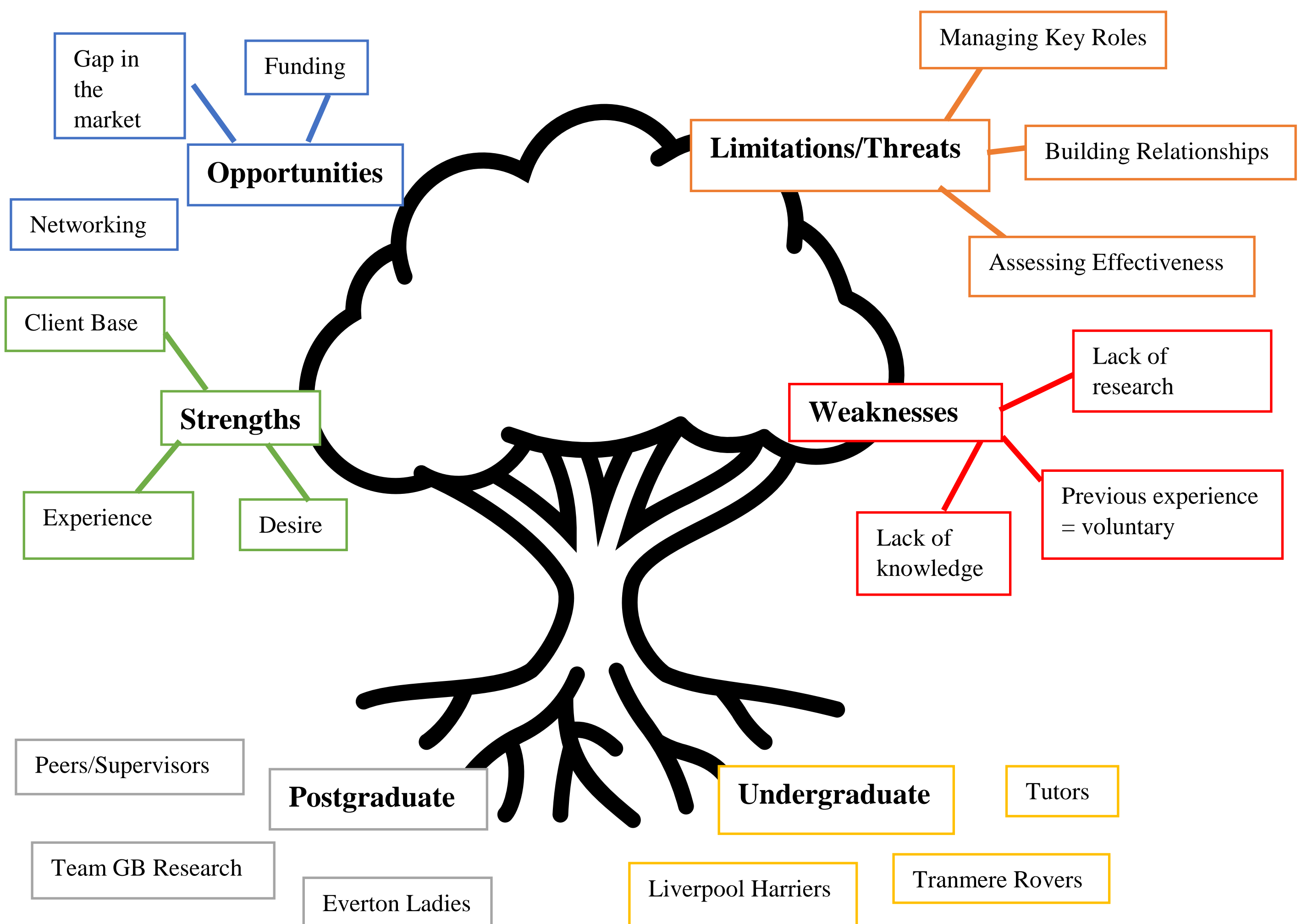
The use of pictorial conceptual models in sport psychology

Key Role 4

What?: At the outset of my training, I constructed a diagram that evaluated my existing capabilities as a practitioner and the plan I would undertake throughout the training process to develop competence. The visual representation demonstrated how previous experiences (the roots) provided some of the guiding foundations for my planned activity (the trunk), with the strengths, limitations, weaknesses, and opportunities demonstrating the areas (branches) that would have a significant impact on the direction my training headed.



So, What?: While the tree above is not a conceptual model, the value of pictorial conceptual models has, for me, been a mainstay within my applied practice, teaching, and research, in

terms of their ability to providing an effective overview of potentially complex ideas and theories in visual form. With a depth of conceptual models pertaining to athlete development (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007), reflective practice (Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004), and professional development (Tod, 2007) amongst a variety of other areas, the value of demonstrating a key theoretical concept through visual means is invaluable. I initially used this within my postgraduate research, which investigated resilience and team resilience in Paralympic football. The model approach gave me an effective way of presenting the process in which individuals undergo the experience of adversity, the key outcomes, and what resources a resilient individual will often possess to determine whether the outcome is a resilient reintegration or not. Transitioning into my stage two training, these models became prevalent within my consultancy case studies, teaching and training, systematic review, and empirical paper assignments, often providing a succinct analysis of the work being conducted.

Now What?: Given that I, myself, am a visual learner, in that I remember best through what I see in pictures, diagrams, flow charts, timelines, films, and demonstrations (Clarke III, Flaherty, & Yankey, 2006), the use of conceptual models will likely be ever-present in my future work. They help me to understand, and then translate to others, the application of psychological theory and principles across various populations, contexts and environments, and provide a concise visual summary of a given area. This has benefitted the athletes, peers, researchers, and other personnel I have worked with in the past, and will drive the systems approach I will look to promote within organisations moving forward.

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Teaching and Training in Sport Psychology: Building an active environment

Key Role 4

What?: I have often found a discrepancy between taught content within the doctorate surrounding teaching sport psychology, and then how this unfolds in an applied environment. In this instance, it is the 'twilight zone' in which the professional doctorate operates, between the university and actual working life (Scott et al., 2004), where I have had challenges in negotiating what teaching psychology looks like in an academic setting. With the roles and responsibilities of teachers incredibly complex, ranging from delivering study, assessing impact of learning, ensuring a safe learning environment and inclusivity (Wilson, 2014); I have often found myself attempting to find congruence and consistency of support through exposure to a variety of theoretical frameworks in teaching, peer encounters, supervision, and training (Stoltenberg & McNeil, 2010). Central to this has been the negotiation of working with/through key stakeholders, diversifying my teaching approach, and adhering to organisational/educational standards. However, ultimately it is the taught content within sessions and creating an active learning environment that has been the basis of all teaching and training-related doctorate work.

So, What?: When stepping into the teaching and training environment, I observed a highly instructional based approach, which involved transmission of information from the teacher to the students (Petersen & Gorman, 2014). This teacher-centred approach evidenced a variety of challenges for the class (and teacher), with extra hurdles for individuals to overcome when learning content. Firstly, the default style of lecturing and PowerPoint slides (Petty, 2004) was an integral part of the set-up, with students provided with copious amounts of time in which to observe the teacher, and then proceed to complete an independent learning task. This was both simple, yet difficult, to alter at the same time. The idea to include a more diverse teaching style,

incorporating buzz groups, group discussions, debates, case studies, and practical's, all provided a variety of methods to suit student-centred, higher, and lower levels of learning (Petty, 2004). However, the difficulty was in attempting to change the culture of active participation and inclusion, whereby students would often go off task, This begun to reduce as time went on, as I was able to better tailor examples and content to engage students and keep them on task.

Another key feature of an active environment was that of student feedback, and students being able to drive the content that was being delivered to them. Given there was a set curriculum, we afforded the opportunity for certain modules and assignments to be student-guided, whereby they were able to essentially design a 'session' where myself, or another teacher would sit in and assume the role of a 'student'. This broke down the barriers surrounding hierarchy, whereby students could choose a topic and be assessed on their understanding and checked that learning has taken place (Reece & Walker, 2006). For example, a group of 3 students chose to deliver a session on information processing, which involved the use of practical examples and interactive class tasks, for which they also provided alternative teaching methods and styles to delivering classroom content. Subsequently, not only did this exhibit their understanding of the topic area, which was later included in assessment of their coursework portfolio, but they also helped construct a more effective and active learning environment for everyone involved. Although not an exhaustive list, these examples were the key determinants of developing an active learning environment for teacher-centred and student-centred as appropriate (Petty, 2004).

Now What?: There is often a dissonance between the two cultures of learning in that of university and applied work (Butcher and Sieminski, 2006). This has meant that I have undergone extended periods of uncertainty when negotiating research, teaching, and applied practice encounters. Within a teaching and training environment the promotion of an active

learning environment culture has enhanced the effectiveness of my support and better advanced student knowledge and learning. With cooperative learning linked to increased levels of student satisfaction (Maxwell et al., 2016), it is through active participation and engagement that I believe a greater range of individuals can benefit. Given the student's individuality within the group setting (Wallace, 2007), each individual has a different way of learning content, and ultimately it is down to us as practitioners, teachers, and educators to provide those who we work with, in both teaching and other domains, a diverse, best-practice approach to delivering to each and every individual within the environment.

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CONSULTANCY CASE STUDY 1

Abstract

The present case study provides the current trainee's first experience working with a client within his own consultancy. The client was a single-figure handicap golfer who was looking to reduce his handicap and performance in competitions, through negotiating the transfer of skills from training to competition. Specifically, the client looked to improve his performance under pressure, with his own cognitions and emotions often debilitating to his ability to execute performance effectively. Given the nature of the consultancy, it provided the opportunity for the trainee sport psychologist to work through the consultancy process and be exposed to the various challenges that occur along the way. The consultancy itself consisted of initial performance profiles to obtain valuable information on past performance and current beliefs. Subsequently, the implementation of support through the Transactional Model of Stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) enabled the practitioner to deliver a psychological skills training intervention on attentional focus, breathing techniques, and pressure manipulation, to reduce anxiety under pressure and transfer techniques from practice to competition.

Keywords: *performance anxiety, profiling, transactional model, psychological skills training*

The Consultancy Process

Background/Introduction

The current consultancy relates to an amateur golfer (herein known as Gary) who sought to develop his short game to improve his handicap. Gary initially contacted me via email, where he outlined that his unhelpful thought processes (Milne & Morrison, 2015) had led him to a negative cycle of detecting an issue ('*It's 7 feet from the hole, I must par this'*), heightened anxiety ('*I hate these distances'*), lack of control ('*I don't think I'll hole this'*), and eventual disruption of performance (Marquardt, 2009). As such, there was an inability to cope under any form of pressure (Mellalieu, Hanton, and Fletcher, 2006), with him often consumed by his own thoughts and cognitions as opposed to the task at hand (Tod, Hutter, and Eubank, 2017). Consequently, Gary looked to reduce his handicap through developing an effective strategy to cope and perform better under pressure.

Gary was the first client I worked with in my consultancy, therefore various expected and unexpected consultancy dilemmas influenced the support I offered. These concerns centred around feeling like a 'rookie' when offering support and prospective interventions (Gardner, 2001), being able to help Gary attend to his issues and achieve his goals (Cropley et al., 2010; Tod, 2017; Tod, Marchant & Andersen, 2007), and ultimately how would I document my effectiveness and warrant payment (Anderson et al., 2002). As a result, early recognition of the role of practitioner in practice would form a humanistic athlete-centred approach, where I would explore and review my decisions throughout to increase understanding and management of my practice (Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004). This decision was based on my initial encounters into integrating philosophy within my professional practice, whereby building a theory unique to my client and basing decisions on that provided a basis to conduct support from. Based on the client needs and context, Gary' difficulties in performing under pressure

alongside being consumed with his own thought processes, provided me with an opportunity to base my support around. This would involve assisting him to work through the experience and have him understand his own cognitions and his responses to challenging situations. The humanistic, athlete-centred approach was central to the consultancy support in this regard.

Intake Process

During the intake, Gary, like many individuals involved in sport, wanted to understand the reasons for inconsistent performance and behaviour across seemingly similar situations (Smith, 2006). Previously, Gary had implemented the use of basic strategies such as goal-setting, imagery, and self-talk (Smith, 2006) in an attempt to alleviate some of his performance decrements; however, the success of these was extremely limited. With the shared confusion around the field of sport psychology (Van Raalte et al., 1996), the intake provided an opportunity to shape this understanding in order to establish a means of support. Gary stated that he found difficulty in employing training skills and strategies, and then replicating them in competition (Hartwig, Naughton, & Searl, 2011). As such, when in any form of pressure situation, he would succumb to the demands of the task, with there being a significant imbalance between the demands of the situation and the resources he had to cope effectively. Subsequently, future situations would then be appraised as 'challenging' or 'threatening' (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), with there being a strong likelihood that his performance would deteriorate under pressure. Having begun to obtain an understanding of Gary's situation and the conflicting factors, we discussed how my support could be incorporated. The contracting process was vital at this stage, as I needed to ensure that the client understood his expectations and the nature of my support. With Gary fixed on improving his handicap and performance based on my support, I outlined that this alone would not guarantee improvement. Furthermore, this tied in with both ethical and legal principles, whereby as we had a contractual obligation, clarity was needed from the outset. As such, it was agreed that a £100 package consisting of: 5

x sessions, on-course management, portfolio monitoring progression, and a de-brief session. If needed, the consultancy process could be extended. Clarifying expectations of a consultancy allowed for a clear understanding from the start of the working relationship (Poczwardowski, Sherman, and Henschen,1998).

Gary's negative experiences of performance challenges, psycho-emotional concerns, and competitive stress were consistent with the discrete and intense emotional responses commonly reported by non-elite golfers (Cohn, 1991, Beauchamp et al., 1996; Thomas and Fogarty, 1997; Kirshenbaum et al., 1998). The process began with an approach to a shot in his short game, with previous unsuccessful experiences compounded by his inability to think rationally. With the heightened pressure of competition, Gary would then appraise the situation as threatening, which in turn would elevate his anxiety immediately prior to playing the shot. During shot execution, there would be increased tension and a focus on irrelevant information, resulting in a poorly planned and poorly executed shot, where he would remark '*that was always going to happen*'. This would form his reflection of the shot, with no evaluation of how he could have handled the situation more effectively to inform future similar situations.

The above had resulted in a decline in scores and performances, with the stop-start nature of golf and more time spent thinking than hitting the ball (Moran, 2004) presenting increased amounts of time for Gary to overanalyse his game. This over-analysis shifted increased focus towards irrelevant information, including his putting mechanics, the consequences of missing the putt (three-putts), and other player's opinions of him, all of which were creating a distracting environment that were debilitating to performance (Wine, 1971). With low handicap golfers in club competitions often being less troubled by negative emotions and possessing higher levels of concentration when playing (Thomas & Over, 1994), it was agreed that Gary's expectations and goals would be achieved by his ability to engage in similar processes and outcomes. Therefore, in the needs analysis it was crucial to address these performance issues,

and how allocating Gary's attention to critical task information may protect him from the debilitating effects of anxiety (Wilson, Causer & Vickers, 2015).

Needs Analysis

In light of the above, for the second session it was decided that Gary would complete a performance profile (PP) (*appendix 1.*) alongside observation in competition, which would give a 'visual display of clear and digestible information to the athlete of how they personally perceive their current performance' (Butler & Hardy, 1992, p.262). The PP allowed Gary to identify and rate perceived strengths and weaknesses we had discussed, which would facilitate engagement on how to improve (Jones, 1993). This would identify any discrepancy between where his current performance was and his best ever performance. Further to this, the observation would allow me to make better inferences about what Gary was thinking and feeling throughout a round of competitive golf (Lazarus, 1999). Furthermore, although post-competition and performance accuracy and recall may diminish, it is still possible for the athlete to identify a range of optimal and dysfunctional emotions related to previous successful and unsuccessful performances (Hanin, 2000; cited in Horn, 2008). Subsequently, the potential inaccuracy of best performance recall would be offset by observation.

The relevant support areas are outlined in *appendix 2*, with accompanying thoughts and statements based on our conversations. Support areas included: relaxation (being calm before playing, and relaxing in difficult circumstances), control and confidence (thoughts of failure, emotional-control, psychological resources), mental preparation (goals, reflections, routine), self-talk (specific cues/routine), and automaticity (conscious thoughts, knowledge of outcome). As highlighted earlier in the intake, Gary stressed an inability to transfer training performance into competition, with his performance dropping under pressure. We elaborated on this, with Gary stating that self-doubt had begun to impact his anxiety and ability to perform, whereby

time spent disputing his self-debilitating thoughts would be prioritised over focusing on relevant processes such as his pre-shot routine. As a result, we highlighted that an ability to alleviate the negative anxiety associated with pressure (Nicholls, Holt & Polman, 2005) would enable Gary to attend to task-relevant information when in performance situations. This would consist of an efficient strategy to approaching, playing, and reflecting on shots, where Gary would remain relaxed and unaffected by his own cognitions, and have the ability to think freely through the approach he would take. Ultimately, with this support in place, the aim was to exhibit some of the 'superior mental characteristics of those who excel in both practice and competitive situations' (Gucciardi et al., 2008, p.262). Gary's characteristics would consist of self-belief, positive attitude, thriving on competition, enjoying pressure and quality preparation, all of which are prerequisite mental skills of athletes who can perform under pressure (Gould, Jackson, & Finch, 1993).

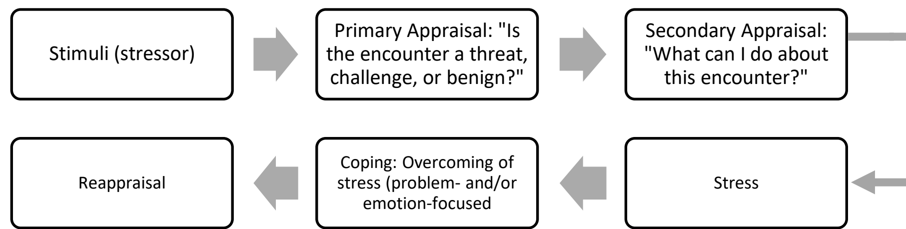
Reflecting on our early interactions, I was able to gain an informed understanding of the effective intake process that we engaged in (Keegan, 2015), but also demonstrated what could be improved moving forward. A strong rapport had been established (Speed, Andersen, & Simons, 2005), whereby the undertaking of observational, profiling and discussions had identified consistencies and inconsistencies between oral and written statements (Vealey, 2007). This approach promoted athlete inclusion, which in turn often results in a longer adherence to support and training (Weinberg & Williams, 2010) and Gary being an active participant in his own support intervention. For me, placing myself in an 'applied helper' role for the first time generated some common difficulties associated with neophyte practitioners, such as anxiety in initial client interactions (Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003). This related to me wanting to demonstrate competence and knowledge to the client, and as a result there were likely to have been occasions where I was quick to intervene with a 'solution-focused' approach, with a desire to 'fix' the struggling athlete as they approach competition (Holliday

et al., 2008). In light of this, I wanted to ensure that moving forward, there would be a collaborative input into the approach taken. However, as is often the case with trainees, the overriding need to continually demonstrate competency as a practitioner did often occupy my thoughts.

Case Formulation

As identified in *appendix 1*, Gary possessed clear strengths in his long game (driving, iron play), in motivation, physical conditioning, technical and course knowledge. However, within his short game, his anxiety had provoked increased amounts of tension in his movement, and interference of thoughts of past mistakes, which elicited regression on his long game. With these issues symptomatic of higher handicap golfers (Thomas and Fogarty, 1997), we targeted the weaknesses (negative tension and anxiety) that led to the problematic behaviour of performance decline (Gardner & Moore, 2005). This would involve us understanding the thought processes he engaged with in his long game, where there was increased confidence he could play the shot he desired.

Gary's performance issues relating to anxiety and tension presented the value of structuring the case formulation around Lazarus' (1999) adapted version of the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This would address Gary's coping effectiveness with the demands of his cognitive appraisals within his game, and the subsequent emotions (including anxiety) that he experienced (*figure 1.).* The transactional model proposes that the athlete's coping results from interactions between their situational appraisal and emotional response (Nicholls, Holt, & Polman, 2005). As such, the model determines the athlete will transition from: *stimuli → primary appraisal → secondary appraisal → stress → coping → reappraisal:*



With Gary, his self-debilitating thoughts resulted in a negative appraisal of the situation:

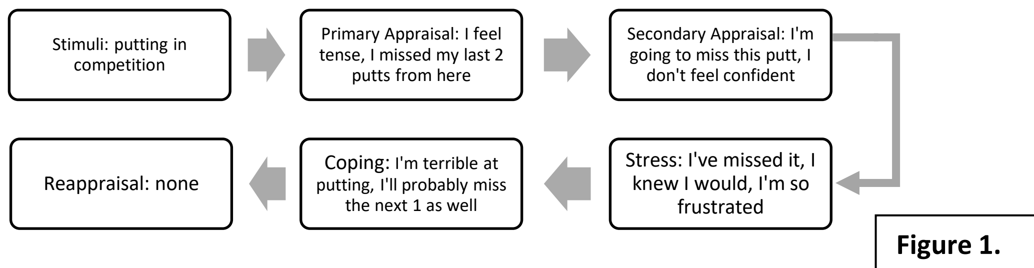


Figure 1.

This demonstrated how Gary appraised, coped, and reflected on stressors within his short game. Therefore, we would implement appropriate support at each stage of the framework, which would enable Gary to possess increased cognitive, affective, and behavioural control over internal and external demands (Crocker, Kowalski, & Graham, 1998; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Specifically, problem-focused coping responses would help reappraise the issues that were impacting future anxiety within performance (Nicholls, Holt, & Polman, 2005). Throughout, I was aware that increasing awareness of performance issues and discussion of his performance-anxiety may result in reducing Gary's ability to ignore irrelevant cues moving forward (Eysenck & Derakshan, 2011). However, it was deemed that an increased awareness was required to access relevant cues during performance, as these had been unexploited previously. Using the transactional framework as a working model alongside problem-focused coping would engage several task-oriented strategies that would encourage movement towards desired goals (performing under pressure), by altering or removing the source of stress (anxiety) (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985).

Choosing and Planning of Intervention

As we had a working model to develop support from, we now incorporated the specific techniques that addressed the build-up of mental and bodily tension (Nicholls, Holt & Polman, 2005) relative to each stage of the model. Consequently, we discussed the use of a Psychological Skills Training (PST) intervention, but one that would be guided by the humanistic approach of delivering a 'programme' that has and will evolve from the athlete's direct experience (Poczwardowski, Sherman, & Ravizza, 2004). The PST intervention would allow for techniques to be developed to target specific psychological skills (relative to the individual) and transfer these from practice to competition (Thomas and Fogarty, 1997). With Gary, a pre-performance routine (PPR) would be constructed as an appropriate intervention for pressure situations (Bartholomew, 2003; Dale, 2004). Relative to each stage of the PPR, the PST would consist of attentional focus, breathing techniques, and pressure manipulation to reduce anxiety under pressure and transfer techniques from practice to competition. These techniques would account for the dynamic nature of the psycho-physiological stress experience and cognitive appraisal processes within the transactional model (Goh, Sawang, & Oei, 2010).

PPR

The PPR looked to reappraise Gary's thought processes within the transactional model (primary appraisal stage), where his current focus negatively affected the build-up to putting, and worsened following unsuccessful attempts. Gary identified that any former routine was disorganised with no purpose; conversely, the current PPR would distract Gary from tension and performance decline, and instead shift attention to task relevant cues (Milne & Morrison, 2015). Although Gary understood his shot preparation and having the right line and pace on the ball, it identified the priming of the shot and using a narrower focus of attention (Cotterill, 2010). Thus, as Gary left his routine until immediately prior to striking the ball, it impacted the

pressure he put himself under, as all his thought-processes were being compressed into a small period of time. Consequently, I emphasised the significance of being in the situation before it arose (Davies, Collins & Cruickshank, 2017) to give Gary more clarity of the process he would engage in, which would help reduce anxiety and tension and narrow his attentional focus.

I provided a routine similar to Cotterill, Sanders & Collins (2010), which involved general components of: practice strokes, reading the line, placing the ball, viewing the shot, setting the grip, and setting the stance – this would address Gary's threatening appraisal of the situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and instead attend to task-relevant information. The PPR began with Gary approaching the green with the ball in place from 20 yards back, as it would replicate the approach to green and consider some of the longer-time processes within golf (before/after shots) (Davies et al, 2014). As we identified Gary not thinking about the putt until being stood over it, we decided on this 20-yard 'initiation' on approach to the green, where Gary would: collect, receive, and process shot information (Davies, Collins & Cruickshank, 2017). I recommended Gary used this time as an opportunity to look at areas involving the target, the gradient of the green, distance from ball to pin, so that when he got to the ball he had selectively attended to the relevant information. Linking with the transactional model and Gary's negative focus and appraisal, the PPR would employ a 'think' and 'play' line 2 yards away from the ball, which when 'stepped over' would transition into his breathing prior to execution, and reduce the attention directed toward over-analysis of the shot.

Breathing Technique to enhance Attentional Control

With anxiety deteriorating under pressure, informed by research and the practitioner's understanding of the client, the breathing technique would distract Gary from pressure by maintaining a self-focused condition (Milne & Morrison, 2015). This aligned with the transactional model and the secondary appraisal stage, where Gary would often execute his

‘problem shots’ in a hurried and inaccurate manner (Turner, Ewen, & Barker, 2020). Conversely, a purposeful PPR would redirect Gary’s thought processes towards this self-focused condition and away from the ‘threat’ of the shot. The breathing technique itself focused on ‘getting fat’, often used as a metaphor in golf coaching to improve posture. However, guided by previous research, breathing exercises often address the emotional coping (including anxiety) of the golfer (Nicholls, Holt & Polman, 2005), where it would redirect Gary’s attention under pressure. This technique instructed Gary to inhale through his nose whilst pushing out his lower abdomen; holding for 1-2 seconds whilst pushing out his diaphragm; then exhaling through his mouth making a “h-a-a-a-h” sound. This was incorporated when stood over the ball, where Gary’s physical and mental tension had peaked. Exerting breathing control would likely redirect his attentional focus towards inner feelings and subsequently make the information processing easier whilst inhibiting distractions (Beilock & Gray, 2012).

The PST techniques where developed through pressure manipulation within training, and later competitive environments, in order to provide a comprehensive programme of reappraisal, facilitated by PST techniques in the build-up to, execution of, and reflection on a shot. During the initial stages of the consultancy, emphasis was placed on Gary’s own responsibility in possessing the ability to enable change. This had begun to allow Gary to understand that I, as the practitioner, was not the sole determinant of improvement or changes in performance levels. As a result, Gary identified his own potential and ability to change this, which demonstrated changes of personal growth and elements of self-actualisation, whereby I was able to observe visible change that aligned with my humanistic approach (Poczwardowski, Sherman, & Ravizza, 2004). This would now involve the current PST being effective in improving psychological skills and actual performance through getting the client to feel physically and mentally relaxed and enjoying the experience of playing well and achieving their goals (Cohn, 1991).

Delivery of Intervention

The proposed intervention looked at integrating a PST approach, informed by the humanistic principles highlighted above, with increased responsibility, personal growth, and self-actualisation emerging from our work. This involved the transactional model incorporating core techniques (PPR, attentional focus, breathing techniques, pressure manipulation), that considered the 'skeleton' and key concepts that my support was structured around (Keegan, 2015), which prompted client responsibility from Gary in driving the process. The delivery begun with combining the elements of the intervention into a coherent whole. As demonstrated below, Gary would engage with the staged-process of build-up, execution, and reflection on shots.

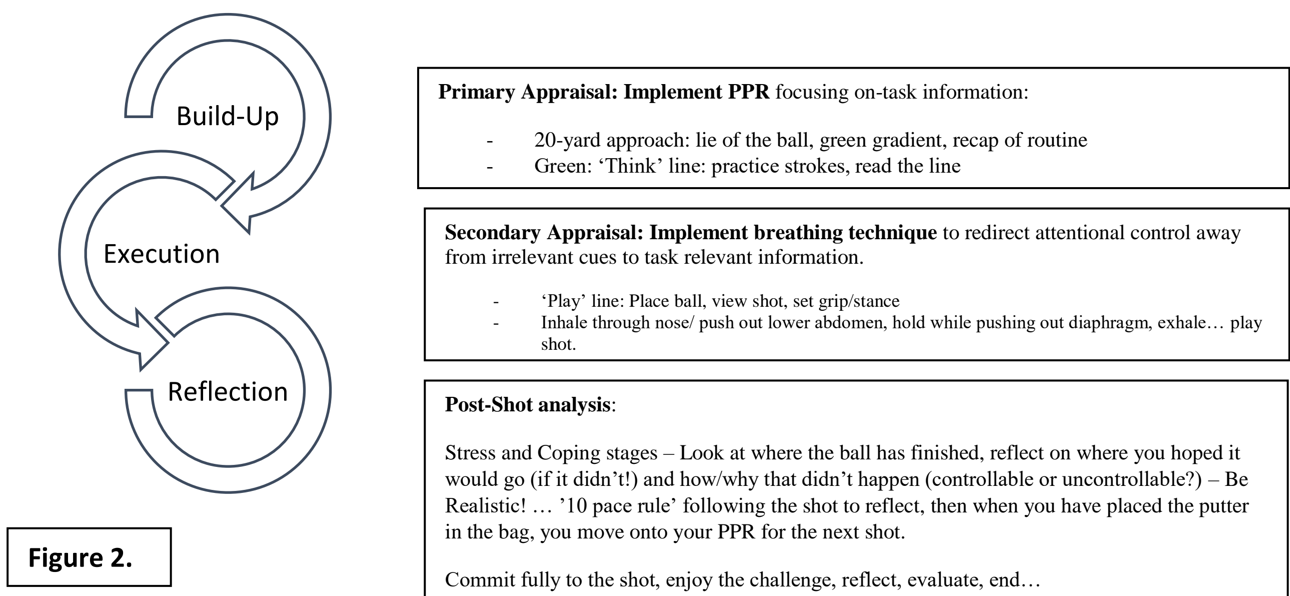


Figure 2.

Through committing to this cognitive-evaluative process, Gary began facilitating performance through redirecting his thought processes away from self-depreciating thoughts and towards critical, on-task information. For example, "*I feel tense and I missed my last two putts from this distance*" was replaced with "*my shot in has set me up well on the green, slope slightly downward from left to right, so my line will be slightly left and take a little off the putt*". Subsequently, Gary had begun focusing on a relevant target (Boutcher, 1992) within the 20-

yard approach to the ball, he then implemented 3 practice strokes ("shadow shots", Mesagno, Marchant, & Morris, 2008), read the line of putt, placed the ball, and viewed the shot (all of which formed the 'think' strategy), which then transitioned into the breathing technique. Stepping into the 'play' line (within 2 yards of the ball), Gary stood over the ball, read the line once more, performed the routine twice and struck the ball. Post-shot, Gary would reflect on where the shot had ended up, whilst understanding how it could be improved, incorporating both controllable (swing, thought-processes, attention) and uncontrollable (wind, other players, divots) factors. He would then evaluate what he would do the same/differently going into the next shot, with him engaging in this process within roughly 10 paces. Following this, the club would go in the bag, which signified the ending of the shot. This then was carried out over the course of 9 holes.

In the session de-brief, Gary had mixed feelings in his initial review of the intervention. He highlighted that his putting performance hadn't actually improved a significant amount, with 2- and 3-putts still present, which meant he felt progress wasn't being achieved. However, he provided an account of being more forgiving of missed-putts: "*I was easier on myself if I missed the target, instead of thinking about everything that went wrong, I thought well actually my approach shot was good, I painted a picture in my head of what the putt would look like, and didn't leave it until the last minute. When I struck the ball, I felt more relaxed and in control"*. The prevalence of the 'quick fix' performance narrative was to be expected, given my initial efforts to provide solutions and 'fix' Gary as he approached competition (Holliday et al., 2008). Yet, Gary's comments illustrated a decrease in negative self-talk (Mesagno, Marchant, & Morris, 2008), whereby the PPR had begun to overcome negative thought processes and shift away from unsuccessful attempts (Boutcher, 1992) and instead maintain attention in the present, attending more to relevant cues (Milne & Morrison, 2015). Within the stress and coping stages of the transactional model, Gary obtained the information to reflect on what was

successful, and where improvements could be made in the next shot. This process allowed Gary to not become overwhelmed with previous performance, and instead shifted his attentional focus to the next shot (Davies, Collins & Cruickshank, 2017). Moving forward, this repeated exposure to routine and anxiety provoking situations would hopefully enable Gary to become more consistent with his PPR and provide a decrease in anxiety and increase in performance under pressure (Mellalieu, Hanton & Fletcher, 2006).

Following this, we considered Gary's susceptibility for his putting performance to breakdown under high pressure (Gucciardi et al., 2010). Therefore, alongside an England Golf coach, we developed a drill-based putting competition (appendix 3.), which members could engage in during lessons with the teaching professional. This would involve players having 5 putts from approximately 7ft., the distance that evoked the highest amount of pressure from Gary. Players would pay £1 and attempt to score as high a score as possible dependent on the proximity to the hole (i.e. 10 points for getting the ball in the hole to 0 points for missing the scoring zone) Prizes of a monetary voucher and golf lessons where offered to the top 3 scorers. With Gary being a co-contributor to the competition design, he was given the task to set a leading score that would set a target for others to beat. Attempting to implement pressure manipulation within training is often challenging, and it is difficult to recreate emotional and physiological responses that are exclusive to competitive pressure (Filaire et al., 2009). As such, the monetary reward alongside the pressure of setting a standard to beat would help generate some of the elements of anxiety and pressure to perform that Gary often experienced.

The challenge allowed Gary to utilise the routine we had established, where deliberate practice and training activities designed to improve performance allowed his skills to develop around concentration on relevant cues and adherence to the PPR (Ericsson, 2006). The evidence of this improvement was shown through the coping automaticity Gary engaged in, where there was an improvement in scores (see *appendix 2* - Delivery of Intervention), and Gary citing that

he slowed down his routine, with it becoming increasingly purposeful and flow more naturally. This automaticity provided the notion that Gary was beginning to cope more effectively under pressure (Dugdale et al., 2002). During challenge situations Gary reported feeling more composed before he played due to increases in the control and confidence he had in his ability to cope with the stressor(s), and the reduction in negative self-talk.

Collectively, the above sessions provided the opportunity to deliver an effective intervention pertaining to the pre-agreed support areas and the transactional model. In terms of recognising a stimulus (putting scenario), primary appraisal would present a PPR to reappraise the stressor, which focused on relevant cues within the situation. Secondary appraisal would incorporate the breathing technique, reducing/alleviating potential anxiety and tension issues. Stress and coping would then involve evaluating the final position and push Gary to actively evaluate and then reappraise the shot. This would initially identify what could have improved with the shot, with a focus then on what he had executed effectively, and as such, what he had to work with in the following PPR and shot execution. At this stage, the significance of observing the client develop an awareness and use of both problem-focused (coping, reappraising, following a routine) and emotion-focused strategies (breathing exercise, rationalisation) enabled Gary to select how he responded to challenging situations, and have a choice in the coping strategies he effectively deployed (Nicholls, Holt, & Polman, 2005).

For me, observing the client carrying out a pre-agreed approach (PPR and breathing technique) and how these enabled him to focus on relevant stimuli to enhance performance helped my own evaluation and documentation of my effectiveness at this stage in the consultancy (Anderson et al., 2007). Crucially, emphasis wasn't placed on our ability to merely adopt two intervention skills, but instead the transactional model and reappraisal process of how Gary approached potentially threatening situations with an ability to maintain appropriate attentional control under pressure (Mesagno, Marchant, & Morris, 2008). This began to allow Gary to

self-actualise (Poczwardowski, Sherman, & Ravizza, 2004) to help his ability to cope and perform under pressure. Consequently, I had also become more relaxed within sessions. There was a sense of unity in our collaborative approach, with active listening (Ivey, 1983), clarity, and personal openness (Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007) driving the process forward to facilitate effective support.

Monitoring of Intervention

Within the current consultancy, due to a commitment to ensure I provided effective support, I found it difficult to comprehend 'when to finish?' (Keegan, 2015, p.200). Subsequently, sessions continued to run, with an emphasis on reinforcing the behaviour Gary had exhibited to increase the automaticity of behaviour and thought processes. As such, I observed Gary in several competitions during intervention delivery and monitoring, whereby we gained a more conclusive understanding of transfer from practice to competition. Moreover, in monitoring the intervention, I looked toward the clear established goals for the support, and assess whether we had progressed towards these goals (Keegan, 2015).

As demonstrated in *appendix 2*, there was gradual improvement identified in each of the Performance Profile attribute areas. Relaxation demonstrated Gary's increased ability to feel and remain physically and mentally calm during pressure situations – within this, and in conjunction with his control/confidence, there was a decrease in thoughts of failure and negative emotions and cognitions (Thomas & Fogarty, 1997), which coincided with an increase in confidence. Gary highlighted that there was initial frustration around a lack of improvement in putting performance and scores, but we both felt that based on the competition observations, Gary was maintaining adherence to the PPR and reducing the impact irrelevant cues had on his game. Consequently, as demonstrated in *appendix 2*, skill rehearsal began to decrease, with Gary benefitting from an increased consistency of routine, automaticity relating to his

performance being smoother, and conscious cognitive control becoming increasingly minimal (Cohen et al., 2006).

Moving forward, we continued to manipulate pressure scenarios, with the ball being placed on difficult gradients on the green, encouraging other members to observe him in practice, and an overload on internal focus instructions, with these all having the potential to interfere with automatic control processes during performance (Bell and Hardy, 2009). During this time, we monitored out of session progress through various channels (one-to-one formal and informal appointments, phone calls following significant competitions, and e-mail and online performance statistics), which offered alternate ways of monitoring development. Over the forthcoming weeks/months, Gary began to compile a 'self-talk record', which logged his thoughts before a round, in competitive scenarios, and following performance. This allowed Gary to a) observe when/where negative self-talk crept into his game and at what stage it was most prominent (often performance situations); and (b) it brought in a process of self-discovery and Gary working it out for himself (Van Deurzen, 2012), which fostered increased autonomy in himself and the routine (Nesti, 2004). As such, we were able to organise a final de-brief session to conclude the consultancy process.

We began with whether the support had met the pre-agreed goals established from the outset. Gary identified that his performance under pressure had significantly improved as a result of the support he had received. This was identified through an ability to allocate attention and focus on relevant cues during performance, where the use of the PPR had significantly improved his ability to remain on-task and not allow external irrelevant cues to interfere with performance (Wine, 1971). To supplement this, the use of a breathing technique to increase attentional focus had been valuable in high-pressure situations, and helped bring his attention back to non-debilitating factors. Having become familiarised with a routine, and through the use of pressure manipulation scenarios, Gary had managed to reach a stage where there was

little conscious activity, and as a result, was no longer consumed by his own thoughts and cognitions (Tod, Hutter, & Eubank, 2017). Consequently, although his handicap hadn't improved drastically, he maintained belief that he was heading in the right direction to achieving this.

From a personal perspective, given this was my first experience of working 1-to-1 with a client, I felt buoyed by the fact that I had provided effective support to pre-agreed goals. This involved a robust staged-process from intake through to intervention monitoring (Keegan, 2015), where a research-informed approach and tailored framework (transactional model) had re-appraised Gary's negative thoughts and behaviours. During the early stages of the process, the aforementioned feelings of being a 'rookie', and a self-imposed 'imposter syndrome' around potentially 'fooling' Gary into believing I had the answers to his questions, and being more capable than I actually was (Clance, 1985); likely meant there was a focus on quantity rather than quality of work. In my keenness to demonstrate competency, I likely missed out on key elements around distal external focus, and having Gary focus on elements away from his breathing and attentional focus, with an external focus less inclined to interfere with automatic programming (Wulf & Su, 2007), especially in pressure situations. Furthermore, alternative support around imagery, blocking, and rationalising, amongst other key emotion-focused support (Nicholls, Holt, & Polman, 2005), may have provided more beneficial coping strategies in critical moments. Yet, ultimately, I reflected on the current experience as being a useful example of rigorous consultancy process that I can use to inform future consultancy encounters, and helping me to demonstrate a consistent approach to best practice. As a trainee practitioner, there will undoubtedly be areas of improvement to extract from each client support experience I offer, and it is only by evaluating, comprehending, and then developing from these experiences that I can grow personally and professionally.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Performance Profiling Exercise

In order to be able to construct a Personal Psychological Skills Programme, it is important to gain a personal perspective about what you consider to be the most important attributes of an elite golfer. Below are some common areas that golfers perceive are core to their game.
You are required to rate (out of 10) how competent/confident you feel in your abilities in that area, at this moment in time.

Performance Skills	**Rating /10:** 1 = no confidence/ability to carry out 10 = maximum confidence to carry out
Motivation (I try my hardest in playing)	9
Control (I feel in control of my thoughts and behaviours in performance)	**4**
Relaxation (I feel calm before/during/after I play)	**3**
Physical Conditioning (I am in the right shape to play optimally)	8
Confidence (I have the capability to complete the desired action)	**4**
Technical (I have the desired knowledge of swing, mechanics, movement)	7
Physical Preparation (I arrange everything I need to play to my best)	10
Mental Preparation (I prepare mentally before round/shots of what I am going to do)	**2**
Concentration (I know what is relevant/irrelevant to performance)	**5**
Self-talk (I recognise helpful/destructive thoughts and actions)	**3**
Course Knowledge (I recognise what environmental, external factors may influence my game and how to control)	9
Long Game (I feel confident in my ability in my long game – driving, iron play)	9
Short Game (I feel confident in my ability in my short game – putting)	**3**

Appendix 2: Performance Profiling Exercise

In order to be able to construct a Personal Psychological Skills Programme, it is important to gain a personal perspective about what you consider to be the most important attributes of an elite golfer.

Name: Gary

A list of important psychological attributes a good golfer should possess: All performance ratings should be given on a 0-4 scale – 0 = 'definitely not', 4 = 'definitely yes'

(a) Relaxation

Best ever performance:

I am always calm before I play	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
I know how to relax in difficult circumstances	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

Current performance:

I am always calm before I play	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
I know how to relax in difficult circumstances	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

Delivery of Intervention:

I am always calm before I play	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
I know how to relax in difficult circumstances	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

Monitoring of Intervention:

I am always calm before I play	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
I know how to relax in difficult circumstances	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

(b) Control/Confidence

Best ever performance:

I do not concern myself with thoughts of failure	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
I approach all competition with confident thoughts	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

I always feel in control of my emotion in competition	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
I feel I have the psychological resources to deal with the situation	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

Current performance:

I do not concern myself with thoughts of failure	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
I approach all competition with confident thoughts	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
I always feel in control of my emotion in competition	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
I feel I have the psychological resources to deal with the situation	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

Delivery of Intervention:

I do not concern myself with thoughts of failure	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
I approach all competition with confident thoughts	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
I always feel in control of my emotion in competition	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
I feel I have the psychological resources to deal with the situation	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

Monitoring of Intervention:

I do not concern myself with thoughts of failure	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
I approach all competition with confident thoughts	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
I always feel in control of my emotion in competition	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
I feel I have the psychological resources to deal with the situation	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

(c) <u>Mental Preparation (before round and shots)</u>

Best ever performance:

I always have specific goals of what I want to do	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
I always reflect and analyse my performance after a shot or round	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

I rehearse my skills or routine in my head before I do them	***0***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***

Current performance:

I always have specific goals of what I want to do	***0***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***
I always reflect and analyse my performance after a shot or round	***0***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***
I rehearse my skills or routine in my head before I do them	***0***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***

Delivery of Intervention:

I always have specific goals of what I want to do	***0***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***
I always reflect and analyse my performance after a shot or round	***0***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***
I rehearse my skills or routine in my head before I do them	***0***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***

Monitoring of Intervention:

I always have specific goals of what I want to do	***0***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***
I always reflect and analyse my performance after a shot or round	***0***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***
I rehearse my skills or routine in my head before I do them	***0***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***

(d) **Self-Talk/Routine**

Best ever performance:

I know how to recognise and deal with destructive self-talk and thoughts during competition	***0***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***
I have specific cues or routines that I say/do to help performance during competition	***0***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***

Current performance:

I know how to recognise and deal with destructive self-talk and thoughts during competition	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
I have specific cues or routines that I say/do to help performance during competition	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

Delivery of Intervention:

I know how to recognise and deal with destructive self-talk and thoughts during competition	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
I have specific cues or routines that I say/do to help performance during competition	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

Monitoring of Intervention:

I know how to recognise and deal with destructive self-talk and thoughts during competition	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
I have specific cues or routines that I say/do to help performance during competition	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

(e) Automaticity

Best ever performance:

I perform in competition without consciously thinking of it	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
When I compete, I know exactly what I need to do to get the outcome I would like	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

Current performance:

I perform in competition without consciously thinking of it	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
When I compete, I know exactly what I need to do to get the outcome I would like	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

Delivery of Intervention:

I perform in competition without consciously thinking of it	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

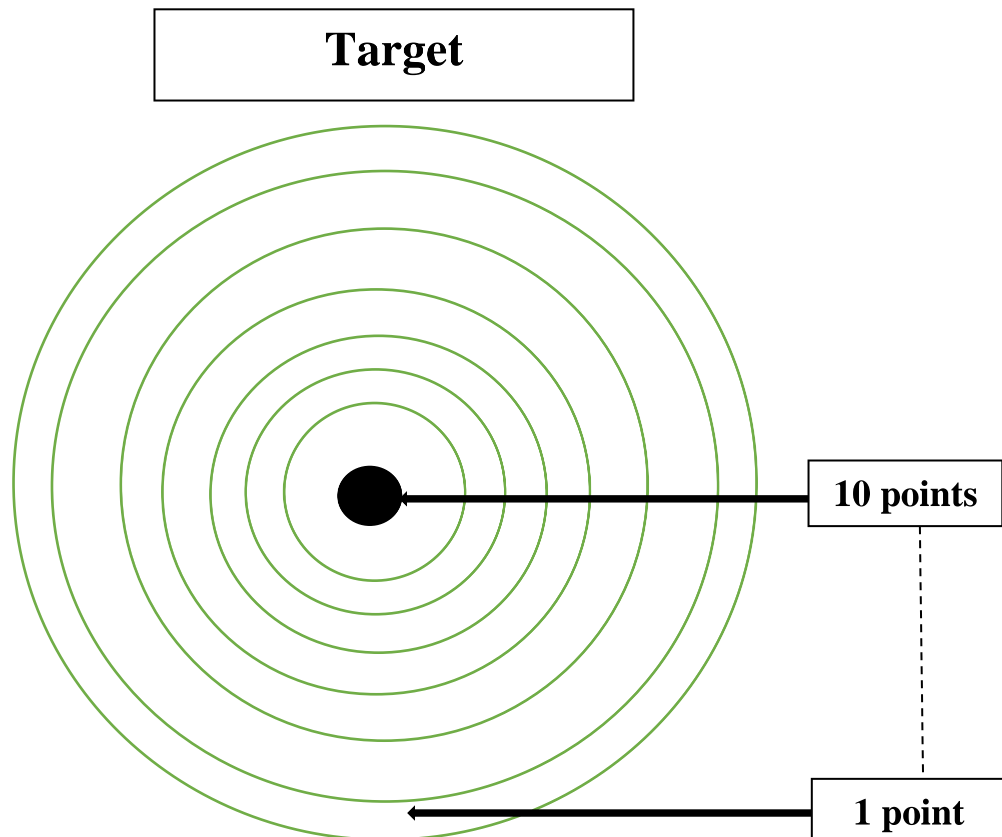
When I compete, I know exactly what I need to do to get the outcome I would like	***0***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***

Monitoring of Intervention:

I perform in competition without consciously thinking of it	***0***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***
When I compete, I know exactly what I need to do to get the outcome I would like	***0***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***

Outline:

Gary performed the pressure-manipulation task on an outdoor driving range putting green, where he would be positioned 7ft. from the hole. The target was composed of nine concentric circles. The outermost circle had approximately a 90-cm diameter, and each consecutive circle was reduced by 10cm, with the innermost circle approximately 10cm in diameter. The areas between one circle and the next had values of 10, 9, 8, etc. with the innermost circle worth 10 points. Members would have 5 putts to gain a high a score as possible, with the same standard golf putter and the same standard golf balls used.



Golfer positioned approx. 7ft from target

Appendix 3. Pressure Manipulation Challenge

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

WILLIAM CROSSEN

DSPORTEXPSY - CANDIDATE NUMBER: 648122

CONSULTANCY CASE STUDY 2

Abstract

This article presents a reflective case study of an applied consultancy experience with two 24-year-old novice ultra-marathon runners, preparing for 10 marathons in 10 days in Gambia. The case study highlights the applied consultancy experience and its accompanying challenges, including working with two clients with contrasting personal objectives that are striving towards a shared goal, and an ability to adopt a philosophical approach (holism and pragmatism) to suit the clients' needs and monitoring their effective progression. As the consultancy involved sessions with the clients together, it was crucial that support was specific and related to the client's personal experience. This involved negotiating the 'to and fro' between overcoming personal issues of the challenge itself (injury, stress) with one athlete, and achieving a deeper, more meaningful connection with running with the other athlete (identity). Alongside this, the case study also demonstrates how the practitioner's own cognitions and experiences must be set aside in order for the client to receive a reliable and objective service.

Keywords: *holistic support, identity, injury, philosophy of practice*

Context

The Practitioner

When I began working with the two clients, I was 18 months into my Professional Doctorate training. Having delivered support across multiple disciplines, I'd had multiple opportunities to engage in applied practice and reflect upon these service delivery experiences to better understand the effectiveness of my practice (Andersen, 2000). Central to these early practitioner experiences was the evolving philosophy of practice underpinning my work. As such, my own practice sought to facilitate the holistic long-term development of the individual athlete and the individual person (Friesen & Orlick, 2010), in terms of both wellbeing and performance. However, having undergone extended periods of uncertainty in aligning my philosophy with my practice approach, an openness to evaluating and adapting my practice approach and philosophy was important at this point in my practitioner development (Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004; Tod, Marchant, & Anderson, 2007).

Reflecting upon my practice experiences across different scenarios (applied work, interviews, teaching) allowed me to develop and 'work on myself' (Simons & Andersen, 1995), and recognise I not only looked to include the goals and strategies for improved performance, but also improve quality of living for the person behind the athlete (Friesen & Orlick, 2010). As holistic development was integral to my practitioner ethos, it allowed practice to be underpinned by my own core values and beliefs (Poczwardowski, Sherman, & Ravizza, 2004) to give a truer representation of myself as an individual and a practitioner (Woolway & Harwood, 2015). Going into this consultancy, although the two runners trained for one ultramarathon, understanding themselves within their own wider context (Fletcher & Maher, 2013) would allow for more congruent support. However, I had previously competed in the

sport and likely experienced similar challenges, therefore, these would need to be set aside to support the clients effectively.

The Clients

The clients involved in the current consultancy are two 24-year old male runners. One previously ran nationally within the sport (herein called Mike), and the other (herein called Tom) had purely ran for leisure purposes. With marathon running once being reserved for elite athletes, it now represents a growing population that endures financial, physical, and psychological challenges in order to train and compete (Havenar & Lochbaum, 2007; Samson, Otten, & Virgien, 2013). This places significant demand on the individual, with voluntary exposure to physical and psychological distress on a regular basis (Ogles & Masters, 2000). Tom and Mike had begun training for the ultramarathon and assembled a team consisting of coaches, physiotherapists, strength and conditioning, and nutritionists. During conversations with these individuals, the physiotherapist (John), who as a mutual friend, had advised them to consider the psychological nature of the challenge and recommended my services. Following this, Tom contacted myself and highlighted their awareness of the physical side of the challenge, but lack of knowledge around psychological preparation for the ultramarathon, and ensuring they got through it. With individuals often directing a lack of attention toward the performance and well-being benefits of psychology alongside other disciplines (Earle & Earle, 2013), it was crucial to initially understand what the clients' understanding of psychology was, and subsequently how my support would be integrated.

The Consultancy Process

Intake and Needs Analysis

Based on our initial conversation, I was uncertain whether there was a genuine commitment to seek psychological support, or if it was just a 'tick box' ahead of their preparation. This

apprehension resulted from their initial lack of awareness of sport psychology, and as such whether they would invest into my support. Apprehension behind 'buy-in' from the athlete is common within sport (Nesti, 2010: p.56), with programmes not benefiting if athletes do not engage with support (Voight & Carroll, 2006). As I had no control over the commitment Mike and Tom displayed towards my support, I approached the first session asking, 'What do Mike, Tom and I want to get out of the consultancy process?' Given my apprehension, I met with Grant, a local ultramarathon runner who had completed various world ultramarathons including *Marathon Des Sables*. We discussed his journey through the ultramarathons to gain an understanding of the psychological factors present during his experiences. Grant demonstrated an awareness of the psychological impact of running and health, having experienced adversity surrounding his health (cancer), injury (back problems), and fitness, whereby embracing these experiences had 'fuelled him to the start-line'. Given Grant completed the toughest footrace on Earth, he emphasised the importance of a solid working relationship and support network, whereby everyone involved supported one another's goals in the process (Hassell, Sabiston, & Bloom, 2010). Further to this, we discussed the current consultancy and factors critical to the process, including preparation, awareness of the associated risks, and how to overcome mistakes, which are all part of the process of sport psychology consultancy (Andersen, Van Raalte, & Brewer, 2000).

In the first meeting, I wanted to establish clarity of the process, and if/how I could attend to their issues and help them achieve their goals (Cropley et al., 2010; Tod, 2017). As such, after highlighting his route into the project, I asked Tom 'what support he wanted going into the process?' He explained that he wanted general directive guidance from me on managing the mental and physical demands of the challenge, including overcoming potential setbacks surrounding his injury. Given the directive nature of the support Tom sought, I adopted a more practitioner-led approach with him to ensure the he felt directed in relation to

the psychology input he sought. While this represented me working in a way that best met the client's needs, it was not aligned with the approach I usually took with clients. This provided initial insight into conflicts with my philosophy of practice, whereby I tended to adopt a construalist, client-led approach throughout consultancy, building a theory unique to my client, and allowing them to arrive at their own intervention strategy (Keegan, 2015: p.53). However, given the circumstance and intake process, implementing a Certaintist approach to identify specific areas of support, was crucial to provide Tom with direction.

As the intake and needs analysis progressed with Tom, it became apparent that while Mike, as a natural runner, was coping more effectively with the training programme and its fitness demands, Tom was experiencing various injury setbacks and difficulties in overcoming them. A strain of working 50-hour weeks alongside training demands, and planning fundraising for the challenge, had become exhausting and began taking a physical and mental toll (see *Appendix: 'Case Report One*'). At this point, we explored the nature of the pressures and prolonged intense physical and psychological stress the challenge brought, which if not addressed, may result in burnout, with a reduced sense of accomplishment and sport devaluation (Raedeke & Smith, 2004). Tom in particular was struggling to balance the workload of the challenge, but despite the demands he experienced, Tom desired to prove something through overcoming a seemingly impossible challenge to himself, and how this could transfer beyond the ultramarathon and into his wider life. Subsequently, Tom and I agreed that the consultancy would focus on three specific areas to work through: (a) exploring sources of stress and 'demands', (b) understand the role of these on performance and wellbeing, (c) appraising stress and thriving on pressure beyond the challenge.

Within the intake process with Mike, he acknowledged the factors that had previously impacted him in running, which had resurfaced during the challenge. Mike outlined his continual relationship of 'falling in and out of love with running', and how these impacted

other areas of life. Having previously raced against Mike in our youth, I empathised with the issues he experienced, but understood it was crucial to clearly separate personal opinion from objective facts (Keegan, 2015; p.32). Specifically, being able to distance my own experiences and attached emotions, ensured I did not allow personal circumstance to interfere with my professional judgement. Mike discussed early experiences of competing, and although extremely stressful, anxiety-provoking events at the time (feeling physically sick before races), it provided an escape, and a brief and often intoxicating respite from the complexities and overwhelm of everyday life (Segrave, 2000). The challenge had reignited his love of the sport, and therefore he had fully immersed himself in the experience. Moreover, 'being at one with the environment, to the point it's just me and the road ahead', had shown to me how much he and others identified himself as a runner, and for him it represented a vehicle for identity reinforcement (Shipway & Holloway, 2010). Mike drove the session, and his needs (different from Tom's) aligned more closely with my client-led construalist philosophy (Keegan, 2015). This was much more about just being there to actively listening to Mike's experiences (Tod, 2007) and where, through this interaction, he felt I could contribute into enhancing his performance and wellbeing around the challenge. We discussed associated themes around identity development, and how running played into other areas of Mike's life and effectively contributed existential meaning and the sense of purpose (Nesti, 2004). Mike and I agreed that for him, the consultancy would: (a) Explore identity experiences, (b) develop this identity in current and future experiences, and (c) understand how this identity relates to wider life 'meaning'.

Case Formulation

Having sat down with both athletes, John (physio) and I discussed our work with them and potential avenues to explore. For Tom, we both had a sense that he came across as a 'closed book', where he may amass high levels of internal pressure, which if not confronted could

prove detrimental. John also highlighted a recurring knee injury Tom had been tackling, which resulted in prolonged periods of frustration and anger that he had found hard to let go (Collinson, 2003). This led to reinjury during the recovery process, with Tom exerting maximum effort (too much, too soon) in order to run quicker times and progress with training. Given the recurring nature of Tom's injury, I sensed it would be useful to work on getting him to reappraise his thought-process and take focus away from injury, thus allowing him to better cope with the situation (Rees et al., 2010). Alternatively, given Mike's openness to conquer the competitive running elements of the challenge, it was imperative to not allow him to become 'blinkered' and 'obsessed' with self-improvement. I underlined Mike's investment with running and orientation toward 'falling in love with the sport' again, which resulted in both positive and negative repercussions. Besides him doing 'too much' in training and becoming 'blinkered', there was potential for incongruence between why he started doing the challenge and what the reasons turned out to be, which could result in Mike neglecting other aspects of life in order to fulfil the athlete role (Murphy, Petitpas, & Brewer, 1996).

John and I then discussed the development of Mike and Tom's relationship, and that maintaining an effective MDT process throughout the preparation for the challenge would enable perspectives to be shared in order to arrive at the most effective intervention for Tom and Mike (Reid, Stewart, & Thorne, 2004). Subsequently, we arranged a group meeting to propose areas of support felt to be critical to Tom and Mike, and to get their thoughts on the aims and interventions being suggested.

The demands and subsequent pressure Tom experienced had prompted concern around injury and overworking himself. Balancing jobs, two businesses, a master's degree, alongside charity work and training, had inevitably become very taxing. Subsequently, we discussed the need to utilise his stress facilitatively, and manage his 'allostatic overload' (McEwen & Wingfield, 2003) through appraising his stressors and managing subsequent demands in an

efficient manner. Encountering stress and working under pressure, was crucial for Tom to work optimally, yet persistent 'wear and tear' placed on him may result in eventual exhaustion, overload, and burnout (McEwen & Stellar, 1993). Tom stated there was "method behind the madness", and that he needed to 'overextend' himself in order to work most effectively. As we agreed that eustress was central to performance, I identified a mutual understanding of the stressors, as critical to facilitating the coping resources Tom employed before, during and after the challenge.

Given Mike's emphasis placed on running and the client-led discussion, Mike would drive the process and collaborate in any prospective intervention (Keegan, 2015: p.55). He identified what it meant to love running again, describing it as a central point to base his life around (Allen-Collinson, & Hockey, 2007: p.8). Follow-up questions around him telling me more about 'enjoying' running again, and what made it more enjoyable, alongside "You talk about it being a central point in your life, can you explain this?"; prompted reflective listening (Ivey, 1983) allowing for a richer understanding of Mike's running-life relationship. Through reflective listening, I looked at delving into this notion of a more holistic athletic identity, so that we could increase Mike's self-awareness around it. Consulting with my supervisor (Dr. Martin Eubank), we identified that through discussion and self-discovery, the intervention itself would be a by-product of these conversations. These would be informed by narrative inquiry, with the individual a storytelling animal naturally constructing stories out of their cultural life (Polkinghorne, 1988). Subsequently, Mike and I would explore meaningful experiences within his life and attached identities, to ensure a developed identity through stories of his experience (Bruner, 1986). Prior to this, I experienced difficulty attempting to progress towards an intervention with Mike, as I often looked toward the 'safety' of using mental skills training to enhance/reduce the symptoms of the experience (Corlett, 1996). Yet, through supervisor discussion, we identified that the nature of the consultancy and process of

adopting construalism would allow an effective collaboration, and give Mike the opportunity to arrive at his own 'intervention strategy' (Keegan, 2015, p.53). Furthermore, given my philosophy of practice, I was aware that any attempt to implement mental skills training would be insufficient to addressing the clients' holistic challenges, and would create a sense of incongruence (Lindsay et al., 2007). Therefore, I was not looking for an 'any win' or 'any improvement' in the client during the consultancy process, but instead that 'success' would only be accepted if a positive impact had occurred on what had been pre-agreed at the beginning of our professional relationship (Keegan, 2015, p.12).

Planning of Intervention

Tom, Mike and I constructed 'workbooks' prior to, and following sessions, that increased contact-time through the use of face-to-face meetings, phone calls and emails, with these channels providing opportunity to approach sessions in different manners. Following this, I engaged in various accounts of identity (Stryker & Burke, 2000; Smith & Sparkes, 2006) and stress literature (Brewer, 2007), to gain comprehensive understanding of how I approached intervention delivery with each client. Addressing the multi-faceted nature of Mike's identity in '*past', 'present',* and *'future'* self, would likely provide the most beneficial approach to support. Having previously undertaken research in the area of identity, I felt that following a format similar to Smith and Sparkes (2006) would be invaluable. This involved treating Mike and I's conversations as data, whereby we explored the structure and form of narrative types within Mike's stories. Specifically, this recognised that the structure (*past, present, future*) would be, as much as content, a way of understanding "the identity, perceptions, and values of the storyteller" (Sparkes, 2005; p.195).

With Tom, we would recognise and appraise stressors through a staged process. Through allostasis, lower levels of stress often resulted in low morale and an 'underload', with

high levels of stress an 'overload', and a breakdown in resources (McEwen & Stellar, 1993). Therefore, appraising sources of stress through an adapted version of Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model of stress would be an efficient method of evaluating their impact (*Figure. 1*). This would explore the potential sources of stress, and then understand the impact of these on performance and wellbeing, whereby we would reappraise thought processes through incorporating both problem- and emotion-focused coping. Tom would identify and reappraise potential sources of stress proactively by: defining the problem, generating alternative solutions, weighing the alternatives, choosing among them, and acting (Schuster, Hammitt, & Moore, 2006).

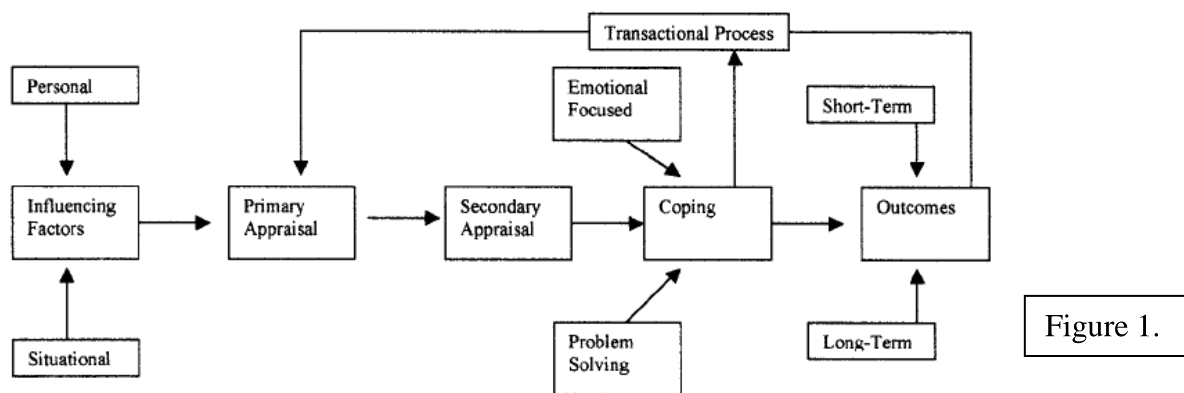


Figure 1.

Delivery of Intervention

Our next session, a 'Yorkshire 3 Peak' challenge, gifted the opportunity to have in-depth discussions in a comfortable open environment. An hour in, Mike and I forged ahead of the others, which provided an opportunity to 'walk and talk'. Identifying the impact of 'past self' identity allowed us to begin redeveloping it to suit Mike's current and future 'self'. Allowing Mike to create and tell stories of key moments within his life, was a crucial part of developing and maintaining a coherent identity and sense of self (Crossley, 2000). We looked toward identifying (i) who Mike previously viewed himself as, (ii) who he currently viewed himself as, (iii) and where and who he may be in the future. This process linked past, present, and future which allowed the development of a coherent sense of self that 'made sense' within the context

of Mike's life experiences (Carless, 2008). Subsequently, we spent the session looking at the 'past self', and follow-up sessions on 'present' and 'future' self. This excerpt outlines discussion around 'past self' identity:

WC: *Looking back, how did it feel to be this person competing at this level (Nationally) back then?*

Mike: *So 'invested' in it… training 6 times a week, not consuming alcohol… shitty foods… so focused on what I wanted to do in running, that I… zoned out.*

WC: *What do you mean by zoning out… forgot what was going on around you…? Or what you were actually doing?*

Mike: *I forgot about everyone and everything… running was the only thing I needed… I lived for running…. a case of wake-up–school-home–running–tea–bed… If I'm being honest… at that stage I loved it… I'd always dreamt of being in the Olympics… I was working toward that.*

Mike's recollections of his youth within running signified crucial aspects of his identity and sense of self (Carless, 2008). This demonstrated development of a high athletic identity at a young age, where running became a focal point within his life. This focus, fuelled by a high athletic identity, included the enhancement of a salient sense of self, having positive effects on performance, and greater likelihood of long-term involvement in sport (Phoenix, Faulkner, & Sparkes, 2005). However, this drive began to wither, with Mike experiencing difficulty in and away from running, and an over-reliance on his athletic identity. This moved toward 'falling in and out of love with the sport':

WC: *How long were you following the routine… wake up–school–running–tea–bed?*

Mike: *A while… I was so set on making something of it, I'd put that much work in… the deeper I got into it, the harder it became to stop… started with missing a race… worried about getting*

beat… missed another race and training… led to an argument with my parents who didn't want me to 'give in'.

WC: *What did you want?*

Mike: *Exactly that… I missed out on so many things, going out enjoying myself with my mates… I'd forgot what I was running for and looked more what I missed out on… age where people would go to house parties…lads' holidays… I was missing them to go training.*

Mike's initial provocative comment of 'falling in and out of love with the sport' became the central theme of our discussions. Mike invested highly in his athletic identity, with running a large component of how he made sense of his 'self'. Although predominantly positive throughout his youth, approaching a 'life story' that made sense (provided unity and purpose) (Sparkes, 1997) in his latter teenage years, he experienced a lack of fulfilment through running and a subsequent 'identity clash'. At this point, I began to understand who Mike previously viewed himself as, and discussed finer details around his 'past self' in the walk.

Following lunch, I spent time with Tom. We began to address his sources of stress, and to understand the impact of these on his performance and wellbeing. Heavy investment in his job, businesses, master's degree, charity work, and training, were explored through Lazarus and Folkman's transactional model (1984), with emphasis on the initial appraisal stages:

Tom: *It gets exhausting… I'm always thinking about one when I'm doing the other... when at the farm, I'm thinking about a uni assignment… do I have enough time?… have I written enough?*

WC: *How does that play into actually doing the uni work… do you feel you can't control the stress… or can but don't know how?*

Tom: *I think it's in my control, I need a level of stress to keep me motivated, but I'm not using it in the right way... I think about the other, then when I get to it, I waste time stressing about the stress… everything's all over the place.*

Tom's outlook on appraising his stressors suggested that a combination of *situational factors* (length of time) and *personal factors* (previous experience) formed a negative foundation, leading to negative stressful appraisal of the situation. This resulted in Tom struggling to adopt a successful coping mechanism and apply it effectively (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), due to a significant imbalance between demands and resources (Olasuga et al., 2009) and Tom over-extending himself across different situations. This resulted in a lack of self-control and Tom appraising future situations as 'challenging' or 'threatening' (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). As we identified how Tom processed appraisal, I looked to interrupt the process between primary and secondary appraisal, whereby Tom could consider a situation 'stressful', but evaluate and determine an appropriate strategy or coping solution. This would affect adaptational outcomes and positively contribute to performance and wellbeing (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984):

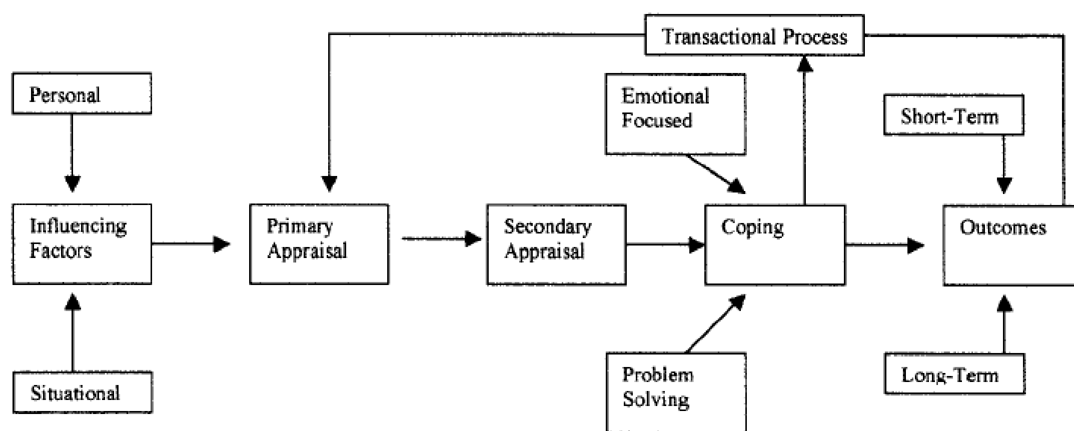
WC: *Things are getting on top of you, how does this play out.... Stress comes in (showing model), how are you reacting to this (primary appraisal)?*

Tom: *Get worked up and I'm over-stressed, then focus on what I could have done to not be stressed in this situation or I'm gonna be stressed going into the next.*

WC: *Going through those motions, where are you at?*

Tom: *Not focused, worried about getting things done… a negative cycle I'm stuck in.*

Currently, Tom was unable to appraise stress in a facilitative manner. Stressful situations were appraised negatively, and subsequently he was unable to deal with the demands of the situation. The area highlighted below, denotes where Tom suffered initial 'breakdown' in resources (Olasuga et al., 2009). Being over-stressed and unable to deal with the task at hand, Tom focused on past experiences or future outcomes as being a determinant of how he would deal with the situation ('focus on what I could have done' and 'I'm gonna be stressed going into the next thing'). Our initial focus reappraised stress at this stage, and provided Tom with the appropriate, facilitative coping mechanisms; thus, if stress was recognised and reappraised (bringing himself back to the current moment), Tom would not need to adopt an effective coping mechanism.



The next session with Mike explored present and future notions of identity, with the purpose of clarifying any conflict between his 'former gloried self' (Adler & Adler, 1989) and current self. As Mike reinvested his love for the sport, I ensured he understood the dangers of an exclusive athletic identity akin to his previous one (Carless & Douglas, 2013), and helped reconstruct elements of this into a 'healthier' current and future identity. Mike begun running as an 'escape' from the stresses of life, with it providing fulfilment and doing something 'just for him'. Subsequently, narrative inquiry was allowing Mike to understand his 'self' through the stories we discussed and he felt part of (Smith, 2007; p.391):

WC: *Going back to pre- and post-race emotions, how did they differ?*

Mike: *Massively… it's strange, because you may not want to run beforehand, be tired, feeling unfit… then you finish and you're absolutely knackered… but it's weird, because nothing matters anymore… it's the best feeling in the world.*

Retaining the euphoric feeling when finishing a race, alongside it being an 'escape', illustrated two dominant narratives central to recreating his new identity. These emergent themes were significant, because they signified when Mike was shown what he truly wanted to get out of running, and through discussion, had shown movement away from a dominant athletic identity. Having reflected on his previous identity, there were notable differences to how he viewed his current and past 'self'.

Mike: *I used to be so focused on pushing that 'winning' agenda, I'd forget about everything else… Now, competing is important to me, but it doesn't end there… I fit it alongside other parts of my life, but I know running will always give me that 'escape'.*

Mike began understanding the previous 'identity clashes' he experienced, with the reliance on his athletic identity associated with distress during periods of poor form and an identity crisis (Carless & Douglas, 2013). Therefore, we maintained the competitive elements Mike sought within running, but also ensured running was the vehicle that allowed him to access an 'escape', which provided a more holistic athletic identity. Although a somewhat 'restitution narrative' of past identity (Sparkes & Smith, 2003); through identifying what Mike sought in running moving forward, were we able to develop a comprehensive understanding of where we were in relation to this. *Figure 3. (see Appendix)* demonstrates our negotiations of his past, present, and future 'self' and how when not combined this may affect judgement and appreciation of his identity. The 'past self' acknowledged high athletic identity within his youth and retaining competitive elements of this; 'present self' focused on his current actions within the challenge and how running provided a 'love' of the sport again; and 'future self' looked at incorporating

both competitive and a wider identity appreciation into a holistic product. Given identity is construed not as a static entity, but an ongoing project continually constructed and developed (Bruner, 1986), the formulation of a 'self' incorporating past, present and future elements, moving forward provided clarity on Mike's identity before, during and after the challenge.

In Tom's next session, having identified an inability to focus on current demands due to an interference between past and future outcomes, we looked toward clarifying how and why this proved detrimental. There was a discrepancy between initially recognising the event as stressful (primary appraisal), to then augmenting and finding negative meaning via secondary appraisal, which indicated a lack of coping mechanisms (Thiel, Connelly, & Griffith, 2011). In Tom's case, while the event could be regarded as 'stressful', if it contained either *personal* or *situational* characteristics (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) when appraising a stressor, Tom would go through negotiation of the model, and if he was able to cope. Events that contained both *personal* and *situational* influencing factors, identified that Tom found difficulty with his secondary appraisal, which reflected an inability to cope, with 'sole' factor situations appraised as positive. Therefore, Tom would initially ask 'Do I think the current 'stressor' is a result of *personal* or *situational* factors?'. With Tom requiring stress to perform, if solely one of these factors, he would go through a process of: a) '*Is there anything at stake*?' (goal relevance); b) '*Is the stimulus (stressor) beneficial or harmful*?' (goal congruence); c) '*What do I want to get out of this current situation*?' (goal content); d) '*Do I need this stress to motivate me*?' (goal motivation). This format, Lazarus (1991), allowed Tom to acknowledge whether he had the coping resources to deal with the situation. Only when there was a combination of *personal* and *situational* factors, which led to harmful (goal congruence), unnecessary (goal motivation) and a lack of clarity around what was at stake (goal content), would we progress to secondary appraisal, which had the potential to be negative.

Tom: *My knee's been acting up again, I'm worried if I keep pushing and running on it, its gonna cause long-term damage. But, I'm concerned that if I stop training then my fitness is gonna suffer… I'm a bit lost really.*

This outlines a potentially harmful long-term issue, with a lack of clarity around how Tom deals with it. Given the goal in this situation was Tom's ability to run on his knee during the challenge and a subsequent conflict in emotions, the goal was highly important and resulted in more intense emotions being displayed (Jones, 2003). Therefore, when demands exceeded the resources Tom had available, we engaged in a staged-process of identifying how severe the stressor was. This process was underpinned by Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) 'definitions of underlying properties of stress', with the 'visual mapping' of it displayed in *Figure 2.* (see Appendix) This assessed each stressor's severity, and whether Tom had experienced or planned for this stressor, and if not, what were the repercussions. If a significant, longer-term impact, then combining both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping would be adopted, given the 'strategic mistake' pitting one coping against the other causes (Lazarus, 2000; p. 669).

Coping consisted of planning and active elements of stress (problem-focused) and dealing with his emotional responses to stressors (emotion-focused). For the injury stressor, I drove discussion on positive and negative repercussions it carried. Given Tom solely focused on the negative (being unfit, not progressing, being unable to do the challenge), it provided opportunity to 'balance' out and gather information, maintaining a positive perspective (belief he could recover to pre-injury level; Bianco et al., 1999). This evidenced Tom had also gained muscle strength, increased fitness, and crucially if severe enough, had the ability to run through it. With positive rehabilitation from and during injury associated with setting specific and realistic short and long-term goals, it allowed for increased self-confidence and autonomy (Carson & Polman, 2008). Therefore, we kept 'completing the challenge' as a long-term goal,

and moved toward a weekly 4-week build-up plan incorporating cross-training, biking, and swimming to build-up and maintain fitness levels, whilst appreciating the stressors had been explored in an efficient manner. The process of initially engaging in the 'stressor' at primary appraisal, identified if/how it could be dealt with through a staged-process, acknowledging the management of resources on demands. If demands outweighed available resources, we reached secondary appraisal, whereby actively exploring the underlying stressors through Socratic dialogue and encouraging thought-provoking questions, allowed him to re-evaluate his negative self-defeating ideas and self-discover positive elements of his stress (Jones, 2003). Ultimately, this allowed Tom to experience the frustration and stress needed in primary appraisal, but allowed for management of his secondary appraisal in his behaviours (Jones, 2003). This allowed for negotiation to the final stage of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) model, whereby we achieved short-term and long-term outcomes moving forward.

Monitoring the Intervention

Through the following weeks, we maintained contact and monitoring of the interventions. Mike highlighted his ability to negotiate through difficult encounters that confronted his adapted identity. The recurrence of the competitive 'self-improvement' narrative initially dominated his thought-processes and training regimes, whereby he felt running faster times, increasing his mileage, and being more driven to complete the challenge, exhibited progress in our work together. Although athletes often experience initial struggle with buying into and adhering to a support programme, and may revisit previous behaviour, Mike begun recognising he was neglecting other aspects of his life to fulfil the athletic role (Murphy, Petitpas, & Brewer, 1996). Through revisiting our conversations, this adhered to his 'past self' and something that was not congruent to the identity he was truly pursuing. Subsequently, Mike replaced these 'past self' goals, and instead running now focused on the environment around him, concentrating on his movement and posture, and allowing himself to switch his thoughts 'on and off' whilst running.

Emphasising wider elements of running, letting thoughts move in and out of the mind, attending to the breath, and sensing the body and posture are crucial to optimal running performance (Dreyer & Dreyer, 2009), yet for Mike, 'performance' was based on being able to immerse himself in what he was doing. This provided clarity for Mike and who he previously viewed himself as, and how this allowed for the 'sense of self' (Carless, 2008) that aligned with his current identity of a wider life meaning through an 'escape'.

Tom had become increasingly focused on his specific appraisal of stressors and recognition of threat to goal relevance, congruence, content, and motivation. In more demanding situations (i.e. injury, wellbeing), Tom highlighted his ability to navigate through the underlying properties of stress, whereby the severity, experience, and impact would be evaluated. Appraising an experience as stressful, but being able to identify the relevance, congruence, content, and motivation, allowed Tom to balance the subsequent positive and negative implications, to understand whether he had the relevant coping resources. Tom felt he may impede their ultramarathon progress, resulting in feelings of inadequacy and stress, which affects his and Mike's relationship and even completion of the challenge. Yet, through Socratic dialogue and opening up the issue and distinguishing what Tom does know from what he doesn't (Paul & Binker, 1990), he appreciated that by asking 'what evidence have I based this on?', and 'Is this always the case?', that this was ever-present, and yet they had maintained solid progress. Tom began to understand that he brought value to other components of the challenge having lived in Gambia, which would inform challenges around nutrition, sleep, and the terrain. Alongside this, he recognised that through ours and Mike's conversations, that progress was achieved through a variety of methods and that collaboration was central to overcoming adversity. This process of self-discovery and Tom utilising the intervention himself (Van Deurzen, 2012), had allowed him to begin developing autonomy in his process of dealing with stressors (Nesti, 2004; p.9).

Ultimately, having established clear goals from the outset, we were able to assess progress, with the current consultancy empowering the clients' ability to self-monitor moving forward (Keegan, 2015; p.200). Mike's ability to focus on a more holistic self, incorporating elements of past, present, and future encounters, enabled him to reconstruct his identity in and out of sport moving forward to obtain a more congruent sense of self. Tom managed stress in a more facilitative manner, giving him the understanding that stress evidences that a situation is meaningful to him. Subsequently, when engaging in appraisal, Tom, if unable to have the resources to cope with the demands, would be able to initially monitor its 'goal threat', and if highly severe and threatening, understand the underlying properties of these demands and if necessary engage in coping mechanisms. Both clients have highlighted a heightened awareness towards their areas of support, and have been successful (in the short-term) in applying our discussions and principles into their encounters. Moving forward, it is hoped they are able to consider these over longer periods of time and into wider, holistic areas of life.

Both clients were able to undertake and complete the ultramarathon in the allotted time. In a follow-up session, the runners highlighted that aside from the intervention(s), the very nature of the consultancy was instrumental throughout the process. When experiencing significant challenges (heat exhaustion, mileage, dehydration, lack of motivation etc.), Mike and Tom had implemented elements of the different support they received. When encountering the above challenges, Tom would attempt to educate and support Mike through the appraisal and reappraisal process in order to view the stressor in a more facilitative manner. Alternatively, Mike 'opened Tom's eyes' to the existential, deeper meaning obtained from running, which in itself, allowed Tom to move away from thoughts around his injury. This demonstrates the role and impact the philosophy of practice chosen from the outset had on the clients. Although the philosophy adopted for each client required a flexible approach to be shown, with considerations around client led vs. practitioner led, and existential vs. CBT; the

outcome displayed that both clients were able to self-monitor and maintain the key principles my support was structured around (Keegan, 2015). Upon reflection, this exhibits how a trainee sport psychologist can effectively support more than one athlete at a time, in a different way, in pursuit of the same outcome goal. Subsequently, although there may be differences in philosophy, approach, and techniques used, through being congruent and flexible within your practitioner and personal ethos, both yourself and the client are able to benefit from a meaningful and impactful relationship and support.

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Appendix

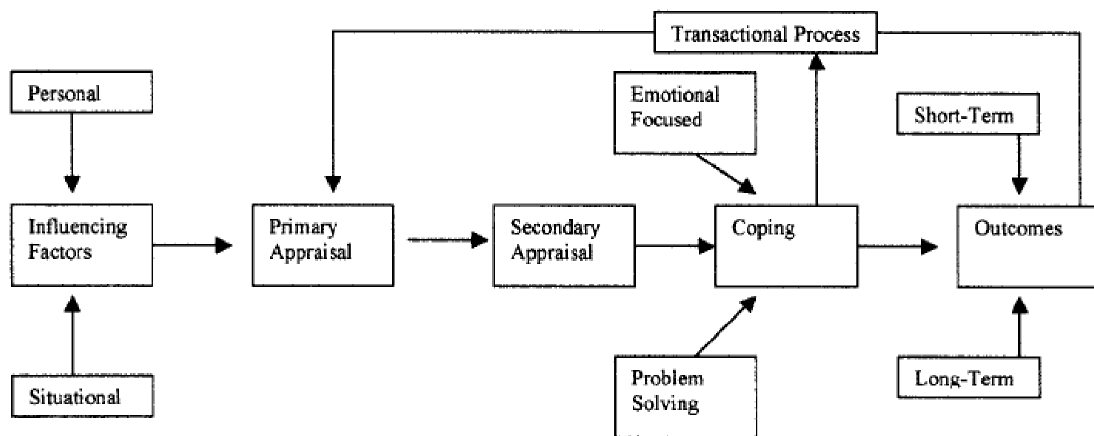

Figure 1. Adapted version of The Transactional Model of Stress developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), developed by Schuster, Hammitt, & Moore (2006).

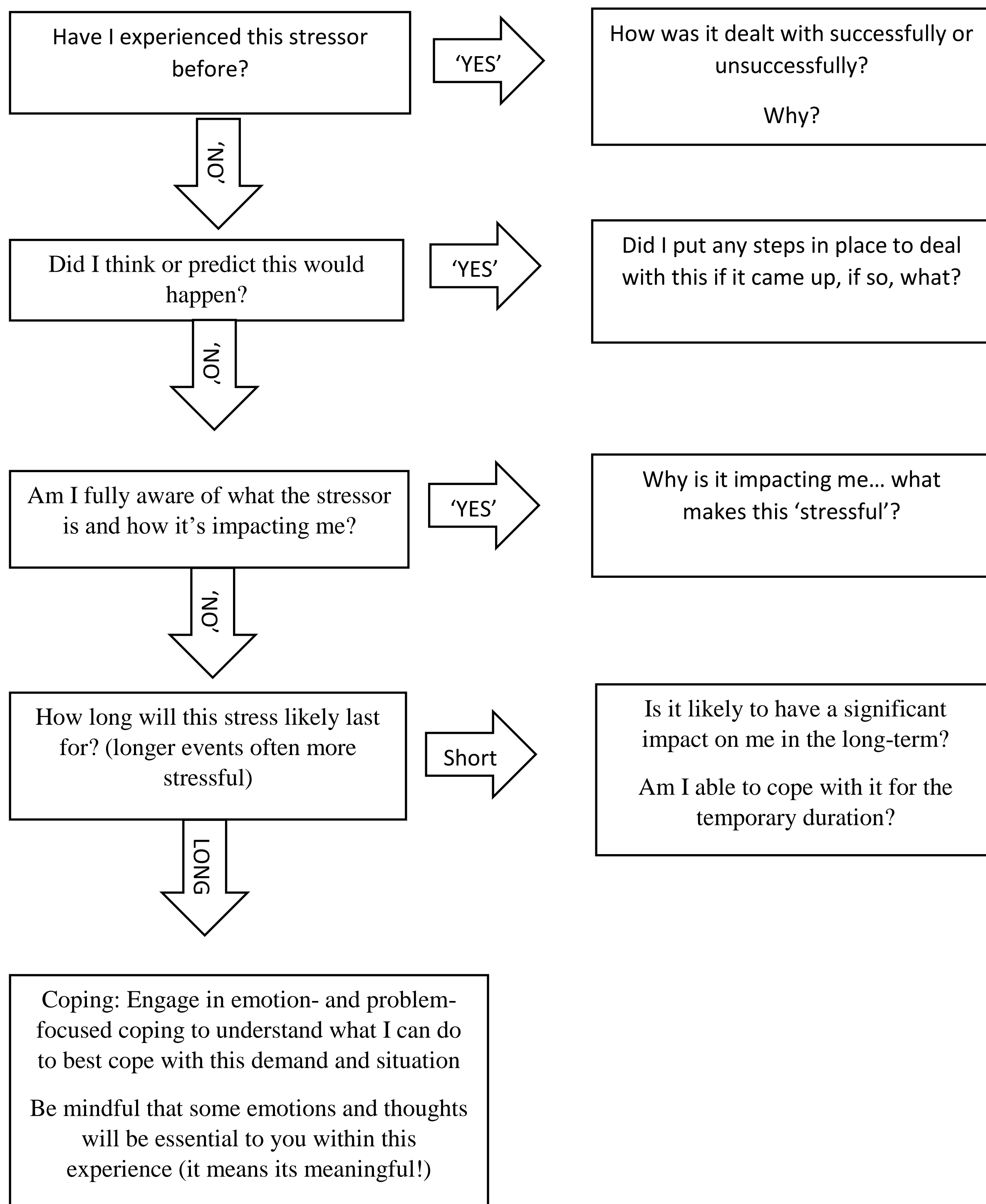

Figure 2. Staged-process of identifying the underlying properties of stress (adapted from Lazarus & Folkman, 1984)

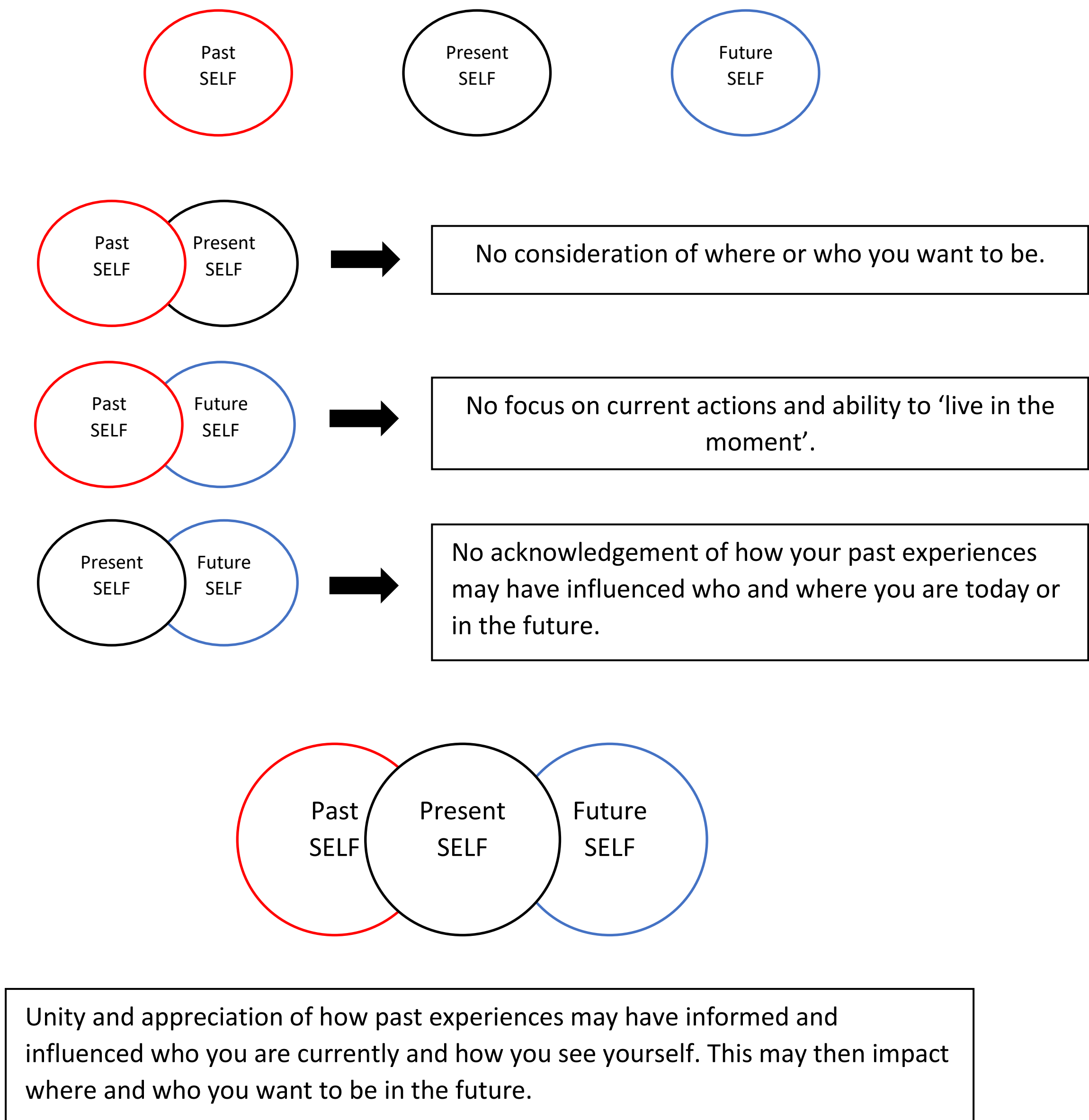

Figure 3. Visual Representation of Past, Present and Future Self.

Case Report One – First meeting (Tom Walker) – 1 hour and 15 minutes

Date: 17-07-19

The purpose of our first session together, was for both parties to understand what we could bring to the relationship and experience together. Mike (second client) was unable to attend the meeting; therefore, Tom and I met and discussed what I would be looking to offer from a psychological support perspective, and how I would fit into their Gambia project.

Background

Upon sitting down, after discussing my background and Tom's route into the project and his previous work in Gambia, I asked him 'What he wanted from me going into the process?' Tom went on to state about him and Mike wanting to prepare themselves for the psychological demands of what they were getting into, and that although they didn't initially plan for the mental aspects of the challenge, following several encounters with ultramarathon runners they soon became aware of the need for it. Tom and Mike themselves had been referred to me through a local physiotherapist who I had known through previous encounters with. The physio (John) had begun working with Tom and Mike, and following their awareness of potentially requiring a psychological component to their training, they got in touch.

We then moved into discussion about Tom's knowledge (and Michael's) of psychology and if they had any experience in dealing with it/being aware of it. Tom went on to highlight that Mike had come from a competitive running background, and after years of falling in and out of love with the sport, was looking to kick-start his passion for running through a cause that was close to both and his Tom's hearts. Tom himself, having worked on fundraising projects around wildlife and villages throughout Gambia was looking to continue this and give exposure of the country and the other two charities out there to people.

Potential areas of support

Tom then went into all the physical preparation him and Mike had been doing with Physios, strength and conditioning etc. but the more the preparation had progressed the more aware they had become aware of the psychological preparation of it. Furthermore, having both spoken with Grant (a local ultramarathon runner) there were similar areas that we felt were going to be crucial throughout the build-up and actual running of the marathons.

Tom mentioned that during the process he had experienced various injuries and difficulties in adjusting to and overcoming them. Although he was getting the mileage in week on week, the

strain of committing long hours to another job (approx. 50 a week), alongside the demands of progressing with his training, planning for the actual trip, and various other fundraising events/social media etc. was exhausting to him. Having picked up a few niggling/minor injuries, there were occasions where he worried about being able to keep coming back from them and whether he was going to suffer a serious injury, or in actual fact it was more of a 'mental issue/block' that he needed help to overcome.

Although not in the meeting, Tom explained that both he and Mike had obviously received great amounts of support from friends, family, businesses etc. but there remained some individuals who had questioned their ability and 'naivety' to be able to actually complete the challenge. One example in particular was around Mike, who when questioned 'have you even ever done a marathon before?' had replied 'no' and then proceeded to go and complete a 26-mile run. Although maybe appearing minor, these initial examples had begun to show to me how much this challenge meant to them, and potential areas we could look to explore.

I then moved on to discuss what Tom had brought up and the more invested they became with the challenge, the money raised, exposure gained, and training done, that the amount of pressure on them would increase. I explained that this would primarily be a good thing for both of them and motivate them even further, whether it was to prove people wrong, achieve something memorable, raise money for amazing charities/causes, or even proving something to themselves. However, I also mentioned that this 'pressure', if not looked at properly and discussed, could result in issues such as; them training harder and 'burning out' and potentially injuring themselves, running and doing it for the wrong reasons, and forgetting what they were actually doing this whole experience for. I then moved onto how important it was for Grant (who had experience of doing it), Tom, Mike, and I, to remember the enjoyment element of the challenge. What they are doing is a life-changing experience, so I wanted them to use this and other elements to fully embrace the experience and enjoy every step of it.

I then mentioned to Tom about potentially visiting the charities they were doing all this work for and provide perspective for them, that would hopefully act as a 'trigger' when they were doing the marathons, and help them overcome situations where they would doubt themselves, regret it, and think about giving up. There would be many people relying on them to complete this challenge and it would be natural to doubt themselves, ignore certain issues and various 'ups' and 'downs', where on occasions the marathons would seem 'easy' and 'amazing' to them, but that these would be coupled with difficult times where 'it's too hard'

and ‘we’ve gone in over our head’. Collectively, we mentioned that it was embracing the experience and taking whatever time we had while doing it, to realise what we were doing and working towards, and why we are doing what we’re doing. We concluded by agreeing to look at support in terms of: (a) exploring sources of stress and ‘demands’ (physical and mental), (b) understand the role of these on performance and wellbeing, (c) appraising stress and thriving on pressure.

- Key points
    - We discussed about what we were both looking to get from working together.
    - We mentioned about potentially visiting the charities to see first-hand the impact they were having/doing.
    - I also mentioned about wanting to get everyone striving towards the same collective goal and having more group meetings/meals/drinks/activities to get to know each other’s (physiotherapist, psychologist, nutritionist, strength etc.) strengths and approaches and how we can complement one another.
    - I mentioned about the importance of him and Mike being honest with one another, using each other during the challenge, and mainly ‘enjoying’ it, and in that way, it would become a lot smoother/easier.

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CONSULTANCY CASE STUDY 3

Abstract

This article represents a reflective case study of an applied consultancy experience with an England Partially-Sighted Footballer. The case study highlights the ongoing consultancy work with the player in the build-up to the IBSA World Championships (Turkey 2019). The consultancy centred around a cognitive-behavioural approach to supporting various of both performance and well-being. The consultancy presented various challenges, including 'moving goalposts' in terms of what the player required support on around their performance and wellbeing, incongruent on and off the pitch behaviours, and managing support mechanisms (including means of support: at/away from camps; and reliance on support). As a result, a consistent flow and congruency was often challenging to maintain with the player, and supporting him within the two areas (performance and well-being). The case study also highlights how working in a new, unique sporting environment can present different challenges to negotiate and overcome in order to deliver best practice.

Keywords: *Confidence, Congruency, Performance, Identity, Cognitive-Behavioural*

Context

The Practitioner

My role with the England Partially-Sighted Squad was preceded by numerous unsuccessful interviews with clubs and organisations. However, having applied for a role with the England Powerchair squad (and been unsuccessful), I became aware of how my key research interests (identity, resilience, post-traumatic growth) were prominent in the field of disability sport. Subsequently, through these unsuccessful attempts, although initially negative experiences, they had increased my self-awareness and self-exploration I needed to take ownership of my existence and experiences moving forward (Ronkainen & Nesti, 2017). This led to both research and applied disability experiences, which resulted in an offer to take up the role as the sports psychologist for the England Partially Sighted Team.

As I was the first practitioner in this role there was a significant amount of ownership I needed to embrace. This included my ability to work in an unknown sport and understand the varying levels and complications of athletes with a similar disability. Thus, I spent significant amounts of time researching the area, speaking to those involved within disability sport, and then reflecting on these experiences to better understand my practice moving forward (Andersen, 2000). Moving into my interactions with players, it became apparent that there were various ongoing conflicts between teammates, which from experience, could undermine team cohesion and performance (Carron & Hausenblas, 1998), and potentially jeopardise any progress with players. Moving forward, I looked to address and potentially resolve these conflicts (Hardy & Crace, 1997), and begin structuring process-focused support through a blend of resources that would ultimately provide them with a strategy to gain a competitive edge in performance (Ludlam et al., 2016).

The Athlete

The player involved in the current consultancy was a 19 year-old individual, who had represented England 4 times and had been to one major tournament (European Championships, Georgia 2019). The player (herein known as H), was the second youngest in the squad and had played club football with several other individuals in the team. As a result of this, H had recently come through the talent selection process, which brought him into the England team just over a year ago. Prior to my first England camp with the squad and meeting H, I had been provided with an IDP (Individualised Development Plan), which outlined each players' profile and their Technical, Tactical, Physical, Social, and Psychological attributes. The IDP itself provided an insight into the key areas coaches identified for the player's development, and what they themselves, alongside other staff, were looking to address.

H was identified by coaches as possessing high levels of potential, with technical, tactical and physical elements all providing the solid foundations for performance and growth. However, issues with social and psychological elements, in particular a lack of confidence, uncertainty around his player/personal identity, and issues with his overall demeanour were areas being targeted for work. As a result, increased mistakes, lack of composure under pressure, and often unhappiness with playing were being demonstrated on and off the pitch. Going into the role and consultancy with H and other players, I looked at assessing and understanding the most effective method to build rapport and relationships within the organisation structure and culture, which would help me to appropriately and effectively fit into the support network and help future decision-making (Gould et al., 1991). From this platform, my task was to address the key support areas and strengths for each player, including H, which would enable me to then focus on enhancing these during the build up to competition (Gordon, 2012).

The Consultancy Process

Intake and Needs Analysis

Disability football has, in recent years, undergone a range of developments from grassroots to elite level (Macbeth & Magee, 2006). As a result, the support for individuals within the sport has increased, with National Governing Bodies, like the Football Association (FA) obliged to actively engage with disabled groups and include equity and equality issues (UK Sport, 2003). As a result, practitioners like myself were able to access increased opportunities to work within disability sport. However, being the first sport psychologist for the England Partially Sighted Squad posed apprehension for me regarding 'buy-in' from players and staff (Nesti, 2010; p.56) and was something that would need to be addressed from the outset. Prior to the first squad training camp I was provided with an IDP outlining player profiles, which informed my understanding heading into initial encounters. The camp introduced new staff to the players and allowed me to give a brief insight into my work and experiences, and I took the opportunity to highlight the work currently done across the England squads, and how I looked to improve performance and wellbeing on and off the pitch. Following the team meeting, I was able to observe the players in practice, which would prompt further discussion over the weekend. I was careful at points to not 'force' my presence or psychology upon anyone, and instead too time to familiarise myself within the organisational set-up (Brown et al., 2005; Weinberg & Williams, 2010).

H approached me to initiate general conversation around our experiences and interests, and provided the opportunity to begin developing rapport. Having observed *H* in social interactions on and off the pitch, he appeared to be inquisitive, and open to engaging in support through asking questions for clarification. Observation pre-meeting had allowed me to gain an insight into *H*'s behaviour in practice, both in- and out-of-game situations (Gardner & Moore,

2005). Our discussions across the weekend, although often brief, had outlined that *H* wanted to take all of the coaches' information on-board immediately (outlined in the IDP'S) and begin working on improving the areas he needed to develop. He perceived that through my role to support social and psychological areas, he would be able to develop and show improvement, which would allow him to go to the World Cup in December. As a start point for support, it became apparent that although H was open and willing to engage in support (a good sign!), there was role ambiguity around what he brought to the team (Vealey, 2009), and he subsequently sought assurance through being 'the player' the coach wanted and modelled his behaviour on this. This provided a potential lack of authenticity and congruence to what led him to this point and selection for England, even though he had a clear outcome goal of going to the World Cup. As we progressed through the following camp (international friendlies against Australia at St. Georges Park), several areas of support opened up based on observations, and mine and *H'*s conversations. These involved pre-match anxiety linking into a lack of confidence in-game(s), an influence (negative) of external factors including team-mates, and inconsistent behaviour displayed by *H* on and off the pitch.

H outlined concerns at not being the player they (coaches) were looking to take to the World Cup, and highlighted that large amounts of this was attributed to him not being 'confident' enough about who he was on the pitch and also who he was off it. This in itself instigated debilitative thoughts around an inability to meet the challenges of the task to be performed (Woodman & Hardy, 2003), with team-mates further compounding this and 'getting on his back' for choosing the wrong pass, making mistakes, and not picking up his man. This likely explained the 'modelling' behaviour *H* had adopted in an attempt to show himself in a 'better light' and distance himself from the unconfident, uncertain individual that was hampering his chances of success. At this point, we discussed the player H wanted to be and what this player currently looked like. Given the end-goal approach *H* had adopted, we began

to breakdown the build-up in a process-focused manner, whereby he would be able to think about what he should be doing in the present (where adjustments can be made), as opposed to focusing on the past or future (where dwelling can hamper present performance) (Watson, Connole, & Kadushin, 2011). As the meeting concluded, we agreed on developing areas around H's self-confidence and how this would accentuate both on and off the pitch in order to provide holistic support and congruence between the two.

During my work across the squad, it became apparent that there were several ongoing conflicts across the squad between players around on- and off-the-field issues. This was leading to team-mate and intragroup conflict at and away from camps, whereby a combination of both performance conflict (issues relating to execution of a particular task – in-game performance) and relational conflict (emotional or interpersonal issues) were impairing relationships and impacting performance on the pitch (Rahim, 2002; LaVoi, 2007).

With *H*, discussion centred on his and another player's (herein referred to as *Joe*) relationship. With *Joe* the vice-captain and a highly assertive individual within the squad, he demanded maximum effort and performance when stepping onto the pitch, with mistakes and indolence dealt with through belligerent outbursts. Although Joe's aggressive propensity was common across the squad, it was *H* who felt bore the brunt of the outbursts, and subsequently reported decreases in performance and enjoyment when playing alongside *Joe*. These emotions were symbolic within conflict literature, with "one party perceiving that its interests are being negatively affected by another party" (Wall & Callister, 1995; p.517). Fundamentally, it was *H's* needs of being confident, playing well and enjoying playing, which were being either deprived or frustrated by the other party (*Joe*) (Pruitt, 2006). Henceforth, alongside eventual work conducted with *Joe* around self-control and ego depletion; for *H*, it was crucial to formulate a structure and appropriate intervention for dealing with external influence on his own performance and wellbeing. This was a core part of *H's* incongruent behaviour (modelling

behaviour on others' perceptions), lack of confidence, leading to decreased performance and wellbeing. Ultimately, *H* was displaying high-levels of socially prescribed perfectionism (perceive that significant others impose perfectionistic expectations on oneself) (Wang, Fu, & Rice, 2012), whereby he prioritised other's high expectations and what he thought they wanted from him, over his own self-oriented perfectionism (imposed by oneself) and what he even thought of himself, let alone could do to improve it. This brought in discussion of self-talk and cognitive restructuring, whereby H's self-depreciating thoughts and irrational thinking could be modified and restructured to into a more functional, rational nature (Wilson, 1984).

Over our following discussions, *H*'s relationship with Joe deteriorated to the point where *H* contemplated leaving both club and country squads. *H* felt he was picturing himself in game situations prior to kick-off, where he visualised himself making a mistake and *Joe* berating him for this. This negatively impacted his confidence going into the game, as he was essentially "waiting to make a mistake, and Joe to have a go". This displayed an unsuccessful image of performance, which provided H with vicarious information which debilitated his self-efficacy, and subsequently self-confidence (Callow & Hardy, 2001). This theme of significant others influencing his thought-processes and confidence in his ability, became commonplace in our conversations. *H* could not understand why it was him who was seemingly 'singled out' amongst other players, and that if he was able to focus exclusively on his own approach to the game and work on what he could do, that he would be able to demonstrate the level of performance required. Furthermore, ongoing contact with other players over this period, identified outbursts and direct criticism of one another as a consistent issue that had affected relationships and performance. These players maintained that through experience and accepting accountability for their performance (Ward, Smith, & Sharpe, 1997), they were able to accept the influence of external factors, but ultimately remain responsible for their thoughts, decisions, and performance. Initial use of confidence profiling was implemented here (*Figure*

1.), to outline *H*'s sources, types and levels of sport confidence (Hays et al., 2010). These addressed experiences within the squad (positive and negative) and identified three conflicting areas: influence of coaches/team-mates; making mistakes; and performance behaviours.

Case Formulation

It was likely that an intervention akin to Murphy and Murphy's (1992) multi-contextual cognitive-behavioural model would be used to support *H*'s confidence, with the model evaluating and assessing the athlete's functioning in multiple contexts and viewing them as a person, not just a performer. This would directly relate to the development of *H*'s identity and how he modelled his 'own behaviour', with congruence of personal effort and organismic needs a vital predictor of well-being and personal growth (Brunstein et al., 1998; Sheldon & Kasser, 1995). Adopting a process-based approach to support would focus on present goals and achievement, as oppose to *H* placing high-levels of emphasis and self-worth on gaining his place in the World Cup squad.

As my role was to support the whole squad, I begun to ascertain how conflicting players' experiences were having an influence on how I developed my case formulation with *H*. Recalling other player's experiences and having them guide parts of my conversations with *H*, meant that I was blurring the lines of whose needs I was directly serving (Andersen, Van Raalte, & Brewer, 2001). As *H* was confusing others' goals and expectations with his own goals (Baumann & Kuhl, 2003; Kuhl & Kazen, 1994), I needed to remain wary of how my support with other players was currently affecting the validity of my work. My reflection at this point addressed how I was occasionally distracted by my own thoughts and cognitive activity during sessions, and forgetting about the support I was offering (Tod, Hutter, & Eubank, 2017). It was only through self-reflection following my early work, and being self-aware of influencing factors (Cropley et al., 2010), that I was able to acknowledge and

subsequently progress through the interference of other support networks. Subsequently, we would: a) construct a coherent and congruent holistic identity to inform on and off the pitch behaviour; and b) develop specific performance behaviours that addressed *H*'s self-confidence, through confidence profiling results and underpinned by Murphy and Murphy's (1992) eight step cognitive-behavioural model. It was anticipated that by establishing comprehensive understanding of *H*'s 'self' and using this as a vehicle for identity reinforcement (Shipway & Holloway, 2010), that an informed, self-aware individual could arise, who was increasingly confident with on and off the pitch personas. Ultimately, the model, serves an educational resource providing a process-focused approach for H to scaffold his understanding around his identity and internal/external influences on this. The process of confronting an issue, becoming familiar with it, evaluating and assessing it, prospective goals arising before/during the process, intervention, and evaluation, enable H to have his needs addressed in the aforementioned areas.

Planning of Intervention

Murphy and Murphy's (1992) model followed: 1) consultation orientation, 2) sport familiarisation, 3) evaluation and assessment, 4) goal identification, 5) group intervention, 6) individual intervention, 7) outcome evaluation, and 8) reassessment of goals (if necessary). My sessions thus far had satisfied the first three steps of the model, with information obtained around H's lack of self-confidence, reasons underpinning his performance/wellbeing issues, and what the potential intervention would consist of. In accordance with the performance profiling and Murphy and Murphy's (1992) model, H's primary goal was to improve his self-confidence and be more confident in who he was as a player and as a person. He also stressed that being able to focus less on the perceptions of others, and more on what he needed to do was crucial. This summary gleaned from conversations and Figure 1a, 1b (see Appendix) allowed us to begin identifying reasons why confidence was low, and help problem solve to increase confidence and identify possible intervention strategies (Hays et al., 2010). Therefore,

the intervention would involve working through Murphy and Murphy's (1992) model, so that *H*, moving forward, would have the ability to appraise areas associated with low self-confidence, and implement performance behaviours. We would expand upon these in the following sessions, with work away from camps underpinning the behaviour exhibited at them, and cognitive-behavioural techniques around self-talk and cognitive restructuring incorporated. This would feed into the consistent holistic identity displayed to model behaviour based on his own cognitions and not others.

Delivery of Intervention

As alluded to, the confidence profiling process enabled *H* to recognise that significant others, mistakes, and performance behaviours were damaging his levels of self-confidence. This was compounded when around other squad members, with increased pressure being created in the competitive environment through one another's' behaviour (Hays et al., 2010). Consequently, we begun with the impact of others on his confidence and how this potentially was a precursor for an inconsistent identity. We discussed these experiences with team-mates and coaches further, whereby increased pressure to be at the standard necessary to compete in the World Championships, had intensified emotions and behaviours at camps. As a result, our conversations begun to uncover that *H* was often preoccupied at camps with other people's (team-mates and coaches) perceptions of him and spent significant amounts of time trying to please others, rather than focusing on himself and his own performance (Hays et al., 2010). This brought in discussions around modelling of others' behaviours *H* adopted, whereby he had been adversely affected by others negative comments (*Figure 1a, 1b, see Appendix*), and although showing awareness of the role confidence played in these areas and experiences, there was a lack of knowledge how to reframe or enhance his confidence.

On the basis of the information gained, cognitive restructuring was introduced in the *group intervention* phase of Murphy & Murphy's (1992) model. This enabled *H* to remain aware of others' thoughts and behaviours, but predominantly be able to focus on his own thoughts and cognitions and how these influenced behaviour and performance. Subsequently, we produced a process of being able to reframe potential debilitating thoughts from others and *H* himself into a positive more rational output (See appendix Figure 2.). As the figure demonstrates, (a) the event or experience *H* encounters is identified; (b) dysfunctional thoughts are introduced; (c) there is a consequence of these thoughts, resulting in a behaviour or feeling towards an experience. With *H*, the event was signified by: mistakes, team-mates, or a negative perception/appraisal of a situation and how he had the (in)ability to cope. This prompted self-defeating negative thoughts and feelings, with these often associated with irrational thoughts and distorted thinking (Zinsser et al., 2006). As *H* was unaware of this debilitative process he engaged in when appraising, executing, and reflecting on situations, our first step in the intervention was revisiting our previous conversations to go through the process highlighted in Figure 2.

As we explored these experiences through the model, it became apparent that *H* engaged in several irrational thoughts prior to and during performance, which Gauron (1984) identified as a precursor to lower levels of performance.

- Perfection is essential ('*I must not make a mistake, I'll be letting my team-mates down*'), catastrophizing (*H* expected the worst to happen, and before matches was preoccupied with what-if scenarios – *'what if I make a mistake?' 'what if I don't play well?*')
- Personalisation (*H* felt he was the cause and focus of actions and behaviour around him, and if team-mates were not playing well or unhappy then it was due to him),
- Polarised thinking (*H* viewed situations as absolute, with them either successful or unsuccessful).

- One-trial generalisations (if *H* had one bad performance, it signified that he was not up to standard and was a 'bad player').

Our discussions were critical in exploring and confronting experiences, with *H* beginning to understand that allowing himself to consistently appraise a situation as negative, continually seeking these negatives, focusing on problems rather than solutions, and his self-worth often contingent on performance or other's perceptions of him, had progressively lessened his self-confidence, even if performances were good. However, what these discussions had done, was facilitate self-discovery from *H* away from camp, and by reflecting on experiences himself (Van Deurzen, 2012) autonomy had begun to develop in how he appraised subsequent situations (Nesti, 2004; p.9).

Following these conversations, and by refuting the strong underlying thought-processes (Zinsser et al., 2006), we begun to propose a functional facilitative manner of approaching events. By identifying and confronting *H*'s self-depreciating thoughts alongside Socratic questioning, we reframed past experiences so *H* could directly compare past and potential future ways of appraising potentially threatening experiences to his self-confidence. For example, when evaluating the role of team-mates on performance, H begun to accept that ultimately he was responsible for his thoughts and behaviour, and that performance was not contingent on others' perceptions and beliefs. Through increasing *H*'s accountability, we began to proceed through a more functional thought process from the initial incident, with these seen as 'opportunities' as opposed to 'consequences'. Alongside this, the inclusion of controllables and uncontrollables to performance were considered, with *H* having elements of control over his thoughts, behaviours and performance, we actively focused on these and felt it crucial to reduce the impact others had on his performance. By engaging in a systematic process, it allowed H to replace negative thoughts and focus with others with positive ('dwell on the positive'), and that through cognitive restructuring, H recognised that he didn't need to change

who he was and model others' behaviour and expectations of him, but rather change the way he viewed who he was and how he engaged in this process.

Having increased focus on his own cognitions, we now begun implementing positive self-talk to reaffirm a more positive outlook to confidence, and adopt performance behaviours alongside this. Feelings of confidence and personal control can be enhanced through the construction of personal affirmation, and reflecting positive thoughts on oneself (Zinsser et al., 2006). As confidence profiling revealed 'making mistakes' and 'performance behaviours' as the other two key areas to a lack of self-confidence, we agreed that we would establish a process of approaching games in a specific mind-set (both psychologically and physically). When in difficult or critical situations, H would be able to rely upon a set of behaviours and thoughts where he had identified and reflected upon these to produce a confident, positive self-image of himself (Hays et al., 2010). Subsequently, as recommended by Hays et al. (2010), *H* was asked to construct a list of all his perceived strengths, skills, and positive qualities in several key areas *(see Appendix Figure 3.)*: social relationships, self-image, self in/out of sport, and feelings. This allowed *H* to both identify the positive elements of himself and his strengths, and also construct the foundations of a holistic identity through considering himself in multiple contexts.

Once *H* identified his positive traits, we begun discussing what enabled him to feel that was a 'strength' of his as oppose to a 'weakness'. What arose, was the significance of 'off the field' experiences and situations on who he was 'on the pitch' and his performance. When *H* experienced difficulty and issues in day-to-day life, these fed into a lack of self-confidence for him to perform when playing. For example, if he was having issues with his girlfriend and/or family, it signified to him that he was not a 'good boyfriend/brother/son' as he was to blame for the 'issue'. *H* then felt that if he was not a good person off the pitch, how could he possibly be a good one on it? When combined with the pressure of performing and others criticising him, this led him to withdraw and demonstrate the role ambiguity identified and dissatisfaction

(Vealey, 2009). However, as previously highlighted, this was not congruent nor sustainable moving forward, but only increased *H*'s understanding and self-awareness of how critical his on and off the pitch experiences were on one another. Following this, *H* highlighted that feelings of confidence and efficacy stemmed from reflecting on what he had done successfully both now and previously (I have a degree, I play for England, my friends and family rely on me), and how for both him and others, understanding this was powerful. As we emphasised more on what he brought to himself and others, rather than what he didn't bring, H became aware of what he actively brought to the team. This included being the fittest player in the squad, being strong on the ball and a good passer, being a role model to other members, appreciating the value of others, and recognising how/where he can grow. As he begun to identify that his own perceptions were more important than those of others (Hays et al., 2010) and shifted his attentional focus, we set about reinforcing these on both a game-to-game and daily basis.

Alongside confidence profiling, self-talk and performance behaviours were judged as the most direct means of enhancing *H*'s self-confidence and subsequent identity. Given *H* now understood his strengths, we emphasised how congruent behaviours would reaffirm his self-confidence to both him and others. Subsequently, when approaching a game, H would aim to promote strengths of: *solid physical conditioning* (strength, fitness, stamina), *being a role model,* and *trust in ability (passing, intelligence, hardworking).* These strengths would be demonstrated through: 'speaking slower' to demonstrate a relaxed thought-out response, 'standing tall' with shoulders back and good posture to project pride and confidence in what *H* was doing, and 'visualising' himself appearing confidently, with these likely to obtain greater feelings of confidence (Williams & Cumming, 2012). What these allowed for, was the notion that if H didn't 'feel confident, he could act confident' in order to project this confidence onto others and likely feel more confident as a result. With performance behaviours being

established, we switched focus to self-talk and developing positive action-oriented self-statements to affirm his capabilities (Rushall, 1979). As H was promoting 3 key strengths, self-talk was structured inclusive of these to reinforce the message, and was used in the present ("I am") and consisted of pre-, during, and post- game affirmations. Before a game, H would reaffirm: "*I am an England player, I am good enough to be on this pitch*", "*This is an opportunity to show how good I am*". During the game, evocative self-talk during critical moments was crucial: "*I made a mistake, but I have the ability to change this*", "*I feel powerful in this strip, I will be difficult to beat*". Post-game, self-talk would look to counter the irrational thoughts that often hampered *H*'s development: "*I left everything on the pitch today*", "*I set up 2 goals, and was solid in defence*".

What self-talk and performance behaviours in *H*'s case allowed, was not only a process and routine to engage with to foster self-confidence, but crucially the removal of irrational, dysfunctional thoughts to being more functional and rational in nature (Wilson, 1984). Gone was the use of unrealistic and debilitative language around 'must', 'have to', 'problem', and 'threat', and instead the promotion of 'want', 'I am', 'opportunity', and 'challenge'. This prompted empowerment from *H* to accept responsibility, give the best account of himself, and be accountable for HIS actions and not attribute blame to others. Ultimately, this detached his self-worth being contingent on others and a 'must' to perform well or act confidently. What this allowed throughout our following discussions, was the alignment of this behaviour with a consistent holistic identity. With the ability to cope with stress and negative emotionality dependent on the differentiation of the self (Baumann, Kaschel, & Kuhl, 2005), a consistent approach to a congruent, self-aware player allowed for a self-confident, authentic individual to arise both on and off the pitch.

Monitoring of Intervention

Developments within disability research in becoming more critical and 'emancipatory' (Barnes & Mercer, 1997, p.4), has led to those in disabled sport receiving a 'barrier removal' and increase in empowerment (Barnes, 2003). With this in mind, the current consultancy sought to incorporate this element of empowerment throughout, even if the specific 'disabled' needs of the individual were irrelevant (Macbeth, 2009).

Following intervention delivery, over the following sessions and camps it became evident that *H* was actively engaging in the support areas, with his changed cognitions resulting in a consequential change in his behaviour. Although external influences on self-confidence remained (team-mates, coaches), *H* focused more on his personal control than comparing himself unfavourably to in-group members (Major, Sciacchitano, & Crocker, 1993). For example, he had started to foster his own confidence by setting out our agreed self-affirmation statements around his house and in his phone, so that he would see them on a regular basis (Zinsser et al., 2006). This reinforced emphasis allowed him to understand his role with more clarity; to be a role model, to trust his ability, and maintain solid physical conditioning. He began assisting younger players in their integration within the team, being more resilient with setbacks and mistakes, and demonstrated a more assured and composed player before and during games through the more functional performance behaviours and strategies he engaged. As the World Championships approached, the intensity and scrutiny of performances increased, yet *H* continued to grow and display the talent the coaches' saw in him. Following conversations with team-mates (*Matt and Joe*), they were consistent in their praise for *H*:

> Matt: "He's just grown in himself; I now see a more confident and controlled young man, rather than the confused 'teenager' I was often seeing on and off the pitch."

> Joe: “I know I’ve got on his back in the past, but that’s just because I know he had the ability, but just wasn’t using it. I’m now starting to trust him more and know that if I play him the ball under pressure, he is more likely to deal with it, and if not he understands what has happened.”

In addition to the above, *H* highlighted that self-talk and performance behaviours had become an integral part of his approach to games. These allowed him to focus attention on task relevant cues (Milne & Morrison, 2015), including his strengths, positive affirmations, and his goals for the game, as opposed to the irrelevant information around other player’s thoughts, and his weaknesses, which were creating a debilitative environment for performance (Wine, 1971). As *H* had a proactive role in all phases of the support, it facilitated his own understanding and commitment to intervention adherence (Hays et al., 2010). This allowed him to appraise areas associated with low self-confidence with more ease, and cognitively restructure how he viewed and eventually confronted them, resulting in a more rational process.

Prior to, and following games, we began recording the core elements of H’s performance, to emphasise a strengths-based approach as opposed to his irrational reflection on the negative areas. This then opened up lines of enquiry around how performance could potentially be improved moving forward (*see Appendix Figure 4.*). Furthermore, H highlighted that if uncertain about how to develop certain areas, he would seek support from myself or others, as his communication had developed and became increasingly effective with coaches, team-mates, and family.

In conclusion, the current consultancy structured support toward self-confidence and the development of a coherent holistic identity. A crucial part of the support was allowing *H* an integrated feel of his own support, where integrated individuals’ feel that what they are striving to do in their daily lives (identity) arises from their own choices, more than from feelings of

being controlled by others (Sheldon & Kasser, 1995). Ultimately, *H* benefitted from an intervention that he was heavily involved with, which allowed for a stronger adherence and 'buy in' to the pre-agreed support areas (Nesti, 2010, p.56). The consultancy has allowed *H* to focus more on his own thoughts and cognitions and in taking accountability for his own cognitions and performance, it formed part of a self-prescribed identity and knowing, understanding, and accepting the 'self' in his personal experiences (Petitpas, Giges, & Danish, 1999). Since completion of the write-up, *H* was picked for the World Championships, and played an integral part in helping us achieve a silver medal and narrowly missing out on gold.

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Appendix

Sources of a Lack of Confidence

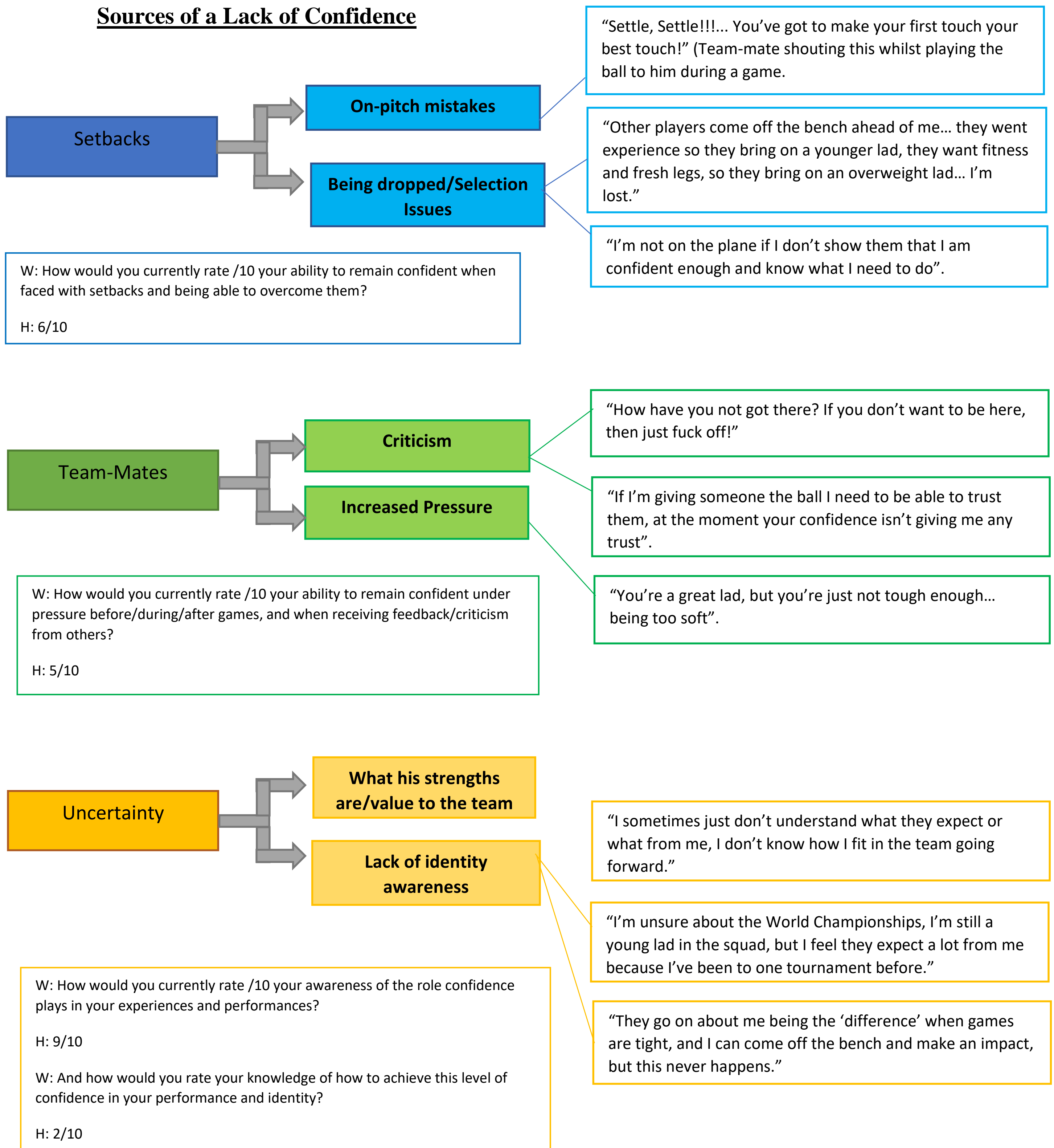


Figure 1a. Visual representation of the key sources, type and level of Self-confidence issues

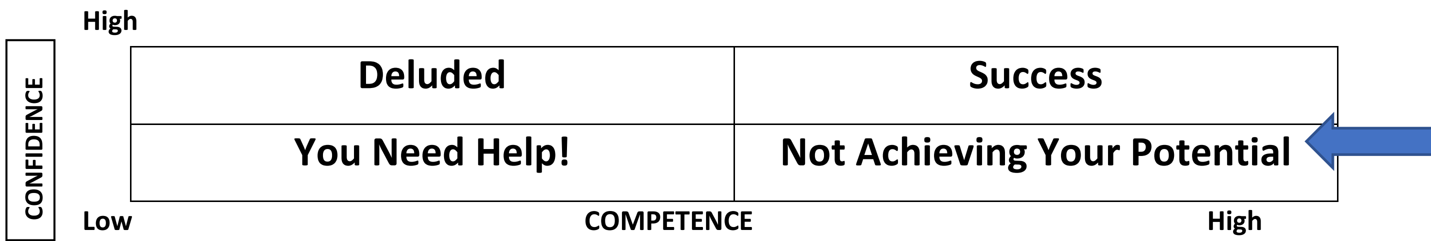


Figure 1b. Competence and Confidence Continuum.

H's current state and profile provided the understanding that he currently resided in the area outlined in the table. H had the ability and potential to perform to the level required, as demonstrated by his inclusion in the squad and comments from team-mates around his key technical and tactical strengths. However, a subsequent lack of confidence in psychological and social areas, resulted in H currently not achieving his potential. Although H demonstrated an awareness of the role confidence played in his experiences (see Figure 1a.), he was uncertain through what means/methods to begin applying this. This is where support was provided.

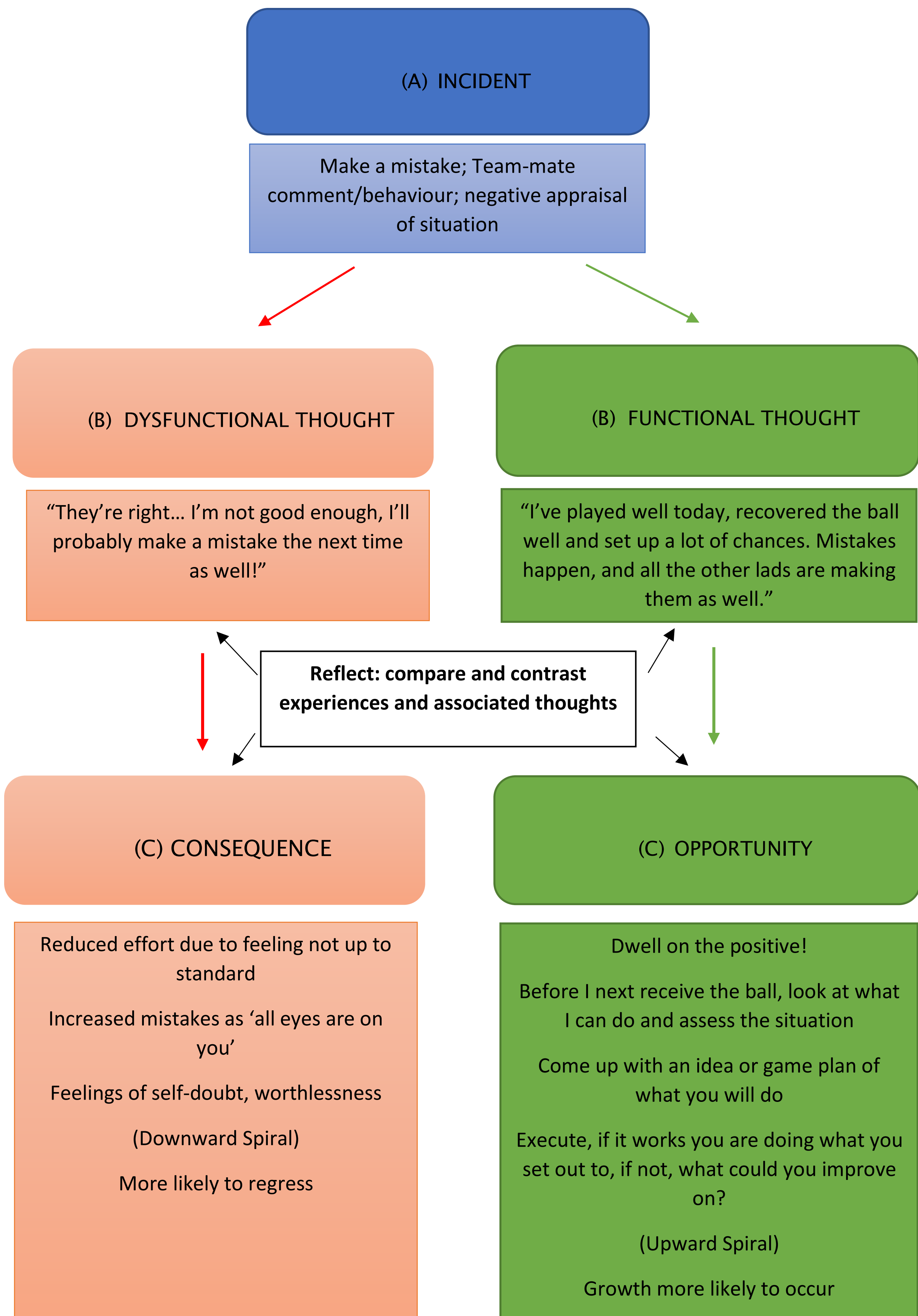
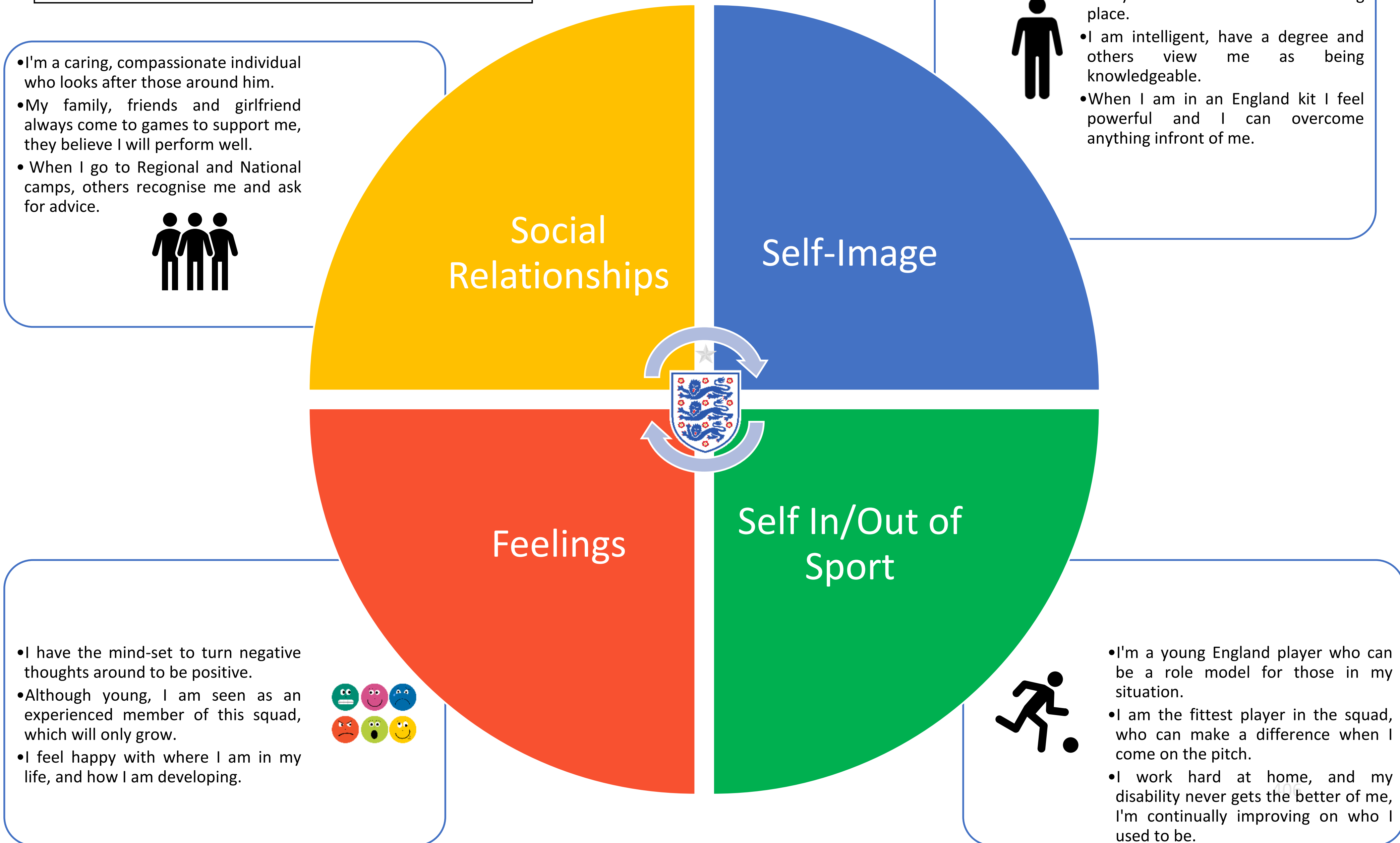


Figure 2. Cognitive restructuring of thought patterns

Figure 3. Strengths-Based Approach Profile



LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

WILLIAM CROSSEN

DSPORTEXPSY - CANDIDATE NUMBER: 648122

CONSULTANCY CONTRACT

CONTRACT CONSULTANT AGREEMENT

This contract agreement dated __/__/__ is made By and Between William Crossen, hereafter known as "**the Sport and Exercise Psychologist in Training",** and _____________________, hereafter referred to as "**the Client".**

Nature of the Contract

1. Consultation Services. The *Client* hereby employs the *Sport and Exercise Psychologist in Training* to perform the following services in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth in this agreement. The *Sport and Exercise Psychologist* will consult with the *Client* concerning matters relating to: (a) *the exploration of stress on performance and wellbeing*; and (b) the *construction of appropriate intervention methods to appraise future stress*. Although these are the pre-agreed support areas that have arisen from the Intake and Needs Analysis, additional related areas of support may be provided on an ad-hoc basis.

Recommended Programme of Delivery:

2. Terms of Agreement. This agreement will begin *3rd August 2019* and will end *3rd December 2019*. The party may terminate the agreement with 7 days' notice to the other party in writing, or via verbal agreement. The programme of delivery will consist of approximately *10* sessions that incorporate: Case Formulation, Planning, Delivery, and Monitoring of the Intervention, which will fulfil its obligations under this contract. The Client will then be provided with a Debrief and Feedback Report to highlight the work discussed, and how support will look once the contract has terminated. The length of sessions may vary from *30 minutes* to *2 hours,* on a daily or weekly basis, either face to face, via skype or phone. Each session, progress will be discussed, and areas of development identified. The *Sport and Exercise Psychologist in Training* may recommend that work outside of these meetings is to be completed by the client and therefore, it is the client's responsibility to complete this.

Payment of Service:

3. Payment. Due to the nature of the consultancy, the *Sport and Exercise Psychologist in Training* will deliver the consultancy *free of charge*.

Standards of Conduct:

4. Ethical Information. The *Sport and Exercise Psychologist* will provide support to the *Client* in accordance with the British Psychological Society code of conduct and its ethical principles.

5. Confidential Information. All information discussed between the *Sport and Exercise Psychologist in Training* and *Client* will be confidential, unless informed consent is given by the *Client* to disclose information to a third party. If the *Sport and Exercise Psychologist in Training* feels that the *Client* may be under threat or harm to themselves or others, then in accordance with the ethical code of conduct this may be communicated to an external party (following an ethical decision-making process) and constitutes an acceptable breach of confidentiality. Approval will be requested from the *Client* prior to any potential publications, with anonymity upheld.

Each session will be documented and be kept in a confidential and secure environment to protect the anonymity of the client and any personal data that is provided or created. This data will be destroyed within 1 month of the contract terminating.

Both parties agree to be bound by the Code of Ethics and Conduct and the Professional Practice Guidelines published by the British Psychological Society.

The Sport and Exercise Psychologist in Training has obtained the following:

Professional Indemnity Insurance Reference Number: P18N1517

Date: 11th May 2019

Sport and Exercise Psychologist in Training signature :

Date :

Client signature:

Date:

Please note Dr Martin Eubank who is a HCPC Registered Sport and Exercise Psychologist and BPS Chartered Psychologist is supervising the *Sport and Exercise Psychologist in Training*, and can be contacted on email M.R.Eubank@ljmu.ac.uk if you have any concerns or would like to make a complaint or report any misconduct.

*(N.B. Both clients referred to below received a separate consultancy contract)

Client Feedback Report

Client: Tom	Client: Mike
Aim: To develop coping strategies to help you deal with of stress and associated irrational thoughts/beliefs of injury.	Aim: To develop athletic and personal identity to empower you to discover the purpose and personal meaning of running.
(a) Explore sources of stress and demands. We collaborated to explore and understand the underlying your sources of stress. These arose from you 'overextending' yourself in areas relative to your job, businesses, degree, charity work, and training. Furthermore, your fitness and injuries presented an array of difficulties to consider. Although you outlined a need for stress to be present to work optimally, this strain had gradually become debilitative to progress and wellbeing. Subsequently, we appraised stress through an agreed empirical model, outlining what would/would not work effectively for your performance and wellbeing. As we progressed, we understood that a combination of situational and personal factors was underlying your thought	(a) Explore identity experiences potential issues. Based on intake and needs analysis, it was important that our work enabled you to self-discover the key elements of your athletic identity that would form the key area of my support. Through our discussions, this would help us collaborate to co-construct the 'intervention strategy'. We began our conversations by exploring the chronological sequence of events from when you began running up to the current day. As this was nearly 20 years' worth of experiences, we took time to explore key areas and meaningful experiences. This helped to build and inform your sense of 'self' that could then become a focus on your development moving forward.

processes. As such, through dialogue, we were able to alter irrational, unhelpful thoughts and behaviour, into a more structured, rational process.	
(b) Understand the role of these on performance and wellbeing. As we developed understanding, we identified that your stress appraisal was often negative. As a result, you would be 'fearful' of encountering too much stress. This brought you to understand how an imbalance between the demands you face and the coping resources you possess can overwhelm you, but an 'underload' can result in low morale and productivity. Stress overload meant that you dwell on previous experiences and their impact, instead of focusing on current and future outcomes. Therefore, we established an optimal and acceptable stress load for you to operate under, and providing effective coping mechanisms to deal with stress overload when it occurs. We stimulated this through a dichotomy of control during sessions, whereby, instead of avoiding/alleviating the	(b) Develop this identity in current and future experiences. We formed a 'past', 'present', and 'future' self, which provided a clear-cut comparison of how you had transitioned from early life experiences, through to 'falling in and out of love with running', and up to the present day and 'onward future' moving forward. Through the development of absolute clarity around these 'selves, we were able to establish understanding that there were high levels of athletic identity when competing, with self-worth highly contingent on your performance. This identity was further fuelled from external pressure (family, friends etc.), which led to identity 'clashes', which underpinned your experience of 'falling in and out of love' with running.

elements of stress, we embraced and accepted its presence, and planned for it.	
(c) Appraise stress facilitatively and thrive on pressure. We engaged discussion about your appraisal of stressors, and through a staged-process of questioning and critical thinking, and by breaking down long-term goals into a more process-driven approach, we arrived at problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies to incorporate into your coping resource to increase your self-confidence and autonomy in dealing with stress differently. As a result, you were able to appraise fitness and potential injury concerns more facilitatively,	(c) Understand how this identity relates to wider-life meaning. By adopting exclusive identities (i.e. athletic), clashes with other identities had been encountered. Subsequently, we merged your athletic identity into a holistic identity, whereby you were able to experience the euphoric feeling of competing and winning, alongside the 'escape' it provided in day-to-day life. By combining past, present, and future 'self', it allowed you to understand not only the key issues and worries with each stage, but also what provided fulfilment and enjoyment at each stage.
(d) What aspects went well, and what could potentially be improved? There was a genuine openness and willingness to explore experiences, and look inwardly at your underlying thoughts and behaviours. The staged-process of support: to explore, understand, and then develop strategies to combat/facilitate stress, allowed for a gradual understanding of what the stress	(d) What aspects went well, and what could potentially be improved? The self-discovery element of the support approach was crucial, which enabled you to provide examples when out running that showed you where moving toward a more holistic identity. This self-discovery was only possible by both parties establishing clear support areas, and by taking the time to

factors were and how they made an impact. You engaged well with 'homework' outside of sessions (follow-up activity and reading), to compliment the work that was being completed in-session. Furthermore, the honesty and clarity you displayed when you were not finding our work to be effective, and the ongoing feedback from both parties throughout the process was fundamental to its success. Moving forward there are other 'therapies' that could be engaged to uncover and dispute some of the underlying beliefs you hold, and the consequences of any irrational thoughts.	build rapport and understand one another. This helped me to steer our conversations towards these strength-based thoughts and skills, and how promoting these would likely prompt a more congruent and beneficial identity for you.

Client Feedback

Tom:

As a keen sportsman, I have always been aware of the mental side of sport, but never invested myself in it greatly. Unfortunately, it took the various setbacks with my knee injuries to consider working with a sports psych., which obviously led me to Will. Having been aware of Will's services through John my physio, I felt it would be worthwhile and 'nothing to lose' by engaging in his support. What I begun to realise was the sheer impact of how my thoughts influenced my behaviour, and how the constant pressure I was putting myself under, was resulting in a lack of ability to be rational in how I approached situations. Through Wills' work

I now understand that I need a level of stress to be engaged and motivated, but that by constantly putting myself under 'too much' stress, that I am not looking after myself and worsening my habits. We have come up with an effective way of assessing stress, exploring potential methods and avenues, and then how I can put them into practice to help deal with stress and pressure. This has begun to be almost fluid and unconscious, where going into the challenge I now understand how I can thrive under pressure and not let it get the better of me.

Mike:

My relationship with Will has continued to develop throughout our work together. The time taken at the start of our work to understand my experience, and what has led me up to this point, has increased my awareness around who I am in and away from running. This allowed me to develop a clearer understanding of the reasons behind why I was falling in/out of love with running, and the impact this had on me previously, now in the build-up, and what may come up in the marathons. Prior to our work, I have been very interested in the role nutrition, and sports science can have to enhance my performance, but never really considered the impact psychology could have on both my performance and running better, but also wellbeing and running with ultimately more freedom. Going into the ultramarathon, I understand that the competitive parts of my identity need to be taken with the meaning running gives to me in my life, to hopefully allow me to appreciate and complete the experience in a more positive light.

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

WILLIAM CROSSEN

DSPORTEXPSY - CANDIDATE NUMBER: 648122

TEACHING AND TRAINING CASE STUDY

Teaching and Training Case Study

The Client Group

The client group comprised of four A-Level and AS-Level Physical Education student classes. Each of the groups consisted of mixed genders, ranging from a minimum of 15 students to a maximum of 24, with the experience of sport psychology education ranging from 6-months (AS-Level) to 2-years (A-Level). This education consisted of classroom-based lessons, whereby students were assessed in two examinations (and mocks) across the year in relation to their knowledge and understanding of subject content and learning outcomes. As per The Department for Education (DFE) standards, the college was responsible for equipping students with a depth and breadth of knowledge, and understanding and skills relating to scientific, socio-cultural, and practical aspects of physical education (GOV.UK, 2015). In terms of sport psychology, students were required to "*develop knowledge and understanding of the role of sport psychology in optimising performance in sport*". Therefore, the programme was structured to progressively develop the students' knowledge and understanding of the material throughout their course of study.

Assessment of Client Group Needs.

Specifications were to cover the following psychological factors in relation to performance: factors (personality, attitudes, arousal, anxiety, aggression, motivation and social facilitation) that can influence an individual in sport, dynamics of a team and how they influence the individual and team, goal-setting, attribution-theory, self-efficacy, leadership, confidence, and stress-management. This provided a start-point around the content of support I would offer; however, I still needed to better understand and appraise each client groups' needs and the most effective methods of delivering this support in relation to assessment (Gardner & Moore, 2006). Furthermore, I wanted to ensure that these subject areas did not stand alone and instead were

incorporated alongside one another within teaching material. This would allow a smooth transition into each topic from the previous, and allow students to flow from one into another.

Following October half-term, discussion begun with academic staff, including the Head of Physical Education, two Physical Education staff members, and the Assistant Headmaster to conduct a stakeholder analysis (Keegan, 2015). These conversations focused on the educational attainment of all students and key topics within the curriculum, and how they were currently taught in order to further student development. Establishing an effective MDT process at this stage that would remain consistent throughout, gathering perspectives from different stakeholders in order to arrive at the most effective solution to get the most from students during sessions (Reid, Stewart, & Thorne, 2004). From an organisational standpoint, the Assistant Head. wanted to ensure that my support ran in-line with the aspirations of the college, and the obligation to provide students with the best possible learning environment and highest possible standards of support, which were underpinned by an effective working relationship between students and staff (Poczwardowski, Sherman, & Henschen, 1998). With 25 years of teaching experience, the Head of PE identified a growing need for both theoretical and practical based content, with these having clear applied outcomes (Klimova, 2011). This would drive understanding in terms of both standards of assessment, and also promote greater comprehension around how knowledge could be extended beyond the classroom. This sentiment was echoed by teaching staff , who felt it crucial to define what students were able to do with the content they learned, as opposed to simply reporting back in their own words what they had been taught (Kandlbinder, 2014). Ultimately, teaching support sought to develop students' thinking skills, and specifically engage both lower- and higher-order thinking skills (Klimova, 2011) through a versatility of teaching methods.

From these conversations, it became apparent that the current content was heavily 'text-book based', with teachers often confined to the multi-layered ecosystem of an educational

institution (Biggs, 1993). This was seemingly due to the 'rigid' nature of the curriculum, where teachers experienced major institutional barriers beyond their control (Morgan & Hansen, 2008). The "rules at each level, having rules were subsumed by the next higher level" (Kandlbinder, 2014; p.10), wherein the teacher would be governed by the module, which would be governed by the subject area, which would be governed by the college (and so forth). This often-meant staff sacrificed their own individual teaching styles and principles in order to conform strictly to these organisational standards. Observing several sessions and familiarising myself within the set-up (Brown et al., 2005; Weinberg & Williams, 2010), I began to notice ongoing support that was markedly different from one teacher to the next, which in some cases almost conflicted. Yet, following engagement in multiple levels of reflective practice (Knowles, Gilbourne, Cropley, & Dugdill, 2014), I concluded that the teaching delivery was a 'negotiation' between a clear alignment of learning objectives with local and national standards (Forehand, 2005) and these individual teaching styles. Therefore, moving forward I would assess the role and confines of institutional factors, and its effect on the curriculum and pressure to teach a number of areas (Morgan & Hansen, 2008).

Further needs assessment were conducted prior to creating an action plan, as I wanted to ensure maximum clarity around whose needs were being directly served (Andersen, Van Raalte, & Brewer, 2001). Irrespective of individual teaching needs, the curriculum, and DFE standards, the teachers looked to provide students with the optimum classroom experience and opportunity to develop as individuals both in and out of the classroom. This holistic long-term development of wellbeing and performance of the student and individual (Friesen & Orlick, 2010), gave rise to understanding more around stage *two* of the teaching cycle, namely initial assessment, *planning of learning goals*, delivery, assessment of learning, and evaluation (Wilson, 2014). Analysing previous lesson plans and student work on mock assessments and exams, identified Biggs & Collis' (1982) SOLO taxonomy (Structure of Observed Learning

Outcomes) to guide students' learning. The taxonomy relates to supporting the individual through five stages of learning: Prestructural, Unistructural, Multistructural, Relational, and Extended Abstract, where they gradually increase knowledge and competence in a specific area. The model is comprehensive, supported heavily by objective criteria and can be used with different individuals on differing types of assignments (Hattie & Purdie, 1998), with staff educating the students through the framework in accordance with the AQA for best practice in examinations. However, there appeared to be a discrepancy between lessons and assessments, with students struggling to 'evaluate' and 'analyse' criteria that required them to integrate different ideas and concepts into a coherent whole (*relational*), and applying it to other areas (*extended abstract*). As a result, answers were disjointed, and when asked in class, students simply reported back in their own words what they had been taught (Kandlbinder, 2014). This was consistent across groups, demonstrating that although the approach was effective, there remained issues around employing tasks and assignments that were varied and challenging, and tied content together (Klimova, 2011). As such, this challenge represented a key consideration to be addressed during the programme delivery phase.

Further reflective work with the teaching staff around their classroom experiences prompted discussion on the lessons I observed, and: What went well? What did I learn? What can I do better next time? (Rolfe, Freshwater, & Jasper, 2001). This allowed analysis, evaluation, and reflection on sessions in order to understand how to approach these moving forward. What became apparent was that staff struggled to relate to the students through examples and case studies, and maintaining engagement of content. This prompted the suggestion of a 'non-classroom' environment approach, in order to maintain engagement and promote development, as advocated by Nesti (2010). It was clear that moving forward, my support would be practically-focused, theoretically informed, yet aligned with the wider curriculum. These would be delivered through a multiplicity of 'in-class' methods (case-study,

debates, buzz groups), so a mix of teaching strategies were utilised to cover varying levels of learning, and could be both teacher- and student-centred as appropriate (Petty, 2004). The subject specifications detailed at the outset (personality, attitudes, arousal, anxiety, aggression etc.) provided a range of potential topics to cover as part of the curriculum, and what had not yet been done. Furthermore, Biggs & Collis' (1982) SOLO taxonomy identified a framework to facilitate student development and educational attainment in-line with DFE and college standards, and to ensure sessions were inclusive and challenging moving forward.

Training Programme Structure and Content.

I began formulating a Scheme of Work (SoW) (*see Appendix 1.)* that allowed me to deconstruct the learning objectives of the curriculum into smaller, more manageable chunks of learning (Wilson, 2014). This allowed for a programme to be developed through a logical sequence of topics, the key learning outcome criteria for each topic, and how this contributed towards the overall learning programme (*see Appendix 1.*) The use of SOLO taxonomy (Biggs & Collis, 1982) substantiated the objectives for the programme, which allowed students to progressively develop a stronger understanding and independence within subject areas (Bruner & Minds, 1986). As AS- and A-Level students' objectives were similar, with the exception of A-Level students covering *attribution theory, self-efficacy, leadership, confidence,* and *stress management* topics; the taxonomy looked to address each topic area in a similar linear fashion, attempting to direct students through the levels of understanding from 'unistructural' to 'Multistructural', to 'relational', to 'extended abstract' when appropriate.

The programme topic content was provided at the outset by the college, and given the academic year had been running for approximately 2 months, certain topics had already been covered within the curriculum. This left the topics of anxiety, arousal, aggression, attribution, and personality/attitudes (including stress management, self-efficacy/confidence, and

leadership for A-Level) with the learning theories behind these topics cited as a priority. Given the holistic development approach was a key focus of the teachers, with an obligation to develop understanding of sport psychology in an applied setting (consisting of examples, case studies, topical issues), the following learning objectives were established in line with AQA. (*LO1*) Demonstrate knowledge of factors underpinning performance and involvement in sport (identify core theories and key information, and be able to describe these components); (*LO2*) Analyse and Evaluate the factors underpinning performance and involvement in sport (critically evaluate these theories and justify reason behind them); (*LO3*) Apply and demonstrate knowledge of factors underpinning performance in sport and any relevant skills and techniques (apply theory to examples in sport and how they interact and influence performance). This would satisfy the college's commitment to the DFE and developing students' understanding and skills relating to scientific (theory), socio-cultural (holistic/wider life), and practical (applied sport) aspects of physical education (GOV.UK, 2015) (*See Appendix 2.*).

Selected Appropriate Materials.

The programme material contained several elements key to developing the students' understanding of sport psychology, both in assessment and non-assessment domains:

- *AQA AS- and A-Level textbooks:* These allowed for alignment of educational objectives with DFE standards (Forehand, 2005). The textbooks allowed clear and concise summary of each topic area within the curriculum, and a basis for staff to construct lessons around. However, with content requiring a more practical focus and clearer alignment with sport, staff ensured textbook material was flexible and multi-faceted.
- *SoW*: The Scheme of Work (*See. Appendix 1*) allowed the syllabus over the academic year to be broken down into manageable chunks (Wilson, 2014). This allowed staff to

understand what content had been covered (and to what extent), areas that needed revisiting, and how each topic fitted into the Learning Outcomes (*LO*).

- *Teaching Approach*: A diversity in teaching approaches was encouraged from each staff member. Subsequently, staff agreed upon allocated session times for direct teaching, independent work, class discussion, and group work throughout each session (Skinner, 2005). This would ensure each students optimal learning style would be addressed and provided a better classroom experience (Wilson, 2014).
- *Teaching Method*: By adopting various approaches to teaching, staff would be able to deliver content in the most effective format(s). These included buzz groups, debates, case studies, and past exam questions, which would allow learning to take place through the active engagement of the students in their own learning (Kandlbinder, 2014).
- *Assessment*: Assessment is the process whereby evidence of student achievement is obtained and judged (Gray, 2005), with this assessing whether learning has taken place (Reece et al., 2006). Subsequently, students would be assessed throughout sessions and the academic year through the aforementioned methods, which would allow for a continual feedback on progress and help all involved to gauge how the students were progressing (Gravells, 2011).

Programme Delivery and Critical Evaluation.

The programme delivery of material would be incorporated into weekly sessions, whereby I would deliver content on a Monday afternoon for AS-Level students, and a Thursday morning for A-Level students. Following discussions with staff, it was agreed that arousal would be covered first across both groups, with A-level classes incorporating further content around Extended Abstract. As outlined below, following each session I engaged in multiple layers of reflection in order to become increasingly self-aware, reflective and self-critical, so that I conducted more effective work moving forward (Keegan, 2015).

Going into the first sessions, I highlighted to classes that they played an active role in one another's development, with students' learning cooperatively and capitalising on one another's resources and skills (Chiu, 2008). I emphasized that integrated activities such as buzz groups, debates, and case studies were crucial and that we would facilitate and create a range of teaching modes through these to serve different needs and purposes (Skinner, 2005). Subsequently, the students were asked to answer anonymously, 'What is arousal?' and list 3 examples of when arousal may or may not be useful in sport/life. These were collected and redistributed, with students having a few minutes to explore arousals' presence in those situations, before feeding back to the class. The aim of this introduction was to allow both an insight into levels of understanding of the topic area, and also transition into initial theories of arousal and their practical application.

Both sessions then transcended into class discussion, with students provided with independent thinking time, alongside collaboration and evaluating one another's ideas. Here, my role shifted from simply giving information to instead facilitating student's learning through encouraging discussion and communication skills (Mix, 2014; cf. Orejan, 2018). Subsequently, arousal theories (drive, inverted-u, catastrophe, and IZOF), promoted student learning through interaction, reasoning and argument (Dillion, 1994), which allowed transition from describing characteristics of the theory (Multistructural) to then critically evaluating these and justification behind this (relational). At this point, I brought in 2 video examples of one performer at optimal arousal (Johnathan Thurston), and one at over-arousal (Jean Van De Velde), whereby performances were broken down in order to incorporate arousal theories, with students providing informed rationale behind their answers. Group discussion at this stage enabled any questions and lack of understanding to be addressed, with A-level groups then moving toward extended abstract, by incorporating other named examples (Tiger Woods, Roger Federer). Furthermore, the A-Level groups were asked to reflect and document arousal

within their sporting experiences (having all played sport) and I encouraged forms of argument about how they felt they successfully or unsuccessfully dealt with these encounters, promoting student motivation and stimulation to uphold their stance (Klimova, 2011). This demonstrated the holistic elements of support, with students able to reflect on increased and unwanted demands, and pressure from others (Friesen & Orlick, 2010), which formed both internal (confidence, motivation, arousal) and external resources (teammates, parents, reward) to how they would manage future encounters.

Reflecting after the first sessions and following staff discussions, it was evident that there was clear transparency between pre-agreed content and what was undertaken, with adherence to curriculum and DFE standards. Each session had been underpinned by SOLO taxonomy, and with arousal representing a heavily theory-based area, the creation of an experiential and cooperative learning environment through interaction was crucial (Orejan, 2018). Yet, feedback from staff highlighted concern around inclusion of quieter students and their voice potentially not being heard, with the classroom culture (Kaplan & Maehr, 1997) promoting a focus and attention on those who were more willing to get involved. Given the focus on group discussion throughout sessions, and use of case studies and practical application through collaboration, there needed to be assurance that those who were not involved directly still benefitted from the session.

The following sessions consisted of aggression and stress management topics, with an introductory activity of aggressive/assertive behaviour (e.g. N'Golo Kante sending off; Floyd Mayweather punch vs. Victor Ortiz; Maria Sharapova smash at Serena Williams). Students were asked to identify whether their example was typical of an assertive or aggressive action, and then provide valid reasoning behind this (i.e. goal-directed, intent to harm, controlled). Furthermore, A-Level classes were to incorporate 'stress' and 'stressor' definitions to demonstrate how and why aggressive/assertive behaviours may initially arise. Additional

marks would be awarded within an exam for relevance towards types of aggression and (if possible at this stage) tying them in with relevant theories (instinct, frustration-aggression hypothesis, social-learning theory, aggressive-cue theory), which was relayed to students. Direct teaching around these theories followed, with strategies to control aggression evaluated (Skinner, 2005). AS-Level classes were provided with a supplementary activity incorporating when aggressive/assertive behaviour may/may not be useful within sporting and wider-life examples (e.g. teaching, sport, conversations etc.), which included appraisal of their use of strategies/resources. With A-Level classes, we moved onto stress management, discussion around cognitive/somatic effects on performance, and stress management techniques. This then transitioned into a brief imagery practical (*see. Appendix 3.)* to facilitate understanding, where in pairs, students compared differences in imagery time of 'mentally' completing the route in comparison to actual 'physical' time of walking/running the route. This demonstrated clear disparity between how the student perceive themselves to perform a task, and how they actually perform, with this linking into a summary around theory (PETTLEP – see Holmes & Collins, 2001) and applied examples of elite performers using this technique.

Throughout these sessions, I offset the dangers of exclusion of quieter students through using one-to-one feedback and direct questioning, aimed at those less involved in both individual and small-group situations. Yet, I also remained conscious of the fact that those students may often remain quiet during group discussions etc., as they are digesting content mentally (Townsend, 1998). Given that the students were prepared, engaged in content, and occasionally inputted into group discussion, I acknowledged that this was likely their optimal learning style, and to appreciate their individuality within the group setting (Wallace, 2007). Furthermore, with it often easier to default to a lecturing and PowerPoint approach within teaching due to its novelty in entertaining students (Szabo & Hastings, 2000), I was satisfied to have delivered sessions consisting of both practical and theoretical elements through various

methods, which maintained an engaging learning environment. The subsequent topic areas in anxiety, attribution, and personality/attitudes (including self-efficacy/confidence, and leadership for A-Level) followed a similar format to previous sessions: an introductory definition activity (unistructural), discussion and debrief around this, followed by a period of direct teaching around theory; this then prompted the descriptive elements of a theory (Multistructural), analysis and critical evaluation of theory (relational), with application to other applied cases and holistic incorporation forming latter parts of the session (extended abstract). In efforts to scaffold up from AS-Level sessions, A-Level students were increasingly encouraged to apply theory to their own performance and potentially prepare them for success in sport (Orejan, 2018).

Throughout these sessions, the negotiation of challenges maintained alignment to organisational demands and continually developed students' knowledge. One presenting difficulty was an ongoing conflict between the pre-agreed support areas, and the dynamic, 'shifting goalposts' in terms of curriculum. Having structured support to run in-line with AS and A-Level syllabus', staff begun seeking to incorporate alternate theories, and revisit 'potential exam topics' so that students were best prepared. This resulted in sessions being interrupted, content being frantically altered, and potentially irrelevant subject areas being taught. Although I have often been able to evaluate and adapt my holistic practice approach and philosophy (Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004; Sharp & Hodge, 2011; Tod, Marchant, & Anderson, 2007) to a more pragmatic (flexible) style, there was concern around the repercussions this may have on students. Instances arose where students asked if what I was teaching was relevant to assessments, and whilst not meaning to undermine my efforts, staff had commented that this would/would not be relevant to assessment. Subsequently, students would then disengage with content and switch off, where time was then needed to help them get back on task (Kaplan, Gheen, & Midgley, 2002). Given the holistic focus expressed

by staff prior to conducting support with the students and ‘developing individuals both in and out of the classroom’, I felt that we were returning to an approach where students were, as staff put it, ‘simply reporting back in their own words what they had been taught’ (Kandlbinder, 2014). As a result, the process-focused approach adopted throughout sessions and developing on existing knowledge, was instead replaced with an outcome-focused, results-based environment with students beginning to focus on past sessions and whether they were relevant, or future assessments and what they did/did not know (Høigaard, & Johansen, 2004).

Given these challenges and the impact they had on sessions, a staff meeting was set up to construct a more synonymous approach to in-session teaching. Subsequently, two areas needed to be adapted moving forward in order for a solid working relationship to be established, with everyone involved supporting one another’s role in the process (Hassell, Sabiston, & Bloom, 2010). Exam questions and related material was to be pre-agreed between staff before sessions, so they: a) related specifically to the content being taught, and b) were structured in a similar manner to how they would look in an exam (i.e. wording). Additionally, maintaining holistic focus was crucial, with staff asked to collaborate and present 5 case-study examples each week that would be left in the office, and would provide the means of relating textbook material into applied settings. Through these, it was deemed that students would benefit both academically and holistically, and likely remain engaged with support (Voight & Carroll, 2006). However, although session development was ongoing, feedback from students and staff praised the impact the variety in sessions was having, and that my experiences within sport psychology were crucial in presenting technical theoretical concepts in an applied manner. Furthermore, students had highlighted that they had begun applying information within the sessions into their own sports, and how these had influenced their performance (*See. Appendix 4*).

Assessment of Learning Outcomes.

Relative to the programme materials, learning outcomes were assessed through various resources in order to evaluate the success of the programme and adherence to college and government standards. With assessment regarded as the process whereby evidence of student achievement is obtained and judged (Gray, 2005), a variety of tasks were incorporated throughout the process to confirm whether learning outcomes had been achieved (Biggs & Tang, 2007). This allowed for a greater congruence between learning outcomes, teaching approaches and methods, and subsequent assessment, with Skinner (2005) highlighting that different teaching methods are associated with differing approaches to assessment. For instance, direct teaching styles were occasionally adopted within sessions, which commonly relate to summative assessment tasks to test understanding (Skinner, 2005); yet, independent work, group work, and class discussion adhered to DFE standards of 'equipping students with a depth and breadth of knowledge of scientific, socio-cultural, and practical aspects', through clear alignment between learning outcomes and methods used.

Formative assessment took place throughout sessions, with continual feedback allowing all involved to gauge how the student was progressing (Gravells, 2011). This came in the form of past exam questions, and mock examinations that were agreed and set before sessions, for students to complete both during and after teaching. These methods allowed staff and I to assess the students' understanding, provide feedback and adjust in- and out- of class tasks accordingly. This was crucial, as clear alignment ensures assessment adheres to the intended learning outcomes, whereby the exam questions were structured to incorporate the 'analyse', 'describe', 'apply', and 'evaluate' objectives. Furthermore, direct teaching involved periods of questioning, allowing us to explore and probe student understanding, and their ability to construct knowledge through their own activities (i.e. diagrams, notes) (Kember, 1998) to then paraphrase and relay this back. Appropriate use of these techniques through

deeper Socratic questioning ('Is that always the case?'; 'What evidence are you basing this on?'; 'What are the implications of that?') prompted students to progress through the SOLO taxonomy towards 'justifying' (relational) and 'reflection' (extended abstract) levels of understanding. Use of Socratic dialogue opened up the area and distinguished what students did know from what they didn't (Paul & Binker, 1990), in order to assess further areas of support moving forward.

With assessment not solely about awarding marks analytically for aspects of tasks and summing them, the teaching methods allowed assessment to also be defined through judging performance against predetermined rubrics (i.e. learning outcomes) (Kandlbinder, 2014). Methods such as buzz groups, debates, and case studies ensured that students' ability to '*apply and demonstrate knowledge of factors underpinning performance in sport'* (LO3) was taught in a format so that students were increasingly likely to achieve their learning outcomes (Kandlbinder, 2014). As provided, these methods allowed facilitation of peer learning, and created applied opportunities to further develop understanding. The use of case study examples enabled students to understand how theory translated into sport, for example aggressive cue hypothesis was tied to the N'Golo Kante example, whereby frustration arose (previous refereeing decision), leading to increased arousal (anger), a presence of aggressive cues which then led to aggressive behaviour. By using applied instances like this, the student was able to name the theory (unistructural), describe elements of the theory (Multistructural), justify why the theory applied to this specific example (relational), and then apply this to other examples (extended abstract), e.g. a rugby student incorporating past experiences. This exhibited the students' ability to demonstrate knowledge of performance factors (LO1), analyse and evaluate these factors (LO2), and apply knowledge of factors (LO3). Furthermore, later in the session we incorporated 'relevant skills and techniques' (LO3) through practical's like the imagery example. Teaching through this method, ensured that there was no "rigidification of teaching,

and conformity to the prevailing order" (Hill, 2012; cf. from Kandlbinder, 2014, p.12), and addressed each students optimal learning style (Wilson, 2014). Further assessment during these tasks took the form of observation and Socratic questioning by moving through groups and listening to discussion, with dialogue directed towards learning outcomes if they were not being achieved. Criticism around observation and its reliability in assessing all learners can often be an issue (Martin, Winter, & Holder, 2020). Subsequently, observation was often used to obtain information around subject understanding, which then fed into more formative assessment.

During sessions, within independent learning times students were assessed more formally in terms of worksheets (*see Appendix 4.*). These worksheets were a continuation of the exam questions and provided opportunities to assess learning outcomes directly, and oversee understanding relating to more challenging criteria (Skinner, 2005). This included 'analyse', 'evaluate', and 'apply' outcomes, where staff agreed that this would then provide assessment feedback through three forms. These were, *norm-referenced* (judging student performance in relation to each other), *criterion-referenced* (judging student performance in relation to criteria), and *ipsative* (judging student performance in relation to their own previous performance) (Klimova, 2011). What these then allowed was feedforward into both formative and summative assessment that were taking place in mid- and final-year exams, which the students required for certification purposes and to progress to the next stage of their career (Wilson, 2014). Through the assessment of learning outcomes, a benchmark was created throughout to identify key areas of support (e.g. arousal or anxiety topics; 'analyse' or 'apply' outcomes), determine the most effective means to support students (group work, independent, in/out of class), and through what assessment (formative, teaching method, norm-, criterion-referenced). These enabled an individualised and inclusive approach to teaching to be adopted, and if/when issues arose, support could be adapted to serve those means.

Suggestions for Future Development.

Moving forward, there were several challenges I experienced which would guide future practice. Although my experience provided me with a greater understanding of the role and responsibility of the teacher, I was left with the sense that academic freedom may often be taken out of teacher's hands and instead imposed by governing organisations (Hill, 2012; cf. from Kandlbinder, 2014). This shift from allowing the teacher to demonstrate their unique characteristics to flourish and enrich the learning experience, to instead conform to the institutional requirements, was an area I felt conflicted with my values as an individual and practitioner (Keegan, 2015). My issue was not with pre-agreed teaching topics being altered, but instead a continual reminder that the students were there for 'assessment purposes', which for me prompted surface learning, negative emotions in the face of difficulty, and procrastination (Kaplan, Gheen, & Midgley, 2012). I felt that staff often didn't understand themselves within their context (Fletcher & Maher, 2013), in terms of resorting back to getting the best marks possible, as opposed to incorporating this within the holistic development that would benefit the student long-term (Friesen & Orlick, 2010). Subsequently, in future I would spend increased time understanding the stakeholders invested in the student's learning, to comprehend how my support would align with institutional standards. Given that staff and college have a commitment to standards of support, if an institution has to raise standards across the board, the focus is likely to be on the institution-wide system of teaching as opposed to personal teacher development (Kandlbinder, 2014).

The current experience provided the opportunity to conduct sport psychology teaching and learning within an educational environment, underpinned by a key theoretical teaching taxonomy (SOLO Taxonomy–Biggs & Collis, 1982). It is hoped that the current process presents a clear overview of the teaching cycle, with the variety in teaching methods encouraging students to process new material through the personal restructuring of the content

and support I delivered (Petty, 2004). Moreover, it is the shift away from passive activities such as listening and teacher-led learning, which has allowed me to appreciate the importance of having students direct the learning process, and as a teacher, supporting this process. As in most cases, there were occasions where an alternate method or approach may have facilitated learning more effectively, however, like students, the experiential learning process one undergoes through these experiences, allows for ongoing development to occur. Subsequently, only through engaging in a continual reflective process and relating back to my 'constructivist' roots, was I able to comprehend what did and did not work, which helped guide and construct my own knowledge. In conclusion, I do feel that I have helped shape the culture of the environment, whereby the textbook-based, striving for 'the trick to get the tick' approach (Petty, 2004, p.13), has gradually been replaced by the incorporation of content that is theory-applied, and can be learnt in relation to how it influences Sport Psychology and to wider life practice beyond the curriculum knowledge needed to pass assessments.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Scheme of Work (SoW)

LESSON	1 (Arousal)	2 (Aggression)	3 (Anxiety)	4 (Attribution)	5 (Personality/Attitudes)
LEARNING OUTCOMES	AS-Level: A01, A02, A03 Demonstrate knowledge of arousal factors and how they underpin performance. A-Level: A01, A02, A03, A04: (Above) + Apply relevant skills and techniques into performance Inc. Evaluation.	AS-Level: A01, A02, A03 Demonstrate knowledge of aggression/assertion and how they influence performance. A-Level: A01, A02, A03, A04: (Above) + Apply relevant skills and techniques into performance Inc. Evaluation.	AS-Level: A01, A02, A03 Demonstrate knowledge of anxiety factors and how they underpin performance. A-Level: A01, A02, A03, A04: (Above) + Apply relevant skills and techniques into performance Inc. Evaluation.	AS-Level: A01, A02, A03 Demonstrate knowledge of attribution and how it contributes to performance. A-Level: A01, A02, A03, A04: (Above) + Apply relevant skills and techniques into performance Inc. Evaluation.	AS-Level: A01, A02, A03 Demonstrate knowledge of attribution and how it contributes to performance. A-Level: A01, A02, A03, A04: (Above) + Apply relevant skills and techniques into performance Inc. Evaluation.
OUTLINE OF LESSON	What is arousal? exercise (definition and examples). Feedback to class, including discussion and independent time. Period of direct teaching around theories, including some student interaction. Case Study examples – discussion + relation to theory. Summary of strengths/weaknesses of each theory and justification. *A-Level: Move towards other examples/situations (Extended Abstract) and relation into personal life. Relation into exams and summary.	Introductory activity (case studies) – aggressive or assertive and justification. *A-Level incorporate 'stress/stressor' as start-point Period of direct teaching around theories and strategies. *AS-Level additional aggression/assertion task. *A-Level Stress Management Inc. effects on performance and interventions. Transition into imagery practical. Summary with both levels.	Definitions of types of anxiety and relation into sporting examples. *A-Level incorporate self-efficacy/confidence and how it may influence anxiety. Period of direct teaching around anxiety types and relevance to performance/wellbeing. Buzz groups around different methods to measure anxiety and advantages/disadvantages of one type vs. others (questionnaire; physiological; observation). *A-Level: bring in how different sports bring about different anxieties Summary with both levels.	Definitions of attribution process and link Weiner's model into sporting situations. Period of direct teaching involving attribution, task persistence & motivation. Case study examples around self-serving bias, attribution retraining and learned helplessness (Be Specific!). Strategies to avoid LH, with A-Level incorporating application to their sport/life. Summary with both levels.	Understanding of nature vs. nurture Inc. definitions (trait; SLT). *A-Level incorporate leadership and styles whilst linking to personality. Period of direct teaching involving interactionist perspective and how it may impact performance. Above lead to practical involving personality types and leadership styles in different tasks – get students to summarise and find the most effective strategy for them moving forward. *A-Level include Fiedler's contingency model and Chelladurai's multi-dimensional model. Summary with both levels.
KEYWORDS	Arousal; Drive Theory; Inverted-U; Catastrophe Theory; IZOF; Peak Flow.	Aggression; Assertion; Instinct-theory; Frustration-Aggression; SLT; Aggressive-Cue. *A-level – Stress; Stressor; Warm-Up; Cognitive; Somatic; Imagery.	Anxiety; Somatic; Cognitive; Competitive; Trait; State; Observation; Questionnaire; Physiological. *A-Level – Self-efficacy; confidence; performance accomplishment; vicarious; verbal persuasion; emotional arousal.	Attribution; Task Persistence; Motivation; Self-Serving Bias; Attribution Retraining; Learned Helplessness.	Personality; Trait; Social Learning; Interactionist; Nature; Nurture; *A-Level – Autocratic; Democratic; Laissez-Faire; Fiedler; Chelladurai; Prescribed and Emergent Factors.
SUCCESS CRITERIA	Understanding of key theories and how they influence performance; Use of appropriate terminology; Ability to apply theory to sport and describe components that may underpin performance.	Understanding of key theories and how they influence performance; Use of appropriate terminology; Ability to apply theory to sport and describe components that may underpin performance.	Understanding of key theories and how they influence performance; Use of appropriate terminology; Ability to apply theory to sport and describe components that may underpin performance.	Understanding of key theories and how they influence performance; Use of appropriate terminology; Ability to apply theory to sport and describe components that may underpin performance.	Understanding of key theories and how they influence performance; Use of appropriate terminology; Ability to apply theory to sport and describe components that may underpin performance.

The above Scheme of Work (SoW) plan broke down the key learning outcomes for each topic area. Within each topic area, the learning outcomes for the lessons are detailed, whereby through the use of SOLO framework (Biggs and Collis, 1982), sessions were constructed to enable scaffolded progression throughout the session through a variety of teaching methods and learning styles. This allowed for a comprehensive programme to be developed through a logical sequence of topics, the key learning outcome criteria for each topic, and how this contributed towards the overall learning programme. Its versatility allowed students of differing abilities and learning styles to benefit and develop their knowledge. With this in mind, *Figure 1.* below demonstrates the 3-factor triad of the type of message we were trying to send, through what means were we to help students understand this message, and how this message would ultimately be assessed. Through continually referring back to *Figure 1.,* were we able to assess the overall effectiveness of each student's development of knowledge, through breaking it down into its constituent parts (learning outcome, lesson, theory and individual definition), to then piece it back together into a coherent whole.

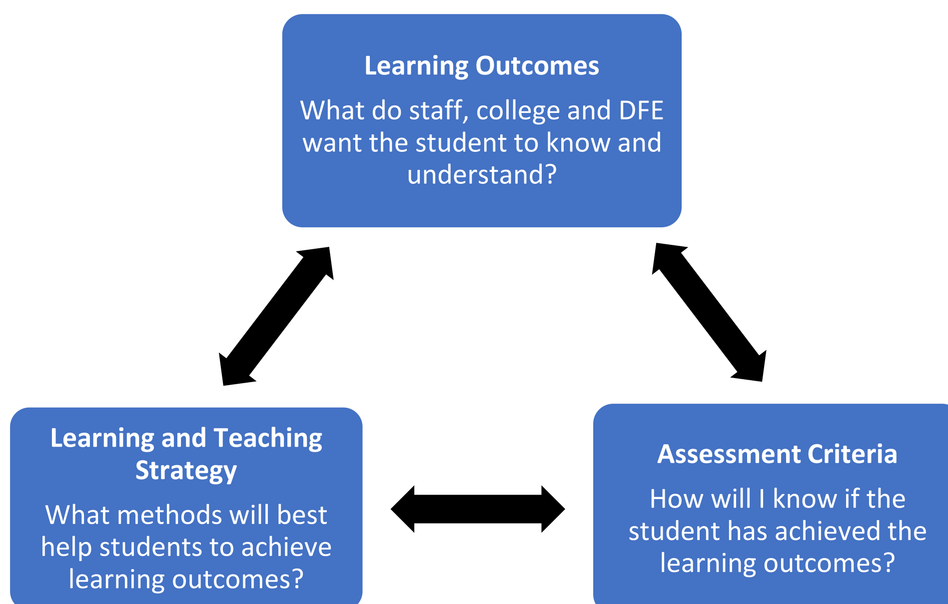
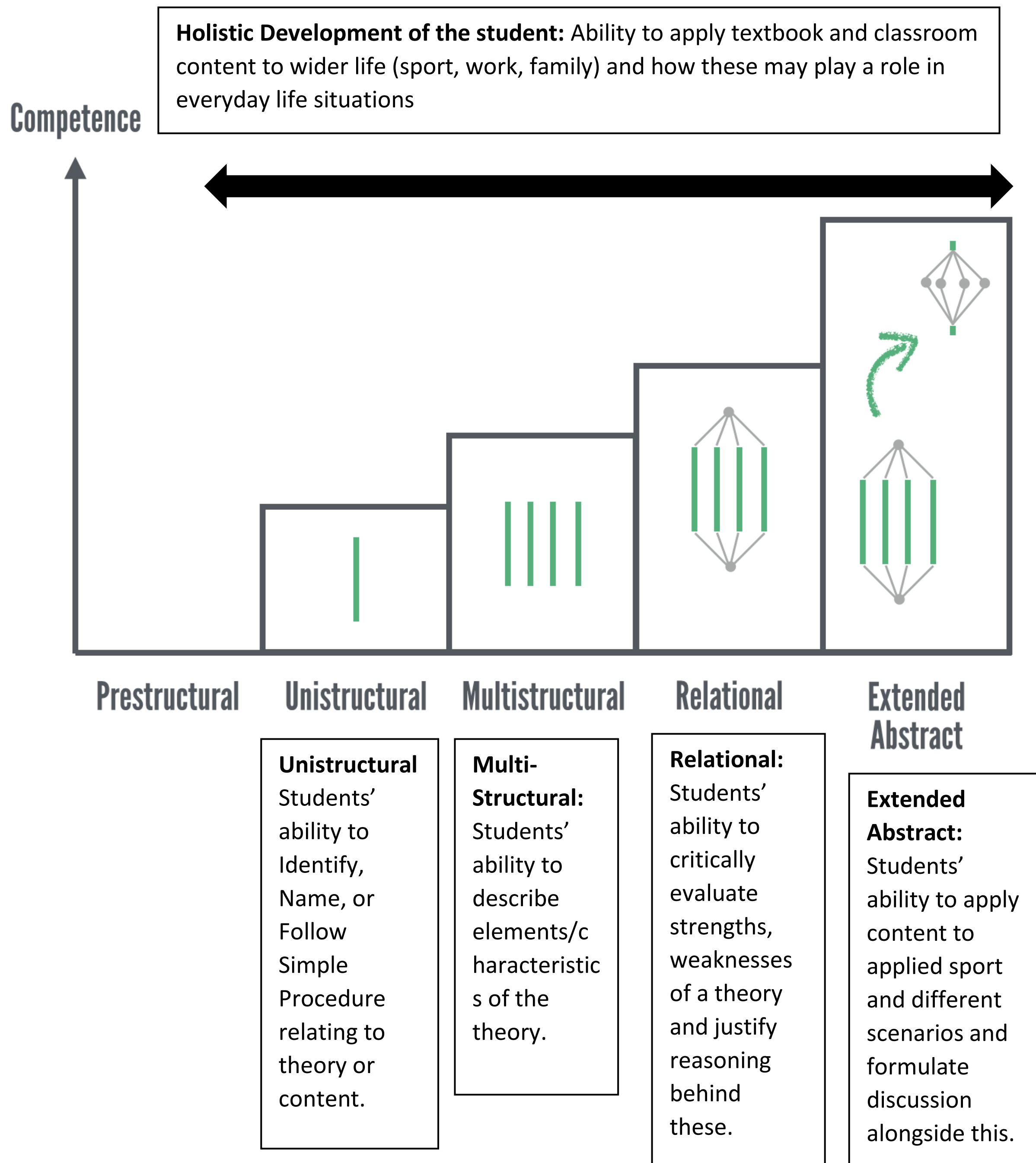


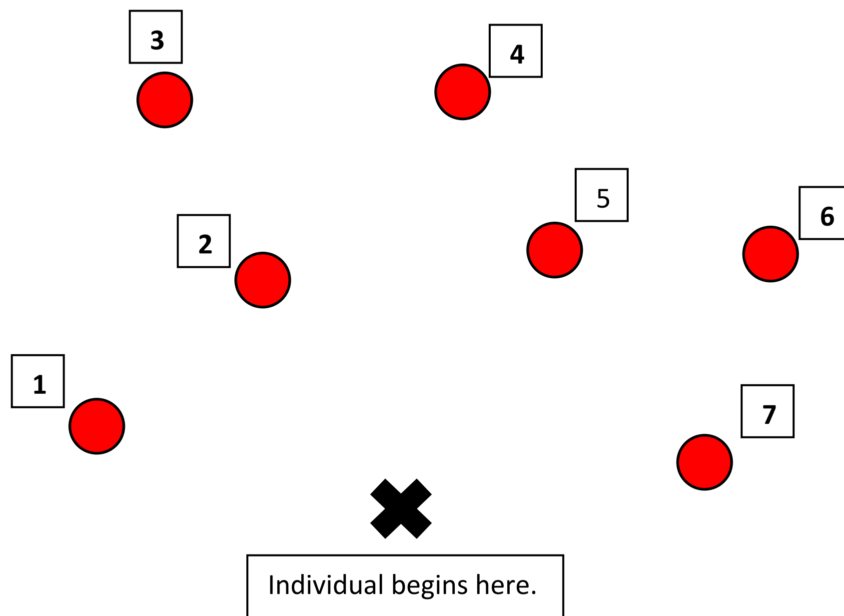
Figure 1. 3-Factor Triad of Student Development

Appendix 2.



Appendix 2. Biggs & Collis (1982) SOLO taxonomy (Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes).

Appendix 3. Example of an Imagery Practical



This task assessed the individual's ability to practice imagery and tie the relevant theoretical concepts (e.g. *PETTLEP – Task, Perspective* etc.) into its explanation. The task will later relate into applied examples and how elite athletes use imagery to promote physiological performance and the performer's ability to reduce stress in critical moments.

1. Students will group into pairs and have 7 cones between them. The students will then plot a route (longer more preferable), with the start/end point demarcated by the 'X'.
2. With the stopwatch, one student will then complete the route in whatever manner they wish (walk, run etc.), with their partner timing start/completion times.
3. When ready, the same student will then mentally complete the route (eyes open/shut) whilst their partner times.
4. The times will then compare differences and demonstrate (hopefully) a disparity between how the student performs a task, and then how they perceive themselves to perform a task. This will then be repeated one more time after potential intervention.

At each stage, the student will encounter environmental effects of other groups' noise, attempts to focus on relevant stimuli and block out irrelevant, and so forth.

Appendix 4. Worksheets: Exam Questions and Wider Application

Exam Question Topic: Aggression

Q1: Please draw and identify the Inverted-U theory (2 Marks).

Q2: Which of these statements describes the Social Learning Theory in relation to aggression? (1 Mark).

1. The view that people learn aggressive behaviour by observing others
2. Acts of aggression are influenced by the presence of socially learnt cues or environmental situations
3. Aggression is the result of blocking, or frustrating a person's efforts to attain a goal

Q3: Identify and describe three strategies which may be used to reduce the likelihood of aggressive behaviour occurring. (6 Marks).

*Holistic Questions

Q4: With reference to a theory of aggression, please relate a personal sporting/life experience and how you implemented/could implement a strategy to combat aggressive behaviour occurring (6 Marks)

The examples above demonstrate how students' knowledge would be assessed in both formative, ad-hoc sessions, and also summative assessments. These questions would relate specifically to what was discussed in-session, and also demonstrate the question layout in their A-Level and AS-Level examinations. Furthermore, the use of verbing offered clarity on what areas students excelled with, or required further work on, both on an individual and collective basis, to adjust focus as required. The holistic question offered relevance to their wider-life, but also related to specific case study examples within A-Level and AS-Level exam papers.

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

WILLIAM CROSSEN

DSPORTEXPSY - CANDIDATE NUMBER: 648122

TEACHING AND TRAINING DIARY

Designing a Sport Psychology Programme

Client Groups

During my Professional Doctorate I began teaching as a Sport Psychology lecturer at Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form, which provided the opportunity to demonstrate my capabilities as a practitioner within academia. My role at the college oversaw the provision of sport psychology across AS- and A-Level Physical Education, where, alongside other staff I was required to plan, deliver, and reflect on sessions both theoretical and practical in order to further student development. I delivered this support twice a week, with the flexibility of adopting and aligning to various approaches, critical to my effectiveness and support (Tod, Hutter, & Eubank, 2017). Crucially, my support in this domain was governed by the Department for Education (DFE) and AQA guidelines, which provided the standards of support to be offered to students; and collaborating with individuals and facilitating development (Tod, Andersen, & Marchant, 2011,) as opposed to students merely reporting back in their own words what they were taught with little depth as to why (Kandlbinder, 2014). However, this strict top-down approach often presented conflict and subsequent negotiation, whereby I felt I had sacrificed my own teaching styles and philosophies in order to adhere to the regulations set by the institution. Teaching within an education environment often requires a clear alignment of class learning objectives with local and/or national standards (Forehand, 2005), consequently my practitioner approach to holistic long-term development (Friesen, & Orlick, 2010) would be positioned in a way to coincide with curriculum content. Therefore, it was necessary to provide ongoing reflection and receive regular feedback on my work to sustain student development, with the results-based, high-pressure environment often providing prolonged periods of discomfort as my practice was being frequently assessed.

A year into the Professional Doctorate, and following various research projects within disability sport, I secured the position of 'Sport Psychologist' with the England Partially-Sighted (PS) Squad, which including psychoeducation of the squad in a teaching and learning context in addition to consultancy work. This position provided my first paid practitioner role following various unsuccessful interviews, and was a significant learning process for me (Gardner, 1991). Having 'gained entry' per se (which in itself is a 'universal step'; Keegan, 2015), I initially approached the role with the 'typical' neophyte outlook of proving myself to others that I was competent and would be able to enhance performance and wellbeing (Tod, Hutter, & Eubank, 2017). This was exacerbated by my experience teaching and offering support in the results-based environment of the college, where my 'academic identity' and approach to the role had contrasted with my holistic 'practitioner identity'. On reflection, this initial approach was likely a result of transferring expectations from a highly regulated college environment, where I was continually required to document my teaching support, to a more relaxed culture where I had more independence and control in physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development (Barker & Winter, 2014). The challenge I encountered in being given more control with support, conflicted with the lack of input from professionals that I was used to receiving for my development from the more formal college environment (Hutter, Oldenhof-Veldman, Pijpers, & Oudejans, 2017).

Unsurprisingly, these early experiences within both environments affected my ability to judge what constituted an 'Effective Sport Psychology Programme'. Within a teaching environment, my programme consisted of providing masses of information, which were theoretically-guided, and underpinned by a learning taxonomy (SOLO, Biggs & Collis, 1982). This would contain sessions driven by learning outcomes and being responsible for "equipping students with a depth and breadth of knowledge, and understanding of skills relating to scientific, socio-cultural, and practical aspects of physical education" (GOV.UK, 2015). This

incorporated a teaching cycle programme (Wilson, 2014): initial assessment, planning of learning goals, delivery, assessment of learning, and evaluation. Subsequently, content would be arranged prior to sessions, and I would deliver these sessions with strict adherence to the aforementioned standards. Alternatively, my programme of support with the England PS Squad was highly versatile in nature, due to the fact that I was the first sport psychology practitioner in post with the squad. Stakeholders determined that the Sport Psychology Programme should be a process-driven, squad-specific entity, yet follow the overarching principles adopted within the other England Para-Football Squads (England DNA) as a foundation of my support with the team. This encompassed player, coach, wider staff, and parental/guardian support, in order to create a strengths-based approach to attend to and enhance players' stronger areas (Gordon, 2012). At this stage, I felt that a relaxed, broad outline of support had been given, whereby I was reminded to 'attend a couple of camps to see what my perception was' and that the first tournament (Turkey in 4 months) would be a 'free hit' in terms of my support. As highlighted, this relaxed, forgiving approach, provided initial 'clashes' with the performance narrative I had been ingrained in with the college, and the relaxed, more independent culture of the England PS organisation (Carless, & Douglas, 2013).

Designing the Programme

The Sport Psychology Programme at the college was designed to incorporate: factors (personality, attitudes, arousal, anxiety etc.) that can influence an individual in sport; dynamics and how they influence the individual and team; goal-setting, attribution-theory, self-efficacy, leadership, confidence, and stress-management. These topic areas gave a definitive outline to the areas I would cover, with 'textbook content' providing the material for the sessions. This was a seemingly fixed programme which although somewhat conflicted with personal holistic process-focused approach, prompted reflection and to be open to evaluation and progressions of my own practice (Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004). Designing a programme for the

England PS squad begun by attending 2 training camps, which provided opportunities to familiarise myself within the organisational set-up (Brown et al., 2005; Weinberg & Williams, 2010), and assess potential 'buy in' from the players around the provision of sport psychology support (Nesti, 2010: p.56). These camps demonstrated how crucial a needs analysis was (Keegan, 2015), as it enabled as much information as possible to be obtained, and provided key areas of prospective support. Following professional interactions with other squads' sport psychologists, discussions with critical peers (Smith & McGannon, 2018), and meetings with coaches, a programme of support was formalised, which adhered to the organisational demands, yet allowed personal practitioner style and philosophy to determine how this support would be carried out. The programme of support (*See. Appendix 1*) would be built on: core squad values (Pride, Integrity, Collaboration, Excellence), holistic player and team identity, and growth mind-set towards performance and development. Throughout the following camps and meetings support would be delivered on ad-hoc basis, whereby relaxed and open environments would encourage players to explore potential lines of enquiry.

With two notably different environments to provide sport psychology support in, the respective programmes would require a different and versatile approach to practice. My role within the college environment was superseded by the next layer of an educational institution ecosystem (Biggs, 1993). Subsequently, I would need to be continually mindful of how my delivery aligned with the wider curriculum, and would often need to adopt the role of expert within the classroom to ensure students were provided with accurate content. Alternatively, I would adopt a more collaborative teaching process (Mascolo, 2009) with the England PS Squad and promote support and development through a more dual-discovery approach to learning.

Planning a Sport Psychology Programme.

The following sections provide an in-depth critical reflective commentary, reflecting on the processes and factors that influenced the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of delivery in the two environments (Anderson, Knowles & Gilbourne, 2004). Outlined below, is a summary of the programme content in each organisation, where an in-depth discussion follows, which focuses on the ongoing reflections I engaged in to become increasingly self-aware, reflective and self-critical, so that more effective work was conducted moving forward (Keegan, 2015).

In the planning stages of the sport psychology programmes I wanted to understand the clients' backgrounds, their journeys, and aspirations in both environments to ensure we were all 'on the same page'. Meetings with respective key stakeholders in each environment (Head of PE; Teaching Staff; Team Manager; Head Coach) to discuss prospective content identified a clearer programme focus to adhere to. Subsequently, the 5 initial college sessions would consist of: arousal, aggression, anxiety, attribution, and personality/attitudes – this would include additional content for A-Level students who were assessed on higher level learning outcomes. With the college emphasising high order educational goals, and the teacher being able to design and deliver programmes of study, ensuring inclusivity, and crucially assessing the impact of learning (Wilson, 2014), it highlighted that my role required evidence of progression and how I improved students' learning (Adeyele, & Yusuff, 2012). Details of how I delivered, developed, and evaluated session content are provided within the Teaching Case Study.

Alternatively, my first two camps with the England PS squad, provided an insight into the structure of the organisation and how support ran in-line with other staff, in order to gauge how I could look to best integrate within the existing system. Having delivered psychological support within a football environment previously (Everton F.C. and Tranmere Rovers F.C.), I

felt that I would approach support in a similar fashion in the current environment. This consisted of initial integration with players (casual conversation), developing relationships, assessing potential types and levels of support (Gould et al., 1991), and looking to implement and deliver support through one-to-one, group, and team means. Therefore, my process of support looked to incorporate Keegan's (2015) format of 'Intake and Needs Analysis; Case Formulation; Planning of Intervention; Delivery of Intervention; Monitoring of Intervention' through both formal settings (classroom based) and informal settings (pitch-side). Having met with key stakeholders prior to the camps, who acted as gatekeepers to the players in the first instance, they felt that this approach would be effective for 'buy in'. Following the first camp, I experienced initial challenges prior to delivering support from the second camp onward. As the camps only ran on a monthly basis, there were significant periods where I did not have any contact with the squad, and I was concerned that any rapport I had built would diminish before the second camp (Knowles et al., 2001). In my previous roles with Everton and Tranmere, I found that a lack of presence at the club hindered any progress that was being made, which often meant players were less engaged due to the infrequent support they were receiving.

Going into the second camp, I was increasingly proactive in 'downtime' situations (mealtimes, dressing rooms, walks), whereby players began to acknowledge the interest I showed in their life on and off the pitch. Approaching these interactions through a holistic lens, enabled me to understand that the players I spoke to showed a genuine interest in their long-term development on and off the pitch (Friesen & Orlick, 2010). This was markedly different from previous experiences within football, whereby the dominating performance narrative and its subsequent impact on players (making mistakes, being dropped, burnout), resulted in the players' own self-worth often being contingent on their performance on the pitch (Mageau, Carpentier & Vallerand, 2011). Nonetheless, the current squad placed heavy emphasis on developing themselves and opening up on areas/issues off the pitch, which identified where

performance and wellbeing support may come in. Alongside this, I was provided with IDP's (Individualised Development Plan) (*See Appendix 4.)* which outlined the key areas of development for each individual on and off the pitch, which while helpful for one-to-one consultancy, also helped me to understand the collective psychological needs of the squad, and facilitate the potential content of any psychoeducational work with the group and team. This work would look to address "core squad values, holistic player and team identity, and a growth mind-set towards performance and development". These would all be integral to my support in delivering psycho-educational material to the squad.

Delivering a Sport Psychology Programme.

I began delivering programme support for the college in arousal and aggression topics. As detailed in the Teaching Case Study, teaching staff had outlined an approach to provide students with optimal classroom experience and developing them as individuals. Prior to delivery, staff had emphasised the importance of the 'whole person'; yet as I began sessions within arousal and aggression, it appeared that this would be more difficult than anticipated. As I progressed through the sessions I began incorporating different teaching methods, which were both teacher- and student-centred as appropriate to vary the learning experience (Petty, 2004). This drew in content that was applicable to applied sport psychology but also be translatable to the students' wider life, yet staff would often comment to the students that this content would not be formally assessed in their exam. Although a relatively insignificant comment in itself, I felt it began undermining the credibility of the information I delivered. Students would begin switching off or raising questions to myself or other staff to whether they 'needed to know this', in relation to whether this was a piece of information that was assessed on their exam. Reassurance came from the head of PE, who maintained that the college were committed to in- and out-of-classroom development/support, yet, I felt that this outlook wasn't shared by all. The demands of learning outcomes and conforming to governing body standards

appeared to supersede any commitment to holistic development within classes, as a result I sought to explore this.

Having previously discussed Rolfe et al.'s (2001) framework of "What went well? What did I learn? What can I do better next time?" staff were able to more effectively analyse, evaluate and reflect on their initial sessions during our conversations (*See Appendix. 2*). When discussing these, staff maintained that they had ensured students could go beyond textbook material and had incorporated more examples, which ensured they were addressing the 'whole student'. This presented a very brief notion of what staff believed constituted holistic development, and potentially demonstrated a lack of awareness away from formal assessment teaching methods. When asked to expand (What is the impact of this?), they brought their support back to prioritising the students' grade and the 99.6% pass rate (with students gaining A*- B in 57.1% of cases). This, however, did not tie in with the SOLO taxonomy proposed at the start of my support, whereby students would gradually progress through the 'levels' of understanding and extrapolation of knowledge. Moreover, this referred back to how each stage of the educational ecosystem was superseded by the next layer (individual teaching style → syllabus → college → local/national standards), and demonstrated that staff felt effective teaching support consisted of demonstrating competence in performance-focus related outcomes (Kaplan, Gheen, & Midgley, 2002). Yet, in this regard, students were often provided with a purpose of demonstrating their ability, and likely displayed associated outcomes including surface learning, procrastinating, and negative emotions in the face of difficulty (Kaplan, Gheen, & Midgley, 2002), all of which had been observed. Subsequently, this presented a conflict of interest, with there a lack of congruence between staff approaches and beliefs, and the content and vehicle in which it was being delivered. During my time at Everton F.C. I had experienced similar conflict with regards to differing coaching philosophies and styles, whereby the approach adopted by one coach (pragmatic – 'get the job done') would be

vastly different to another (construalist – ‘player knows best, there may not be a problem per se’), which again would be different to the next coach (Certaintist – ‘coach knows best, find and then solve the problem’) (Keegan, 2015; p.53). This would result in one commonality… a lack of understanding amongst players around their performance and development. Subsequently, this transcended into ‘clashes’ amongst staff, whereby a ‘bad performance’ by a player would signify that they were ‘not up to the standard’ by one coach but show to another ‘what they still needed support on’. As a result, within the current environment I wanted to ensure both I and others had a clear understanding of how each individual appropriately and effectively fitted into the support network and organisation moving forward (Gould et al., 1991).

Whilst delivering support at the college, I had begun to see an increase in contact time with England PS players both in and out of camps. Through setting up ad-hoc support during camps, players felt comfortable to access support in their own time and had more awareness and understanding around my role (Speed, Andersen, & Simons, 2005). This presented an upsurge in support, with increased contact with players allowing us to develop a working alliance, with increased trust, openness and collaboration of support (Petitpas, Danish and Giges, 1999). For example, through individual conversations, initial themes were drawn that linked into what that player viewed as the ethos and values of the squad. This then transcended into small group-based discussion, whereby several opinions and voices could be ‘heard’ and allowed players to feel that they were actively contributing to the team’s identity. Following this, a squad meeting allowed me to draw ideas and link them together, in order for the core values related to *pride, integrity, excellence*, and *collaboration* to be outlined and understood across the board. Active listening (Ivey, 1983) and Socratic questioning were integral to explore the underlying issues related to player performance and wellbeing. Performance and relational issues had arisen due to one player’s interests being negatively affected by another

players (Wall & Callister, 1995). When a player made a mistake, the response would be to blame others for causing said mistake (i.e. lack of movement). This impacted self-confidence, where performance and relational conflict were impairing an ability to focus and perform (LaVoi, 2007). Alongside this, other personal and wider-life issues negatively affected the players (redundancy, financial issues etc.). Through discussion, we began to explore methods of dealing with on- and off-the-pitch issues. We explored the 'controllables and uncontrollables' to performance and wellbeing, and how currently if a player had a poor game or was unsuccessful in an interview, who was to blame… himself or others? Therefore, we established certain performance behaviours through REBT, and instilling a more rational thought process before, during, and after these opportunities, in order to help both performance and wellbeing. Support with players around aggression, mindfulness, and anxiety, enabled flexibility within my approach, and demonstrated effective intervention skills through empathy and a genuine sense of care (Yukelson, 2001).

Given the lack of clarity around one another's role and approach within the college environment, my collaborative work with England PS provided an increased understanding of how I could keep developing my programme of support in the college. Simpson and Ure (1994) suggest that all students have differing levels of need and aptitude and by moving toward a more personalized learning environment, these differences can be less of a hindrance and more of a help. Therefore, in the following anxiety, attribution, and personality/attitudes sessions we established 'concrete' structures to how the sessions would flow, where there was an agreed flow of: Key topic definitions → Class feedback including discussion and independent working → Direct teaching → Case Study examples incorporating theory → Summary of strengths/weaknesses of theory/approach → Application to wider sport and life to incorporate holistic development. Although still highly performance-based and a rigid programme adhering to learning outcomes, the current structure allowed for the adoption of a more

inclusive learning environment. Students who learnt more effectively through independent work were given the opportunity to do so, and students who learnt through a more collaborative means where also able to benefit, which meant the college stayed congruent with developing the whole student, fostering the often inseparable performance and well-being relationship (Brady & Maynard, 2010). Treating the students fairly through these means allowed each individual to benefit and thrive in their own unique way. At this point, sessions flowed better due to staff understanding, and more importantly 'buying in' to the programme of support (Gardner, 2001; Green et al., 2012) and how incorporating wider elements of the student to generate knowledge from, would likely lead to increased understanding of the subject area.

Evaluating a Sport Psychology Programme.

Throughout my experiences developing the sport psychology programmes, it was imperative to understand how each environment impacted and influenced one another. This allowed continual revision of the methods taken, and evaluation of these to improve support moving forward. The key areas of support for the England PS programme consisted of core squad values, holistic player and team identity, and a growth mind-set towards performance and development. As I progressed with the programme, I felt increasingly competent around my skills and ability to offer support as I had begun to understand the context of both the environment (disability sport) and the individual(s) (partially-sighted) (Fifer et al., 2008). As provided in *Appendix 1.*, the core values related to *pride, integrity, excellence*, and *collaboration*. These 4 values represented the development of performance and wellbeing standards, where players collectively strove to develop one another to be their best through incorporating holistic player and team identity. Alternatively, within college I delivered a structured 5-session Sport Psychology Programme on arousal, aggression, anxiety, attribution, and personality/attitudes. This was incorporated within an AS- and A-Level Physical Education programme, which in turn was monitored by college, local, and national organisations. The

ongoing contrast between a strictly controlled environment vs. a more open and flexible environment, brought about increases in my self-awareness and critical reflection to enhance my support moving forward (Keegan, 2015).

I experienced initial difficulties in aligning my practitioner identity and philosophy with the demands of the performance-based college environment. A lack of congruence between how staff presented their teaching style and approach, and how they then put this into practice, presented numerous difficulties to negotiate. Nonetheless, as a result of my support and development within the England environment, I was able to use my experiences to navigate the difficulties I encountered within the college. The *Design* and *Plan* elements of both programmes, although initially thought-provoking, were relatively straightforward in understanding that the college was highly controlled performance-based, and England presented significantly more freedom around the content of support and how it was structured. However, the college environment at this stage gave rise to how philosophies and approaches may often be 'taken out of your hands' as a practitioner, and instead be imposed by the organisation (Hill, 2012; cf. from Kandlbinder, 2014). As a result, the freedom and independence given within the England PS environment, meant I experienced an initial struggle in seemingly 'starting from scratch'. This meant that as a relatively neophyte practitioner, there were periods where I felt a significant amount of pressure and anxiety, especially in early player interactions (Ronnestad & Skovholt, 2013).

Moving into *Programme Delivery,* and underpinned by the SOLO taxonomy, my support within the college needed to be developed and reformed in order to comply with the learning outcomes and formal assessment. With the college adopting a performance-based approach to teaching, and myself looking to develop students holistically, a middle-ground was reached to satisfy the colleges commitment to DFE standards, but also accommodate why I was brought in to support student development. Thus, through use of Rolfe et al.'s (2001)

reflective framework of "What went well? What did I learn? What can I do better next time?" the staff were able to incorporate the core elements of support into a comprehensive programme. As staff reflected on each session independently and then as a group, we generated a more effective approach to practice, based on what the students engaged well with, how information was successfully/unsuccessfully communicated, and how each session could be improved moving forward. This multidisciplinary team approach enabled all individuals to contribute to what was delivered in sessions, and ultimately drove all our support moving forward. Although seeming relatively obvious at the time, I realised later that use of reflection in this way was something that staff had rarely, if ever engaged with reflection on action when considering how to enhance their delivery. Subsequently, within sessions, students benefitted from a more consistent, comprehensive approach to support, where translation of theory into practical situations, which students could then apply into their own sport they played, was a consistent thread running through the delivery of the taught content. This also fitted with the SOLO taxonomy and: 'Identify' → 'Describe' → 'Analyse' → Generate/Reflect' progression through staged understanding of content.

Reflecting back on the process, I maintain that despite experiencing significant difficulty and contrast in the two support programme environments, I was able to work congruently, and in line with my core values and beliefs (Poczwardowski, Sherman, & Ravizza, 2004). At the time, there were uncomfortable and awkward experiences (Andersen, 2000), yet upon reflection it shaped a more effective and congruent practice. The role and responsibilities of a teacher are complex, ranging from designing and delivering programmes, assessing the impact of learning, ensuring inclusivity and a safe learning environment (Wilson, 2014). Therefore, my ability as a practitioner in this environment to show solid interpersonal skills to collaborate with staff to assess learning, be flexible in my approach to design and delivery, and

be open to reflection and evaluation to adapt support and practice (Petitpas, Danish, & Giges, 1999) was crucial.

Moving forward, it is important to me that I look to increase the amount of time I spend in my intake within the environment(s) to which I offer teaching support. From a teaching perspective, being able to understand the key stakeholders in the organisation and how they are influenced, and potentially be 'bound' by certain standards and guidelines is important. Although I observed and took adequate time to integrate myself within both environments, there remained an open willingness to immediately begin offering support and demonstrating competency. Respecting the culture of both the classroom and the pitch, points to gaining a heightened experience of learning, understanding, and improving over past performances (Kaplan, Gheen, & Midgley, 2002), which in itself, will likely promote student growth in terms of wellbeing and performance. Yet, ultimately, the teaching experience has allowed for a gradual process of developing learning and understanding across two populations, with ongoing feedback and performance providing the foundations to measuring effectiveness.

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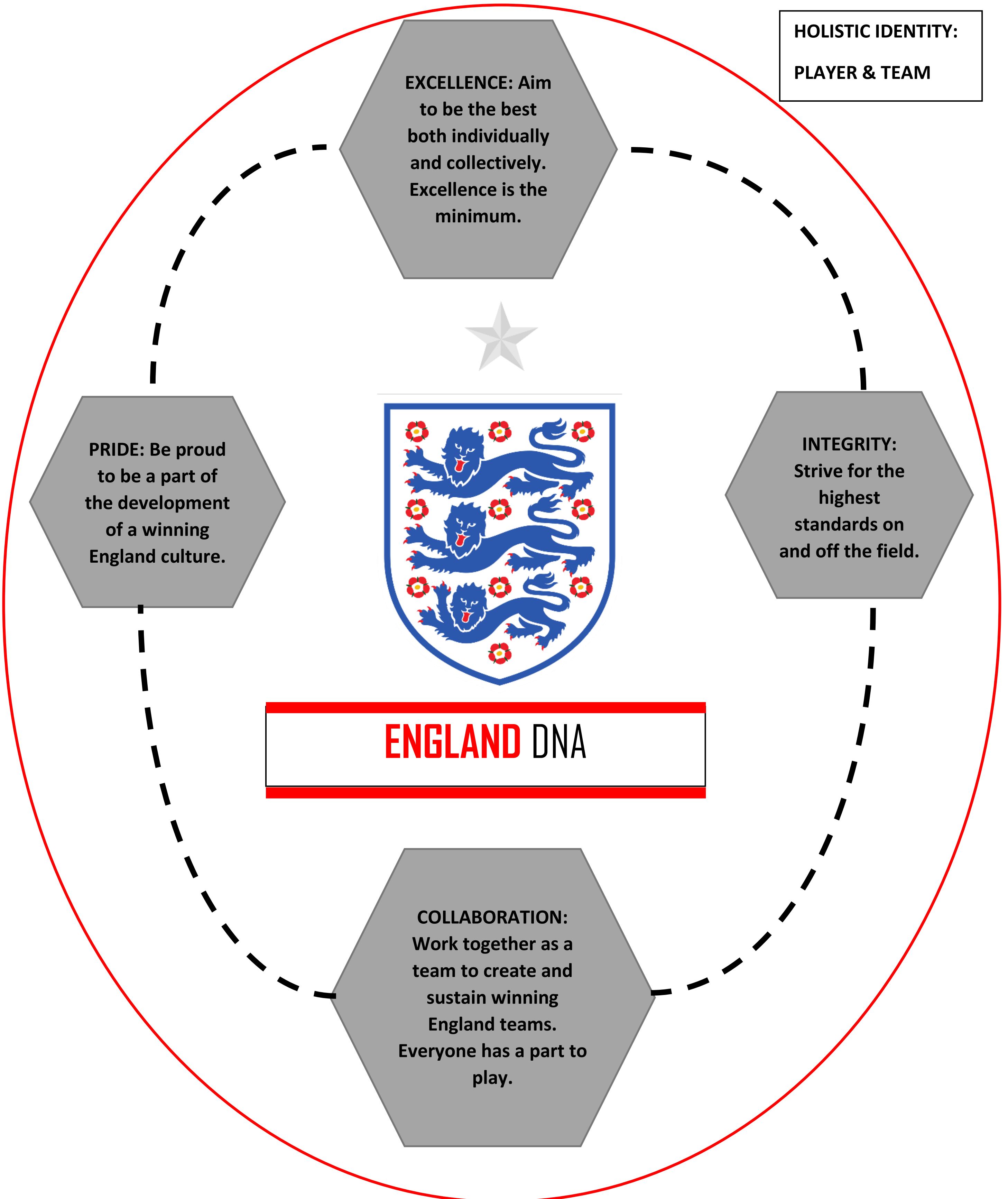
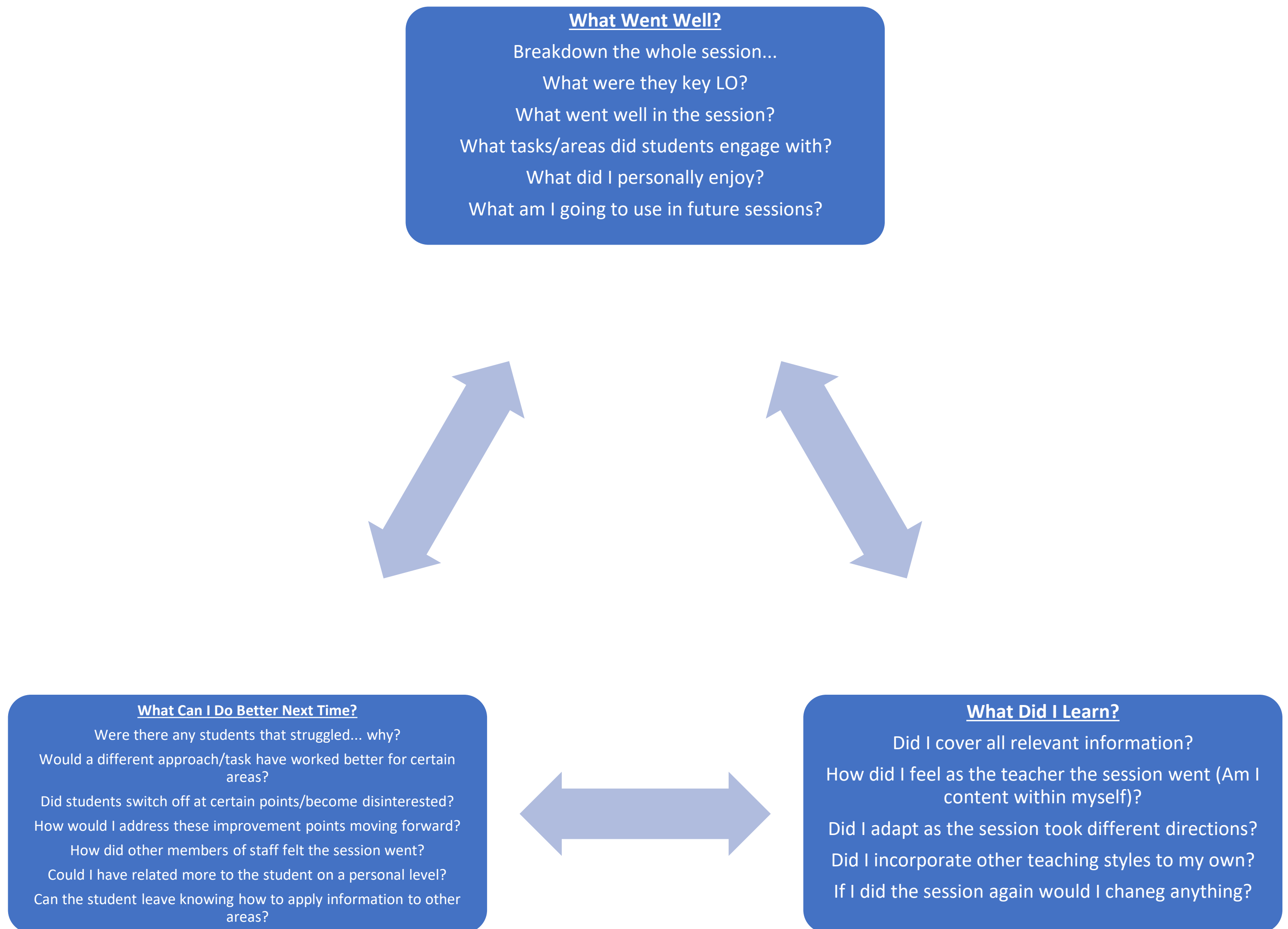
Appendix.

Appendix 1. – Programme of Support.



Appendix 2. – Rolfe et al. (2001) Framework on Reflective Practice



Appendix 3. - Player Support Plan

ENGLAND FUTSAL PLAYER SENIOR MEN

SUPPORT AREAS:

Low self-confidence in player in performance situations both on/off the pitch. Worsened by mistakes/pressure, leading to lack of enjoyment. Self-Efficacy may be low.

SUPPORT INTERVENTIONS:

Controllables and Uncontrollables to performance: Listing... Creating 'What If?' plan... Implement concentration cues and pressure training

REBT: Explore rational/irrational thoughts and how you: THINK, FEEL & BEHAVE

Increasing Self-Efficacy and ability to perform to given standard both on and off the pitch

Consider the role of a process-focused growth environment. Ability for player to build identity on/off pitch in terms of performance and wellbeing.

OUTCOMES

Player grows in self-confidence: ability to thrive under pressure, react from mistakes and take criticism and support in effectively.

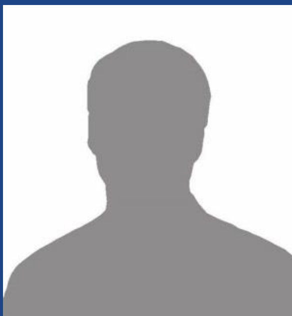
Player also is able to think rationally under pressure, and understands what he can exert control over.

ENGLAND FUTSAL PLAYER SENIOR MEN

NAME

CAMP 1 ■ 13-15/09/2019

ENGLAND PARTIALLY SIGHTED NATIONAL FUTSAL TEAM



PERSONAL INFO

D.O.B:

CAPS:

AGE:

TECHNICAL & TACTICAL

Appendix. 4

1. Penetrative passing and/or movement: the ability to influence the game with and without the ball (find pivot, play forward, drive into space)
2. Limit unnecessary touches and maximize quick play (e.g. quality of pass, speed of pass, play simple)
3. Understanding and timing of movements to provide support, receive or combine with team-mates

- Block the middle
- Pressure on the ball
- Adopt correct body position – Low centre of gravity, knees bent, balanced stance, weight on balls of feet, head over knees, central arm out.
- Control player then ball (do not ball watch/use contact/arms
- Maintain your opponent in front of you and do not allow in behind you

PHYSICAL

Physical efforts of bouts of 3/4minutes with short recovery of minutes (1:1 ratio)

Multi Directional Acceleration + De-Accelerations + Turning

Take opportunities to play Futsal + Small Sided to maintain Futsal Specific Conditioning/Movement

SOCIAL

1. Be confident - No longer a newcomer finding their feet. Desire to improve, reached out for 1 to 1 feedback.
2. Focus on what qualities and energy you add to the squad/group rather than what you feel group needs.
3. Talk more on court to gain more re-assurance and provide assurance to team mates.

PSYCHOLOGICAL

1. Decision making between Possession and Penetration – awareness of surroundings, play positive/simple and what is in front of you. Rushing decisions can decrease quality of execution.
2. Reaction to mistakes/unforced errors + perceived criticism – part of the game, minimise + focus on how to re-gain confidence
3. Understand overall + specific role within the corners IP/OP routines + appreciation for detail attached to (Blocker/Shooter)

OVERVIEW

1

Limit unnecessary touches and maximize quick play (e.g. quality of pass, speed of pass, play simple)

2

Reaction to mistakes/unforced errors and perceived criticism – part of the game, minimise and focus on how to re-gain confidence not dwell and lose it.

3

Decision making between Possession and Penetration – awareness of surrounding, play positive/simple

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SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

Identity in Disabled Sport: A Systematic Review and Meta-Study of Qualitative Research

Abstract

Identity within disability sport addresses the extent to which an individual connects and aligns themselves with both the disability community and/or the sporting community. The purpose of the current study was to systematically review and evaluate the qualitative literature concerning identity (athletic and disabled) within competitive disabled sport. This will generate an integrated theoretical framework, which advances theory and informs recommendations for research and practice. Following a systematic search of online journals, search engines, and databases, 18 papers met the criteria for inclusion and were retained. These studies served as the basis for a meta-study, which included the meta-data, meta-method, and meta-theory analyses, which identified a diversity in the methodology and guiding theory adopted by research in identity in disability sport. These were integrated using a meta-synthesis approach. 3 higher-order themes were identified from the data: *identity as athlete*; *identity as disabled*; and *identity as disabled athlete*. These themes were integrated with existing theory (identity theory), to propose a theoretical model outlining the role of identity within disabled sport, which informs future research within this domain. We describe how this model advances understanding of disabled athletes‘ experience, and what practitioners and organisations alike can focus on to inform their practical application of knowledge within the area.

Keywords: disability, identity, sport, athlete, Paralympic, Parasport.

INTRODUCTION

The role of the self and identity remain central concepts within behavioural and social sciences, which subsequently has led to an increase in research interest in sport psychology (Ronkainen, Kavoura, & Ryba, 2016). Although identity has been explored within athletic identity and the degree to which the athlete identifies with the athletic role (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993), identity within a disabled context has received less attention. The gradual integration of the Paralympics with mainstream Olympics has begun to explore how disabled athletes' athletic and disabled identities are impacted through sport. With this, although disabled athletes' often maintain an identity of being an 'athlete' irrespective of disability status (Perrier et al., 2014), there remains further clarity on: 'When do people consider themselves to be persons with disabilities?' (Olkin, 1999).

Participation in sport has various physical, social, and psychological benefits, with there being a gradual increase in opportunities for athletes with disabilities competing in sport (Marin-Urquiza et al, 2018). These individuals are able to become physically active after disability acquisition, with this encouraging psychological growth (Day, 2013) and allowing the individual the opportunity to develop themselves holistically (including their identity). Thus, this development may exhibit that individuals with a disability are able to triumph over their 'tragedy' of disability through sport (Smith, Perrier, & Martin, 2016).

In a meta-study review of athletic identity literature, Ronkainen, Kavoura, & Ryba (2016) highlighted the influence of *identity formation* in developmental psychology and the study of the *self* within social psychology, as the fundamental basis for identity exploration in the domain of sport psychology. This basis involved the construction of an individual's *psychological identity*, with it often disputed in *unity* versus *multiplicity*, and *personal* versus *social* contexts (Ashmore & Jussim, 1997). In a sport psychology setting, athletic identity is

often understood as an aspect of multiplicity and the individual's multidimensional self-concept (Ronkainen, Kavoura, & Ryba, 2016). This holds the *self* as a product of multiple identities (Stryker, 1980), with the individual's identity and character acquired from others attributing that identity to the person, and the individual accepting and internalising it (self-concept). Following this, the multiplicity of disabled identity has been explored with it following a similar format of athletic identity, and the fracturing, fluidity and multiplicity of identity construction, which is mirrored in the self-identities of elite disabled athletes (Huang & Brittain, 2006).

This notion of identity as multi-faceted influenced by the self-concept, lends itself to disabled individuals within sport who may construct an identity based upon their experiences with both their disability and their sport. Current identity research (e.g. Ronkainen, Kavoura, & Ryba, 2016) advocates identity as multiple, dynamic, and fragmented, with it negotiated within cultural narratives or discourses within which the individual is embedded. Consequently, the concept of intersectionality remains central, whereby a disabled individuals' identities do not operate exclusively from one another, but instead interact and co-constitute the individual's lived realities (Collins, 2015). Therefore, an individual's identity is often dependent on the environment and situation they find themselves in, where existing and new traits may develop over time.

For a disabled athlete, both social and developmental concepts are applicable to how the individual negotiates their way through life, both in and out of sport. The question of 'When do people consider themselves to be persons with disabilities?' (Olkin, 1999) lends itself to Eriksen's (1968) notion of an 'identity crisis', with the individual often left in a state of 'between-ness' (Titchkosky, 2003) and increasingly unclear of their identity. This often results in a disabled individual potentially 'embracing' or 'hiding' their disability (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013), and whether they consider their identity to be based around being an 'athlete', or being

a ‘disabled athlete’. With disability often portrayed as a bad thing that must be eradicated (Smith, Bundon, & Best, 2016), through investigating and understanding information within this field, it may result in a disability opening up opportunities, as oppose to closing them.

As provided, identity research within sport psychology has tended to adopt an athletic identity approach, with disabled identity often overlooked. Although research has considered the impact of disabled identity on *trauma* (Day & Wadey, 2016), *post-traumatic growth* (Day, 2013; Crawford, Gayman, & Tracey, 2014); *wellbeing* (Richardson et al., 2017); and *activism* (Smith, Bundon, & Best, 2016), there remains a negative notion around adapted sport as ‘not real sport’ and disabled individuals reporting lower levels of athletic identity (Perrier et al., 2014), with little explanation as to why. This may result in the individual experiencing negative identity repercussions with their disability, and potentially hiding their encompassing identity, as a result of their perceived status and outlook. Therefore, the significance of the individual reintegrating successfully after acquiring their disability, will facilitate how they deal with their future experiences. Individuals who adapt successfully, often find positive meaning with their acquired physical disabilities following adversity (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013); however, it is imperative for research to consider the impact sport experiences have on these disabled individuals who have gained enhanced life meaning and identity through sport (Day, 2013), and also those who have not. Consequently, the present research provides further investigation and identification of what ‘disabled identity’ is and how it informs the individual in and out of sport (Bundon et al., 2018). This may assist in the (re)development of the present/future self as an athlete, so it is better understood (Perrier et al., 2014), through highlighting positive and negative aspects of disabled identity, and the study of disability narratives informing individuals with and without disabilities (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013).

Ultimately, when exploring the masses of literature pertaining to identity within sport psychology, there remains a lack of clarity and understanding around the impact of identity and

other environmental factors in disability sport (Hutzler & Bergman, 2011). This relates to the notion of disabled athletes often being unprepared for certain situations throughout their life and career, whereby research and application is often reactive as opposed to proactive. For example, when experiencing retirement issues, employment concerns, and transition into higher education, para-athletes are frequently unprepared in taking steps that may help them cope, and often regret that they had not been more proactive (Bundon et al., 2018; Campbell, 2013; Day, 2013). Having uncertainty around disabled identity, results in research in the area often being more speculative than either empirical or theoretical in nature (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013). Consequently, athletes and stakeholders within these and other studies, have demonstrated the need for practitioners working in sport to have an important function to play in 'future proofing' para-athletes (Bundon et al., 2018) and that this allows individuals to gain awareness of their capabilities and future opportunities by accepting manageable risks, responsibility, and personal control (Crawford, Gayman, & Tracey, 2014). Subsequently, it is imperative to advance understanding of the experience of disability and identity within sport (Olkin & Pledger, 2003) and the influence of this in rehabilitation research and practice (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013).

The creation of a research synthesis and review, summarising the role and impact of identity in disabled sport, offers several benefits for prospective research. First, practitioners and organisations will gain a heightened awareness of the impact of how the athlete identifies with themselves in and out of their sport, so that they can support a holistic longer-term development of the athlete (Friesen & Orlick, 2010) through a more meaningful relationship. Second, through an informed understanding of the athlete and improved relationships, the athlete will likely benefit from the practitioners' ability to best tailor their support to enhance performance and wellbeing. Third, with an increased awareness of those with a disability within sport, organisations will have the ability to offer support on disabled athlete's transition

in/out of sport, whereby the issues of (re)integration into sport, retirement and (re)establishment back into society often highlight what an individual with a disability 'cannot do' (Huang & Brittain, 2006). Finally, researchers could identify novel areas of study where knowledge gaps are identified, or research quality is questioned – advancing validity in its usefulness for real-world application and effective service delivery.

As a knowledge synthesis will advance science and bridge the research-to-practice gap, the purpose of the current meta-study was to systematically review and critically appraise qualitative literature in the field of identity in disabled sport. Two specific aims were to (a) synthesise knowledge to generate a novel, integrated theoretical model that outlined the role and impact of identity within disabled sport; and (b) critically appraise the quality of the studies in this area. With traditional systematic review approaches often too specific and inflexible (Rycroft-Malone et al, 2012), a meta-study (Paterson et al., 2001) was chosen for its capacity to enable synthesis of research, which included a systematic approach to the collation of studies, a critique of methodological approaches, and a synthesis of findings. It is hoped that by having a framework and knowing the level of confidence in the evidence, it will inform future behaviour through an increased awareness of how to work alongside those with a disability.

METHOD

Review Design

The current review embraced an interpretivist paradigm, which encompassed a realist ontology and constructivist epistemology within a meta-study approach. This approach appreciates the individuality of each study and the interpretations of their social contexts (Ronkainen, Wiltshire, & Ryba, 2018) and how they may differ from one another. A meta-study "involves a systematic approach to collecting and analysing qualitative research findings" (Tamminen &

Holt, 2010, p. 1564) using interpretation rather than reduction of data (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2003). This systematic approach consists of four components (Paterson et al., 2001): meta-method analysis, meta-data analysis, meta-theory analysis, and meta-synthesis. The first three components (method, data, and theory analysis) often take place concurrently; the meta-synthesis is presented as the outcome of a meta-study. Two primary objectives of a meta-study are to identify unanimity and explore inconsistencies in existing literature, which together contribute to the qualification of research for concept development. An enhancing transparency in reporting the synthesis of qualitative research (ENTREQ) statement (Tong et al., 2012) was also completed for the review (See *Appendix A)*

Search Strategy

Keywords development

Key words were developed via a scoping review and hand searching of research in the area and subsequent discussion by the authors. The search strategy consisted of four separate term searches: **1)** *disab** OR *paralympi** OR *parasport* **2)** *identit** OR *character* **3)** *sport** OR *athlet** OR *exercise* **4)** *1st* AND *2nd* AND *3rd* keyword search. This '*' ensured for coverage of differing word suffixes (e.g. disabled and disability). These keywords and search combinations yielded a concise and sensitive (wide breadth and depth) data retrieval in order to maximise the potential of reliability.

Electronic search

The search databases used were: EBSCO SPORTDiscus, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, and Web of Science. The author initially began searches on 10 September 2018, with the original search repeated on 1 July 2019. This ensured no studies published in the intervening period were omitted, with no new studies retrieved in that period. Backward (i.e. scanning reference lists

of included articles) and forward (i.e. searching works that have cited included articles) search strategies were conducted to check that all articles fitting the criteria were collected.

Manual Search

A manual search was conducted on relevant journals, reference lists, and abstracting journals, to identify any key research articles missed through electronic search methods.

Exclusion and inclusion criteria

Following discussion between the authors' studies, utilising purely quantitative methodologies were excluded. Quantitative research (e.g. Marin-Urquiza, Ferreira & Van Biesen, 2018; Martin, Adams-Mushett, & Smith, 1995) provided high-quality quantitative data, however its richness of data was limited and hence failed to capture the potential depth and detail obtained via qualitative methods. Studies were included if they reported: (a) primary data obtained through at least one qualitative data collection method (e.g. interview; narratives; focus-groups) that were constructed to (b) explore the role of identity in disability sport, and (c) were English-based texts. Based on guidelines for the synthesis of qualitative data (Sandelowski, Docherty, & Emden, 1997), articles were excluded if any following criteria was evident: (a) the paper was not original empirical research (i.e. literature reviews, methodological papers, theoretical papers, book chapters, and conference presentations were excluded); (b) the study involved only quantitative methods, (c) with no qualitative exploration of identity within disability sport, and (c) the study drew from a non-sport setting. There were no publication date limitations. English-based texts were exclusively chosen as per recommendations of Hartling et al. (2017), with restricting the search and inclusion to English-only studies likely not having an impact on the results in the vast majority of cases.

Screening and Selection of Studies

An electronic search was conducted using keyword searches across four databases, retrieving *698* prospective research articles. Following this, the six-hundred and ninety eight articles were collated into a central database using *EndNote X8* software. As searches were conducted across four database platforms, each of the *698* papers were first screened for duplicates (internal and external), and only included in the title/abstract phase of screening if they met the designated criteria. *510* articles remained and were screened via title and abstract. *439* articles were excluded at this stage as they failed to match the inclusion criteria, with *71* articles progressing to full-text assessment. Each of the seventy-one articles were read in their entirety, revealing initially *23* articles via first full-text screening, and later *18* articles via final full-text screening, that met the full inclusion criteria in the final review. The *52* articles marked for exclusion at the full-text screening phase, were then shared with an independent researcher to discuss reasoning for exclusion, with no amendments recommended. Forwards and backwards searching yielded no further addition to the final *18* research articles. The general search strategy is provided in *Figure 1*.

Data Extraction

Following meta-study guidelines (Paterson et al., 2001), key features of retained research articles were entered into the corresponding columns of a data collection spreadsheet (see *Table 1*. and *Table 2*.). These templates were constructed by assessing other published meta-studies (e.g. Ronkainen, Kavoura, & Ryba, 2016) to identify potentially helpful groupings and subsequently choosing categories considered to best fit the purpose of this review. *Table 1*. summarises the key descriptive, methodological and theoretical features of the primary research reports, including: author, year of publication, purpose, country of origin, method theoretical orientations, sample characteristics (e.g. total number, age range, gender, sport,

disability), data collection approach, analysis techniques, and theoretical frameworks applied. *Table 2*. presents main findings of the reviewed literature (detailed below).

Data Analysis

The current review conducted a meta-study approach (Paterson et al, 2001), consisting of four components: meta-method analysis, meta-theory analysis, meta-data analysis, which lead to the meta-synthesis being produced. This review adopts an approach, whereby the theory, methods and findings are analysed to produce new ways of thinking about phenomena.

Meta-method analysis reviewed the methods and methodologies employed in each primary study, the effect they have on findings and outcomes, and the collective methodological themes across the disabled identity literature. Based on the procedures used in previous qualitative meta-studies (Ronkainen, Kavoura, & Ryba, 2016) the included articles were reviewed, with specific methodological data extracted from each paper (i.e. *sample characteristics, method theoretical orientations, data collection, data analysis, and guiding theory*) and presented in *Table 1.* The data presented in *Table 1.* was reviewed across all included literature for patterns to emerge, with this data presented in the meta-method analysis results section.

Meta-theory analysis identifies the key paradigms represented within the theoretical frameworks and literature base. This allows for the theory used, to be related to larger social, historical, cultural and political contexts, and how theoretical underpinnings influence a body of work (Paterson et al., 2001). Ritzer (1992) highlighted the reasoning behind meta-theory: (a) attaining a greater understanding of the existing theory' underlying structure; (b) precursor to new theory development; and (c) providing a complete framework that helps explain and understand the existing theories. How these theory' and philosophical perspectives have influenced the nature of the findings are explored within the meta-theory analysis section.

Meta-data analysis critically examines the findings from each primary research study (Paterson et al., 2001), which provides insight into the common concepts being explored within the current review. Included, are any notable similarities and discrepancies between study investigations (Anthony et al., 2016) and the reasoning behind these. The lead author conducted the meta-data analysis by extracting what the study looked to investigate, its main findings, and conclusions into an Excel database. Significant meaning units were identified, and themes that shared similar meaning were clustered together and when necessary, new themes were created to create a coherent list to adhere to. Through a process of inductive reasoning, themes were categorised into 3 interdependent higher-order groupings: (1) *Identity as an athlete*; (2) *Identity as disabled*; and (3) *Identity as a disabled athlete*. These were displayed in an *Iceberg model* (*Figure 2.),* with 5 underpinning lower-order themes (*traits*; *transitions*; *social support*; *growth*; *meaning*). Coding groupings were compared and analysed to ensure clarity and uniqueness to the individual higher-order groupings. The meta-data is summarised in *Table 2* and discussed under the meta-data results section.

The final stage concerns the meta-synthesis, which involved the integration of interpretations from the meta-data, meta-method, and meta-theory analyses. A meta-synthesis explores beyond the descriptive meanings of findings, and towards generating an explanatory or integrative theory, framework, or model to extend upon what is already known (Paterson et al., 2001). Therefore, the purpose of the current meta-synthesis was to extend previous findings into identity in disabled sport, and provide a succinct model that outlined the characteristics that disabled athletes identify as critical to their identity. This will likely then provide practical and theoretical implications for applied practitioners, coaches, athletes, and organisations to utilise within disabled sport. To achieve this, the author(s) adopted analytical techniques from grounded theory in a dynamic and iterative process of interpreting, theorizing, and reflecting (Paterson et al., 2001). Ultimately, this involved the extraction of relevant data from the papers

within the review, with these then compiled into an Excel database that outlined the key findings from each paper. Following this, the findings were then broken down into the 6 lower-order themes, which then informed the 3 interdependent higher-order groupings, which are presented in *Table 2.* This formed the content of the *Iceberg model* (*Figure 2.)*

Review Rigour

The lead author collaborated with the second author, who acted as a 'critical friend' from outset to completion of the project. The relationship allowed for the exploration and development of a coherent interpretation of all the research article data and the subsequent meaning of them (Smith & McGannon, 2018). As the current research adopted a realist ontology, it supported the ideology that each person (participant) experiences and perceives reality differently, which subsequently makes more sense to discuss multiple realities, rather than a single reality that is the same for everyone (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Therefore, both primary and secondary author agreed that there was no expectation prior to data collection that they would see the same things in the data. As this multiple interpretation was anticipated, it was agreed that the primary researcher would not go beyond the text in order to interpret it, and all interpretations would be discussed collectively. Furthermore, all sections of the review process were subject to discussion and refinement with other members of the LJMU School of Sport and Exercise Science, which commenced following the data retrieval phase and continued throughout until the final presentation and subsequent synthesis.

RESULTS

Meta Method Analysis

Country of origin

Studies drew from: United Kingdom (n =8); United States (n =2); Canada (n =1); Sweden (n =1); and Israel (n =1). The total number of studies listed here equals 13, as four studies

(Crawford, Gayman, & Tracey, 2014; Richardson et al., 2017; Huang & Brittain, 2006; Dunn & Burcaw, 2013) drew participants from multiple countries, and one study (Lundquist, 2014) did not state its country of origin.

Method theoretical orientations

Method theoretical orientations was not explicated in 3 of the studies. Of the 15 studies which did refer to a specific theoretical orientation, an interpretivist approach was employed 5 times: Bundon et al. (2018); Perrier et al. (2014); Richardson et al. (2017); Campbell (2018); and Smith, Bundon, & Best (2016). A purely phenomenological approach was adopted 2 times: Crawford, Gayman, & Tracey (2014) and Goodwin et al. (2009). A purely relativist approach was conducted 2 times: Day & Wadey, (2016) and Day (2013). Alongside this, several theoretical orientations were adopted once across the remaining studies: an ethnographic approach (Lindemann, 2008); a hermeneutic phenomenological approach (Pack, Kelly, & Arvinen-Barrow (2017); critical realist ontology and epistemology (De Haan, Sotiriadou, & Henry, 2016); humanistic approach (Huang & Brittain, 2006); a disability activism approach (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013); and a feminist poststructuralist approach (Wickman, 2007).

Sample characteristics

A total of 244 participants provided data across 16 of the retained studies, with 2 of the studies (Lindemann, 2008; Dunn & Burcaw, 2013) not specifying the number of participants involved. All participants were sampled via purposive sampling techniques. The age range of participants was not always clearly stated. Nonetheless, we were able to estimate that data had been provided by 238 athletes (aged 15-77 years old), from over 30 different Parasports including sailing, boccia, swimming, archery, wheelchair rugby, and football. Other support staff (approximately 6) had been involved within the studies, including Grooms (for riders/horses), Performance Managers, and National Coaches. For the studies that specified details, the sample

consisted of 123 males and 83 females, with 38 participants' gender unavailable. 1 study included data from 6 narrative sources (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013 – see p.31), with one study including data from the support staff sample (De Haan, Sotiriadou, & Henry, 2016). 130 participants had acquired disabilities and 45 had congenital disabilities.

Data collection

Interviews were solely used in 12 studies. Focus-groups were used in one study (Hutzler & Bergman, 2011). Surveys were used in one study (Bundon et al., 2018). More than one qualitative data collection technique (survey, interviews, observation, narratives) were used in 4 studies (Crawford, Gayman, & Tracey, 2014; Lindemann, 2008; Smith, Bundon, & Best, 2016; Dunn, & Burcaw, 2013).

Data analysis

Of the 18 studies, various data analysis methodologies were employed. Thematic analysis was exclusively used in 4 of the studies; 2 studies outlined their exclusive use of content analysis (Day, 2013; Hutzler & Bergman, 2011); 3 studies solely employed narrative analysis (Day & Wadey, 2016; Perrier et al., 2014; Dunn & Burcaw, 2013); 2 studies used IPA (Campbell, 2018; Pack, Kelly, & Arvinen-Barrow, 2017); a further 2 studies used systematic analysis (Lundquist, 2014; Wickman, 2007); document analysis was used once (Lindemann, 2008); and Immersion/Crystallisation Analysis was employed once (Huang & Brittain, 2006). 3 studies employed mixed data analysis methods: content analysis using interpretational analysis (Crawford, Gayman, & Tracey, 2014); narrative thematic analysis (Smith, Bundon, & Best, 2016); ethnographic content analysis (De Haan, Sotiriadou, & Henry, 2016).

Research Rigour

The use of multiple researchers to conduct data analysis was apparent in 8 studies. This involved analyst triangulation, peer-researcher review, 'critical friend', and interrater reliability

checks, amongst other methods. Member checking was employed in 12 studies, with transcripts returned to participants and other researchers for verification (e.g. Bundon et al., 2018; Campbell, 2018). Dependability was suggested in 4 studies through the form of reflective and reflexive diaries logged throughout the research, enabling the audit of decision making (e.g. Lindemann, 2008; Day & Wadey, 2016). 4 studies did not provide a clear and accurate description of the employed techniques used to enhance rigour of the research (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013; Huang & Brittain, 2006; De Haan, Sotiriadou, & Henry, 2016; Lundquist, 2014).

Meta Theory Analysis

Of the 18 studies, 8 employed a guiding theory to outline their research approach and underpin their methodology. Lundquist (2014) and Perrier et al. (2014) utilised identity theories (e.g., Burke, 1991; Stryker & Burke, 2000) to understand the interaction between the individual and society in a disabled sport context. Campbell (2018) explored the negotiation of identity through differing life worlds, via the sociological lens of Bauman's liquid modernity (2000). Lindemann (2008) used Schechner's Performance Theory (2002) to focus on the art and embodiment of performance, in order to achieve a transformed sense of self and conceptualise disability. Smith, Bundon, and Best (2016) employed narrative theory, considering language to be constructive and that stories constitute our psychological realities, including identity. Day (2013) incorporated 2 guiding theories to underpin her research approach:-, (1) the Functional-Descriptive Model of Posttraumatic Growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995; Janoff-Bulman, 1992) and; (2) the Organismic Valuing Theory of Growth Through Adversity (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1998). Goodwin et al. (2009) employed the use of Community Theory (McMillan, 1996; McMillan & Chavis, 1986) to understand the athletes' experience of the dimensions of influence, membership, fulfilment of needs, and shared emotional connection, within disabled

sport and the wheelchair rugby community. No theoretical model or framework was explicitly stated in 11 studies.

Meta Data Analysis

Results of the meta-data analysis were constructed around the 3 main themes of: *identity as athlete*; *identity as disabled*; and *identity as a disabled athlete* (*See Table 2*).

Identity as athlete.

Athletic identity relates to how much the individual identifies with the athletic role, with sport performance providing individuals with the opportunity to develop this identity (Marin-Urquiza, Ferreira, & Van-Biesen, 2018). Of the 18 studies included in the review, individuals 'labelling' their identity as an athlete was consistent throughout 10 of them. These individuals often regarded themselves as being an athlete first and foremost, and then a person with a disability (e.g. Lundquist, 2014; De Haan, Sotiriadiou, & Henry, 2016; Wickman, 2007). By embodying an athletic identity, it allowed the individuals to overpower the disability narrative, and subsequently enabled them to be seen as athletes. This embodiment was displayed across the findings in multiple forms, with the role of being an elite athlete often heralded as a master identity, with the theme of individuals showcasing their sporting abilities central to this. Athletic performances then reified ableist notions of competitiveness, athleticism and the body, which were often regarded by participants as being overlooked within disabled sport.

These ableist notions within a disabled context, were a result of the creation, acquisition and strength of the participants' athletic identity and ability to emulate an idealized athletic body. However, it was apparent that individuals in the studies had to 'fight' for their identity, with their status of being an athlete not always acknowledged by others (Wickman, 2007). Although participants embraced an athletic identity, there was often uncertainty to whether this was their current identity or an attempt to recapture a past athletic identity before disability.

Attempts to reclaim a former athletic identity involved recapturing previous life meanings and past definitions of sport, which due to the effects of loss and limitation through disability, often caused confusion and uncertainty. If the individual did not recapture their previous identity and instead forged a new athletic identity, there remained concern around the identity being 'forced' following disability acquisition. As the athletes were unable to return to sport in the same manner, there were often difficulties reintegrating into sport and adopting a new athletic identity due to constant reminders surrounding their physical state (Crawford, Gayman, & Tracey, 2018).

Having returned into sport, the athletes experienced various difficulties associated with identity (re)development. Nonetheless, through retaining a consistent athletic identity and competitiveness within sport, there was potential for the negative effects of having a disability (i.e. loss and limitation) to be minimised through a stable athletic identity (Hawkins, Coffee, & Soundy, 2014). This stable athletic identity was invaluable within the adjustment process following disability. This possessed the ability to make new life meanings after trauma, through: being part of an elite group (Hutzler & Bergman, 2011); representing themselves as elite athletes (Wickman, 2007; Huang & Brittain, 2006); facilitating overall quality of life (Pack, Kelly, & Arvinen-Barrow, 2017); and a shared sense of community, fulfilment of need, and shared emotional connections through sport (Goodwin et al., 2009). Through the individuals' propensity to discover new life meanings through sport after disability, they were able to facilitate meaning within other identity contexts.

Identity as disabled.

Meta-data findings identified another major theme within the current review, in the form of *identity as disabled* within 13 of the studies. Firstly, a theme documented across the review was the nature of the disability, in congenital and acquired circumstances. In comparison of

individuals with a congenital disability (*CD*) or an acquired disability (*AD*), there remained uncertainty to whether living with one disability was 'easier' than the other. It had been suggested that a *CD* individual would not have to create a 'new identity' following disability, as they had been born with it and not known any different. This concept highlighted that *AD* individuals' had to confront new life circumstances (including how to travel in a wheelchair) (Crawford, Gayman, & Tracey, 2014), with new physical changes in the body resulting in diminished athletic and disabled identity (Perrier et al., 2014). Further supported came from *CD* individuals' not viewing themselves as having lost something or as even being disabled (Pack, Kelly, & Arvinen-Barrow, 2017). However, through participation in sport, *AD* individuals were then able to accept life with a disability, which allowed them to integrate into society more effectively (Richardson et al., 2017). Furthermore, those with an *AD* acknowledged the 'luck' around their disability, as they had the opportunity to experience what life was like being able-bodied (Day, 2013). Therefore, although discrepancies arose surrounding the difficulties associated with the nature of the disability, this was suppressed by the notion that those living with a *CD* described existential challenges akin to those with an *AD,* and ongoing issues surrounding the meaning and acceptance of their disability (Pack, Kelly, & Arvinen-barrow, 2017).

Following this, another significant theme within *identity as disabled* was the embracing or diminishing of disability identity. Akin to the first theme, there was uncertainty around the significance of having an identity relating to their disability, with these individuals often occupying a liminal state between identities (Lindemann, 2008). Certain individuals defined themselves purely as disabled people (Huang & Brittain, 2006), with disability qualifying as another identity context that clearly marked them as a minority subjected to prejudice and discrimination (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013), which allowed them to differentiate themselves from 'others' (Wickman, 2007). Alternatively, other individuals evoked a positive social change and

outlook on being disabled first and foremost, through preferring to position disability first within their identity hierarchy to emphasise an affirmative identity (Smith, Bundon, & Best, 2016). This reinforced notions of accepting and defying limitations of disability (Hawkins, Coffee, & Soundy, 2014) to ultimately understand how disabled people perceive themselves and how they wish to be perceived by others, to then define the emerging identity of disabled people (Goodwin et al., 2009). This was fundamental for many individuals within the review, as they were then able to better relate to their sport and their identity in and out of it, with it often commented that people with disabilities will always have a disability identity, but how strong or dominant this is, will vary (Lundquist, 2014).

Identity as disabled athlete.

The final higher-order theme evident in the current review is that of *identity as a disabled athlete*. Individuals within the review, irrespective of adopting a primary *athletic identity* or *disabled identity*, accepted the role of both within a collective *disabled athlete identity*. Given the fluidity of identity (re)construction, sport provided the individuals with the everyday space to (re)produce disabled and athletic identities, and transform societal understanding of disability (Bundon et al., 2018). This resulted in the individuals' recognition that each identity did not diminish or weaken if they identified as a disabled person first (or vice versa) (Smith, Bundon, & Best, 2016), or even if a disabled identity was occasionally rejected (Huang & Brittain, 2006). This managing of their identities often occurred in a hierarchical format (i.e. athlete first, disabled second), whereby, although one was placed above another, the individual was consciously aware of the role each identity played and the impact it had on them as a whole (e.g. Wickman, 2007; Huang & Brittain, 2006; De Haan, Sotiriadiou, & Henry, 2016). This then allowed the individuals to adopt a collective *disabled athlete identity*.

Dominating the identity as a disabled athlete narrative, was the theme of positive and negative accommodation and how this related to previous or current identities. Some individuals within the review had distanced themselves from the present-self in an attempt to recapture experiences and the past self (pre-disability). This past self, related to their desire to be able-bodied and return to a previous identity of not being disabled (e.g. Day & Wadey, 2016; Hawkins, Coffee, & Soundy, 2014; Lindemann, 2008). Yet, quite often within the accommodation process, growth began to arise after the individual(s) had negotiated distress and achieved a positive identity change (Day, 2013). This revolved primarily around the individual's ability to shape their current identity through storying their experiences and acceptance of their disability (Perrier et al., 2014; Hawkins, Coffee, & Soundy, 2014; Pack, Kelly, & Arvinen-Barrow, 2017). Ultimately, these collective experiences validated the participants' disability identity by providing plurality of points of view, freedom of action of their status being grounded in history (Goodwin et al., 2009).

Meta Synthesis

The studies in the current review provide a comprehensive overview into the identity in disabled sport literature. The extracted data has shown the previous lack of clarity behind understanding the characteristics underpinning the role and subsequent experiences of identity in disability sport. The current review provides data findings outlining the characteristics central to these disabled individuals' experiences and how they influence the development of identity in its varying capacities. Hence, although research within the review has explored (to varying extents) athletic identity and other concepts (post-traumatic growth, trauma, well-being) within a disabled population (e.g. Hawkins, Coffee, & Soundy, 2014; Day & Wadey, 2016; Crawford, Gayman, & Tracey, 2014; Richardson et al., 2017), there remains a paucity of research investigating disabled identity within athletes (Lundquist, 2014; Pack, Kelly, & Arvinen-Barrow, 2017; Huang & Brittain, 2006; Dunn & Burcaw, 2013). Furthermore,

although studies highlighted identity in disabled sport, often it was reference or brief discussion of disabled identity, with little expansion on its role or impact. Consequently, the current synthesis moved beyond brief description, and focused on integrating the reviewed data, in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of identity in disabled sport; characterised by the three pillars of: *identity as disabled*, *identity as athlete*, *and identity as disabled athlete* (*Figure 2.).*

Driven by previous identity research, disabled individuals involved in competitive sport often possess and maintain a disabled athlete identity, consisting of characteristics obtained by being someone with a disability and being an athlete. Akin to the influence of *identity formation* in developmental psychology, and the study of the *self* within social psychology; the *self* is a product of multiple identities (Stryker, 1980) and a multidimensional self-concept (Ronkainen, Kavoura, & Ryba, 2016), which underpins identity, and is influenced through others attributing identity to them and the individual accepting it. Subsequently, the current synthesis proposes an *Iceberg model* (*Figure 2.*) outlining the multi-faceted nature of identity, underpinned by several key concepts.

In understanding the proposed framework (*Figure 2.*), the consideration of the underpinning key concepts is crucial (*social support, growth, traits, meaning, transitions*), whereby the creation of identity for the individual is composed of personal and social identity that contributes to how they 'label' themselves (i.e. athlete, disabled, disabled athlete) (Anderson, 2009). Central to this, was the concept of *social support* and *transitions* (represented in various formats throughout the literature) with stakeholders and other athletes playing a role in how the individual was (or was not) supported during *transitions,* and how this affected the individuals' identity experiences. Individuals' identity benefited from *social support* during the *transition* into rehabilitation, (re)integration into sport, and exit from rehabilitation, through connections and sharing of experiences that allowed them to learn from

others and develop their disabled athlete identity (e.g. Crawford, Gayman, & Tracey, 2014). Yet, the prevalence of a lack of support both during the sporting career and the *transition*s in and out of the sport was significant. One of the most reported difficulties for individuals within the studies was a shortage of information and clarity surrounding support, due to a lack of understanding in disability sport (e.g. Goodwin et al., 2009; Campbell, 2018). Participants often highlighted that those 'offering support' within disability sport (i.e. NGBs, organisations, teams), were unfamiliar with supporting disabled athletes in areas such as classification, retirement and employment. This resulted in the individual being unable to fully invest and focus on their sport, and failing to gain disability-specific life skills to assist in transitioning into future employability and life out of sport (e.g. Campbell, 2018). This imposed further stigmatisation of a disabled identity, and subsequent weakening of athletic and disabled athlete identities, as they were not regarded in the same light as able-bodied athletes (e.g. Bundon et al., 2018; Huang & Brittain, 2006). Although *social support* had increased in recent years that had 'freed' individuals from the need to earn income from other sources; disabled athletes still struggled with their identities as a disabled athlete, due to disability sport associated with inherently disempowering mechanisms, whereby NGBs and organisations focus more on medal count than empowerment (Hutzler & Bergman, 2011). The need for a supportive social and athletic network was consistently identified within the review, with the view that equity will only occur when *social support* includes consideration of the unique transitions (e.g. forced retirement) and discrimination para-athletes are likely to encounter when transitioning into employment (Bundon et al., 2018).

Further underpinning concepts of 'identity as multi-faceted', was that of *Growth* and how that facilitated *Meaning* within the individuals. According to the Organismic Valuing Theory (Joseph & Linley, 2005), prior to trauma, most individuals will hold the world as a relatively safe and free from harm place. However, upon experiencing trauma (i.e.

acquiring/living with a disability), there is discrepancy between these existing assumptions, and how the individual then has to negotiate experiences throughout life and search for meaning (Joseph & Linley, 2008). Although those with a congenital disability may not hold the world in the same regard, the search for *growth* and its subsequent *meaning* displayed similar tendencies across the review.

Meanings associated with the disabled body are to be imperfect, incomplete and inadequate (Hargreaves, 2000). Therefore, in order to experience *growth,* the individuals had undergone some form of traumatic experience associated with their disability, which shattered their core beliefs (Day & Wadey, 2016) and resonated with notions of being 'imperfect, incomplete and inadequate'. The occurrence of *growth* throughout the review was represented in various formats, with sport offering the ability to enhance *growth* and re-establish *meaning* in the individuals' lives (Day, 2013). These *growth* outcomes were often characterised by changes in the perception of self, the interpersonal relationships (i.e. *social support*), and philosophy of life (i.e. *meaning*) engaged in by the individual, and the notion that personal distress and *growth* can coexist (e.g. Crawford, Gayman, & Tracey, 2014; Day & Wadey, 2016). Those who experienced *growth* claimed what it meant to "feel alive", "live in the here and now", and be "fully in the present", whereby *growth* was highlighted by the individuals acknowledging that their situation could have been worse and remaining thankful for what they had (e.g. Crawford, Gayman, & Tracey, 2014; Goodwin, Johnston, Gustafson, Elliott, Thurmeier & Kuttai, 2009). The extent of '*growth*' in the individual was inextricably linked with their identity and the degree to which they identified with being an athlete, disabled or a disabled athlete, which was underpinned by positive and/or negative accommodation. Given the complexity of '*growth*' and its process (Day & Wadey, 2016), the *meaning* individuals' attached to their experiences provided a more coherent understanding of identity within disabled sport. Identity was often found in the search for *meaning* in disability (Dunn &

Burcaw, 2013), with *identity as disabled* characterised by searching for significance, engaging in sense-making and findings benefits of being disabled. Additionally, individuals with *identity as athlete*, identified that it was only by giving recognition to their sporting success that their life was given *meaning* (e.g. Huang & Brittain, 2006; Hawkins, Coffee, & Soundy, 2014; Pack, Kelly, & Arvinen-Barrow, 2017). Ultimately, these *growth* and *meaning* experiences allowed the individuals within the review to explore their boundaries of athletic, disabled and disabled athlete identities, with the reciprocal nature of this relationship facilitating one another's development.

Traits and how they informed *identity as disabled*, *identity as athlete*, and *identity as disabled athlete* provided the final concept. Individuals often opposed the disability narrative of being defined by what he or she 'cannot' do (Huang & Brittain, 2006), through exhibiting *traits* that were closely related to that of being an able-bodied athlete. This conflict with *identity as disabled* and participants not adhering to cultural understandings of disability (i.e. weak and invalid), strongly corresponded with *identity as athlete* and individuals having the ability to demonstrate competence and *traits* linked to perceived ability in sport (Pack, Kelly, & Arvinen-Barrow, 2017). These traits generally consisted of positive attributes including commitment, strength, empowerment, performance, and the individual actively displaying athletic-based skill-sets. However, there were instances of abandonment, isolation and feeling powerless (e.g. Hutzler & Bergman, 2011; Bundon et al., 2018), that needed to be overcome and were directly influenced by the positive attributes.

The disabled individuals' ability to possess 'able-bodied attributes' of strength, fitness, skill, and competitiveness (e.g. Richardson et al., 2017; Perrier et al., 2014; Huang & Brittain, 2006), was underpinned by a master narrative of 'being an athlete'. Yet, the reasons for this narrative differed markedly across the review, with disability either identified as an undesirable personal attribute (e.g. Huang & Brittain, 2006), or disability representing a badge of pride and

unanimity (Pack, Kelly, & Arvinen-Barrow, 2017). Therefore, the *identity as disabled athlete* was gravitated toward through the individuals either distancing or embracing their *identity as disabled,* in order for them to be able to perform in sport. Given that identity refers to the distinctive characteristics attributed to individuals (De Haan, Sotiriadou, & Henry, 2016), the *traits* provided by the participants represent the extent to whether they attributed their identity primarily to being disabled, being an athlete, or being a disabled athlete. These traits were informed by past experiences, personality, ability, physical appearance, values, goals, and social roles (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013).

Future research could look to examine the methodological reflexivity of papers included in the review more meticulously. In most studies, there was minimal justification for why specific data collection and analysis techniques were chosen, with the decision to potentially prioritise findings over methodology a concern (Ronkainen, Kavoura, & Ryba, 2016). For example, Goodwin et al. (2009); Wickman (2007); and Lindemann (2008) amongst others, highlighted the methodological theoretical orientation employed (e.g. phenomenology, ethnography), however, offered a lack of explanation behind why that orientation was preferred over other equally appropriate alternatives. Goodwin et al. (2009) utilised phenomenological methods to analysing data, yet engaged minimally with the central concepts of phenomenology, including intentionality, lived experience, essences and embodiment (Ronkainen, Kavoura, & Ryba, 2016). Furthermore, discussions of data-collection authenticity were often limited and dependent on one or two techniques (e.g. member-checking, triangulation), with little explanation to what the goal was of the chosen technique. Additionally, almost all participants across the reviewed studies were of western societies commonly understood to uphold individualistic ideologies. In acknowledging this, consumers are able to interpret and consider findings from an alternative perspective, and the knowledge and understanding of identity in sport may uphold for disabled athletes competing in other ethnic, societal or cultural contexts.

Despite within-paper limitations, the rich and meaningful data obtained from participants within the review, offers advancement of knowledge within disabled identity sport research. The realist ontology and constructionist epistemology enabled the exploration of new ideas and concepts, whereby athletes, coaches and organisations within disabled sport can benefit from the current research' data findings. This may provide research-informed practice to support and enhance relationships, which may then subsequently facilitate performance and wellbeing.

DISCUSSION

The current review explored identity literature (disabled and athletic) within competitive disabled sport. An *Iceberg model* (Figure 2.) was formulated to outline the multi-faceted nature of identity in disabled sport and synthesise the key research findings. It was found that the 3 main pillars within identity in disabled sport: *identity as athlete, identity as disabled, identity as disabled athlete*; were underpinned by the *social support, growth, traits, meaning,* and *transitions* experienced by the participants in the review. How the current review' results and generated knowledge can advance future research and practice is discussed below.

Through providing a framework (*Figure 2.*), the *Iceberg model* offers a novel way of packaging research within the domain of identity in disabled sport. The model illustrates the key concepts that underpin the theory of *identity as multi-faceted,* and thus what different identities a disabled individual involved in sport can adopt. The individuals' experience of the five concepts (*social support, growth, traits, meaning,* and *transitions),* attempts to understand *how* the 'self' is a product of multiple identities based on circumstance/environment, and *why* the individual 'labels' themselves as either an athlete, disabled, or a disabled athlete (Anderson, 2009). *Figure 2.* addresses this and provides a new understanding of how the 'self' operates,

in terms of how they perceive themselves as someone with a disability and someone competing in sport, and how this subsequently influences them as a person.

As discussed, disabled athletes' identities are fluid, unstable constructs, whereby research has highlighted the need to consider the variety of disability identities rather than a single essentialist disability identity (Shakespeare, 1996). According *to Identity theory*, an identity is a set of 'meanings' applied to *the self* in a social role or situation that defines who one is (Burke & Tully, 1977). This set of *meanings* then serves as a reference point for who one is, whereby the *meaning* affixed to themselves in a role affects how closely they relate to that identity (Burke, 1991). The current review advances our understanding of *identity theory*, by considering key concepts that may influence the degree to which a disabled individual within sport attaches meaning to identity(s). The extent of the individual attaching significance to their *traits, social support, meaning, growth and transition* experiences, will, based on identity theory, have advanced understanding of how and why meaning is attributed to each role (*identity as disabled, athlete, and disabled athlete*).

As identity theory suggests, when a situation is incongruent with the individuals' identity, distress can occur which signals to the individual to remediate the problem discrepancy. The current review highlights that when an individual identifies primarily as an athlete (and vice versa), when in a circumstance that confronts their disability identity, it can cause conflict and difficulty in adjusting to and dealing with the situation. This is when lower levels of attachment to a specific identity often occur and cause an identity 'clash'. However, through further exploration of the underpinning concepts that contribute to an individual's identity in different environments, it enables increased understanding of how 'the self' operates as a whole and why these clashes in identity occur. As the current review has enhanced clarity and understanding around the various roles and identities a disabled individual may have, it offers knowledge on how these may subsequently affect their life in and out of sport. Given

that disabled individuals must continually negotiate the relationship between body, socially constructed disability, and identity (Huang & Brittain, 2006); it is imperative to continue research in a similar light to the current review, in order to give the reader and wider society more clarity when interacting with disabled individuals, especially within sport.

The current review's in-depth examination of the role of identity within disabled sport has a clear applied focus. The identification of mechanisms underpinning 'identity as athlete', 'identity as disabled', and 'identity as disabled athlete', enables practitioners to adjust their prospective interventions around identity. These underpinning concepts (*traits, growth, social support, meaning, transitions*) provide valuable information on the process by which individuals develop considerable investment in sport (Stephan & Brewer, 2007). Thus, sport psychology practitioners interested in optimising athletes' performance and wellbeing could focus their attention and intervention toward specific sources known to influence these concepts, and indirectly contribute to increased investment (and potential performance) in sport. Moreover, amongst organisations and practitioners concerned that athletes may encounter identity issues in association with sport career transitions or termination, the current review provides insight into the factors that are potentially distressful for the identity of the individual. For example, if an individual displays high levels of commitment towards 'identity as athlete', if that individual experiences a setback regarding their disability that influences their ability to compete in sport, it may cause significant distress with negative repercussions surrounding performance and wellbeing. This is especially pertinent during transitions into rehabilitation, (re)integration into sport, and exit from rehabilitation, whereby the current review highlights the significance of social support and mutual understanding during these encounters, which greatly benefits the individual in overcoming potentially traumatic experiences. Practically, this highlights the need for interventions surrounding maintenance of an identity to consider anticipating and preventing prospective issues when the individual

experiences the above, and/or termination of their career. Through the current review, the practitioner(s) will have a heightened awareness of the impact of the individuals' identity in each area (disability, sport), and thus can best tailor their support through understanding this. For example, the practitioner may wish to work on disability-specific life skills to assist in future employability for the individual, so that they are then able to be less reliant on their identity as an athlete, and have a more holistic understanding of their skill-set.

The current review employed a purely qualitative data-collection methodology, and thus disregarded research conducted within quantitative research articles. Subsequently, as the reviewed data was descriptive in nature, it cannot stress the strength of the relationship and substantiate causal inferences between participant experiences and the subsequent role and impact of identity in their sport. Furthermore, given the lack of coherence in presented theoretical orientations, it often made it difficult to follow how authors had worked with the concept in the reviewed studies. The paradigmatic and theoretical approaches adopted in the current disabled identity research have principally focused on an interpretive approach with its emphasis on fluid, contextual, and socially constructed identities. Yet, given the diversity in theoretical and methodological approaches within identity research (Ronkainen, Kavoura, & Ryba, 2016), the current review incorporated various other theoretical orientations. Although the current review included studies with a clear justification of their philosophical underpinnings of the theoretical or methodological approach adopted; given the plethora of theoretical orientations, it is crucial for future studies to specify which theoretical perspective has guided their interpretation (Ronkainen, Kavoura, & Ryba, 2016). Therefore, future researchers may wish to employ mixed-method data-collection methodologies, combining the richness of qualitative data alongside the systematic standardised comparisons drawn from quantitative data methodologies. These will clearly justify the relevance of the theoretical orientation chosen and how it influences the subsequent data extraction, as there still remains

a lack of clarity around this within the papers included in the current review. These may indicate the quantitative value of each underpinning concept (i.e. *growth*) in the individuals' identity(s), followed by a qualitative exploration of why this is and its significance as a whole on their *self*. What has still been achieved however, is an advancement of theory which can help inform and inspire future experimental research and evidence-based practice recommendations.

The data discussed herein was rich and descriptive at its source. 18 qualitative research articles (involving 1 document analysis) were investigated, involving some 244 participants' experiences of the role of identity in disabled sport and its impact. The detailed accounts of intricate experiences provide guidance and a solid foundation for future research to build upon, which would have been unattainable from any single study review or those employing quantitative methodologies. The inclusion of a document analysis (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013) gathering research from six published narrative sources, allows for a creative way of looking at disabled identity research. This allowed researchers to identify and make sense out of thematic similarities and differences across several narratives, and presents a potential line of enquiry for future research to explore, given its resourcefulness in capturing meaningful data. However, there still remains opportunity for advancement of research, through considering the limitations of the papers in the current review. Further reviews in the area may wish to explore and include research from additional cultures and languages. The present review solely included research written in English, and although research in the main may not be impacted through this, searching for non-English studies should likely be considered in future research on a case-by-case basis (Hartling et al., 2017), whereby certain areas and themes within disabled identity research may be more prominent in other languages. Moreover, given the dominance of western samples (exception of 1 article), a percentage of opinion may well be missing from the synthesis that may be represented in more depth in non-Western cultures.

Incorporating non-Western cultures may provide additional socio-economic, cultural and societal differences that influence the role of identity within disabled sport, and thus requires further investigation. The included research only spans approximately 12 years of investigation. However, due to the youthful nature of the research area (identity in disabled sport), it is hoped that such ends justify the current means and that the up-to-date, rich qualitative investigation provides an avenue for future research to cast an even wider net to capture missing research in the present synthesis.

In summary, the current review attempts to organise and advance knowledge concerning the role of identity in disability sport, in order to view the 'bigger picture' (Bhaskar, 1989). Identity is best considered as multi-faceted, with the individual adhering to a specific identity based on the situational-context, be that *disabled*, an *athlete* or a *disabled athlete*. There are numerous underpinning features that influence whether the individual adopts the identity, with the current review highlighting the role of *growth, meaning, traits, transition, and social support,* in the individuals' experiences in and out of sport and their disability. Ultimately, the amalgamation of the circumstance and environment, and the underpinning characteristics, will influence the degree to which the individual adopts a specific identity and the relation of this to *the self*. Directions for continued research, tutelage and practice in this regard have been discussed and are hoped to support the continued development of research in the area for the use within applied practice.

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Table 1. Key methodological and theoretical features of primary research reports

Study	Purpose	Country of origin	Sample characteristics	Method theoretical orientations	Data collection	Data analysis	Use of Guiding Theory
Bundon, Ashton, Smith, & Goosey-Tolfrey (2018)	Explore the retirement experiences of elite Paralympic athletes.	United Kingdom	60 retired Para-athletes: Paralympians (48) and International Para-athletes (12).	Interpretivist approach, underpinned by ontological relativism	Online Survey.	Thematic analysis.	**Not clearly stated**
Campbell (2018)	Presents the narrative accounts of six elite student-Para-athletes attending higher education full time.	United Kingdom	6 Paralympic athletes.	Interpretivist Phenomenological Approach	Semi-structured Interviews.	IPA (Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis).	Sociology (Bauman's liquid modernity, 2000)
Crawford, Gayman & Tracey (2014)	Examines Post-traumatic growth of Parasport athletes with acquired SCI.	Canada & United States	12 Parasport Spinal Cord Injury athletes	Phenomenological Approach (Patton, 2002)	Survey and Semi-structured Interviews.	Content Analysis (Tesch, 1990) using Interpretational Analysis.	**Not clearly stated**
Day & Wadey (2016)	Explore how participation in sport may assist an individual in working through experiences of physical trauma.	United Kingdom	2 acquired disability athletes	Relativist Approach	Interviews.	Narrative Analysis	**Not clearly stated**

Hawkins, Coffee & Soundy (2014)	Establish how sport, and access to an athletic identity, has been used when adjusting to a spinal cord injury.	United Kingdom	8 Wheelchair Badminton Athletes	**Not clearly stated**	Semi-structured Interviews.	Thematic Analysis	**Not clearly stated**
Lindemann (2008)	Highlight tactical performances of disability that challenge ableist assumptions.	United States	Quad Rugby Players (number unavailable)	Ethnographic Approach	Mixed-method (3 year Ethnographic study)	Document Analysis/Goffman Frame Analysis	Performance Theory (Schechner)
Lundquist (2014)	Examine the influence of riding on the identity construction of people with disabilities.	**Not Stated**	15 Disabled Horse Riders	**Not clearly stated**	Interviews	Systematic Analysis	Identity theory
Pack, Kelly & Arvinen-Barrow (2017)	Explore the role of swimming on Paralympic athletes' perceptions of self and identity development.	United Kingdom	5 Paralympic Swimmers	Hermeneutic Phenomenological Approach	Semi-structured Interviews	IPA (Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis)	**Not clearly stated, likely identity theory**
Perrier, Smith, Strachan, & Latimer-Cheung (2014)	Explore why athletic identity may be lost or (re)developed after	United States	11 Paraplegic athletes	Interpretivist Approach	Semi-structured Interviews	Narrative Analysis	Identity Theory

	acquiring a physical disability.						
Richardson, Papathomas , Smith, & Goosey-Tolfrey (2017)	Investigating how and why sports participation impacts psychosocial well-being in disabled sport.	Multiple Countries	16 Wheelchair Tennis players	Interpretivist Approach (Relativist ontology and Constructionist Epistemology)	Semi-Structured Interviews	Thematic Analysis	**Not clearly stated**
Smith, Bundon & Best (2016)	Examining narratives of activism amongst elite athletes with impairment and their adoption/rejection of various activist identities.	United Kingdom	36 disabled athletes (amputation, cerebral palsy, SCI, visual impairment)	Ontological Relativism (reality is multiple, created, and mind-dependent) and Epistemological Constructionism (knowledge is constructed and subjective)	Interviews and Fieldwork Observations	Narrative Thematic Analysis	Narrative Theory
Wickman (2007)	Illuminates the meaning-making processes through which athletes construct and manage their identities.	Sweden	9 Wheelchair athletes	Feminist Poststructuralist Approach	Semi-structured Interviews	Systematic analysis	**Not clearly stated**
Huang & Brittain (2006)	Explore the multiplicity and complexity of	Multiple Countries	21 British and Taiwanese elite powerlifting and track and field disabled athletes.	Humanistic		Immersion/crystallisation method (Borkan, 1999)	**Not clearly stated, (likely Identity Theory)**
Day (2013)							

	identity construction for elite disabled athletes.				Interviews (Life History Approach)		
Dunn & Burcaw (2013)	Explore Paralympic athletes' lived experiences of becoming physically active after disability - role of PTG	United Kingdom	7 Paralympic Athletes with Acquired Disabilities	Relativist Approach	Life History Interviews	Holistic Content Analysis	Functional Descriptive Model of Post-Traumatic Growth, & Organismic Valuing Theory of Growth. (Joseph & Linley, 2005)
Hutzler & Bergman (2011)	Review Disabled Identity.	Multiple Countries	Six narratives (e.g., articles, chapters, books, blogs) written by people with disabilities.	Disability Activism	Six narratives (e.g., articles, chapters, books, blogs) written by people with disabilities.	Narrative Analysis	**Not stated**
De Haan, Sotiriadou & Henry (2016)	Explore mediating factors to pursuing a competitive swimming career as well as attributes of participation in disabled swimming.	Israel	9 retired international disabled swimmers (CP, SCI, Polio & Amputated).	**Not stated**	Focus Group	Inductive Content Analysis	**Not stated**
Goodwin, Johnston, Gustafson, Elliott, Thurmeier,	Ethnographic evaluation of	United Kingdom	28 Olympic/Paralympic equestrian athletes	Critical realist ontology and epistemology		Ethnographic content analysis	**Not stated**

and Kuttai (2009)	Paralympic/Olympic equestrian athlete's experiences.	Canada	11 National rugby players	Phenomenology	Semi-structured Interviews	Inductive Analysis (thematic analysis)	Community theory (McMillan, 1996; McMillan & Chavis, 1986)
	Explored the social experience of wheelchair rugby (including community and fulfillment)				Semi-structured Interviews		

Table 2. Main findings from primary research reports.

Study	Main findings Identity as athlete	Identity as disabled	Identity as a disabled athlete
Bundon, Ashton, Smith, & Goosey-Tolfrey (2018)	Study contributes to how empirical work explores how integration with Olympic sport has an effect on athletic identities.	Leaving sport may raise unresolved emotions about the traumatic event and their identity as a person with a disability.	Sport is an everyday space where disabled identities are (re)produced and have the potential to further oppress people with disabilities and transform societal understandings of disability.

		Study contributes to how empirical work explores how integration with Olympic sport has an effect on disabled identities.	Better understanding of retirement, coping, wellbeing and identity in disability sport from sport psychs. PL advisors and researchers.
Campbell (2018)	Shared identity conferred by the label 'athlete', with each participant providing examples of what they consider to be the similar core characteristics displayed by individuals who claimed ownership of that title. The only shared element of this identity was the impetus for their sporting career. It is the creation, acquisition and strength of the 'athlete' identity that allows for such diverse meanings to attach to the participants' experiences of higher education as a student with a disability.	Academics are yet to explore an individualistic consideration of 'identity' for UK-based university students with a disability that transcends the issues of scholarship as a 'disabled student'. However, papers fail to differentiate the impairments of the students, which only serves to fuel the concept that the term 'disabled' is an all-encompassing social and personal identity. At best, this concept is highly offensive and at worst is severely handicapping. The identity of 'disabled', whether independent or linked to the 'student' or 'athlete' identity, demonstrated least parity across all accounts.	Despite knowing that all participants broadly share similar life environments (sport, university, disability), their accounts regarding personal identity were thoroughly diverse. This highlights that the participants are not a 'group' of elite student-para-athletes, but rather a collective of individuals – all experiencing their multiple yet individual and social identities very singularly within the communal understanding of 'university' and 'sport' and 'disability'.
Crawford, Gayman & Tracey (2014)	Forced new athletic identity after injury, as cannot return to sport in the same manner. Reintegration into sport re-established their athletic identity. However, there are difficulties in establishing this new athletic identity after SCI.	Forced new identity following injury required participants to confront new life circumstances including how to travel in a wheelchair.	Loss of identity due to radical changes in body image/functioning following SCI was a significant source of stress. Participants revealed importance of establishing identity after the trauma by re-identifying with the sport or identifying with the sport for the 1st time.
Day & Wadey (2016)	Attempt to recapture past identity as an athlete before their injury/disability. Involves recapturing previous life meanings and creating an athletic identity using past definitions of sport.	Early memories of disability based around inability to achieve basic tasks. Daily reminder of their disability resulting in feelings of incompetence and vulnerability. This can lead to positive and/or negative accommodation.	Positive accommodation contradicted early beliefs and focused on an emerging belief in potential of becoming a disabled athlete.

			Negative accommodation attempted to recapture past experiences and past self (pre-disability). Continual downwards comparison to others with a disability, with a view of being better than them.
Hawkins, Coffee & Soundy (2014)	Participants' consistent athletic identity provided a buffer to the effects of loss and limitations due to SCI. Hence, an individual's athletic identity was used and valued as an essential factor that assists in adjustment process.	Individuals are simultaneously impelled to accept and defy limitations of their disability.	Some participants hoped for previous past-identity/self. Participants could hope for a cure, express desire for able-bodied sport and worries for future, whilst, simultaneously accepting what had happened.
Lindemann (2008)	Performances may also reify ableist notions of competitiveness, athleticism, and the body. By gaining strength and mobility, though, participants may emulate an idealized athletic body.	Resist the medicalized gaze that others disabled persons, by affixing disability as a static marker of identity. Disabled persons occupy a liminal state, where one is between identities.	Quad rugby players perform a reversal of passing that subverts the gaze of medical professionals who seek to affix a level of impairment with a particular athletic identity.
Lundquist (2014)	People know them first and foremost as a rider, then as a person with a disability.	People with disabilities WILL HAVE a disability identity, but how strong or dominant this is will vary.	Participants either acquire a new identity as a rider or resume their previous identity pre-disability. Riding offers a link to their previous lives, with it helping focus on what they can do, and not what they cannot do.
Pack, Kelly, & Arvinen-Barrow (2017)	Participation and competing in swimming facilitated overall quality of life by enhancing movement capability and maintaining an athletic identity.	Participants didn't view themselves as having lost something or as being disabled, nor as supercrips.	Participation in swimming facilitated self and social acceptance and identity development. This also allowed the opportunity to present and reinforce a positive identity both personal and social.

Perrier, Smith, Strachan, & Latimer-Cheung (2014)	The athlete as a future self primarily focused on present sport behaviour such that behaviour changes diminished athletic identity.	Non-athlete narratives describe physical changes in the body as reasons for diminished athletic identity.	Individuals shape identity through storying their experience and the structure of such stories. Behavior does not necessarily lead to validation of an identity as an athlete for some individuals, and moreover, how and why others could be drawn to develop an athletic identity after acquiring a disability.
Richardson, Papathomas, Smith, & Goosey-Tolfrey (2017)	By embodying an athletic identity, participants perceived this athletic narrative overpowered a disability narrative that enabled them to be seen as athletes.	Identity as someone who is disabled, is overpowered by an identity as an athlete.	Participating in wheelchair tennis helps accept and get used to their new identity as someone with a disability well as being able to integrate in society.
Smith, Bundon & Best (2016)	The majority of the participants confined activist behaviours to advocating for change inside sport	Acting as counter-narratives, identity discourses of political activism and 'I am a disabled athlete' resist disablism and circulate affirmative identities. In so doing, these discourses hold great potential for evoking social change and generating positive ways of being a disabled person.	Identifying as a disabled person first and then an athlete second did not mean that the participant's identification with an athletic identity was weak or diminished.
Wickman (2007)	Participants prefer their identity as elite athletes and actively produce and maintain this identity by representing themselves as wheelchair racers. Sometimes, however, they must literally fight for this identity, as this status is not always acknowledged by other people.	In order to construct their identities in accordance with the discourse of able-ism, the athletes in this sample differentiate themselves from the "others" – those with severe impairments.	Managed their own identities by "othering", of reconstructing hierarchies, and/or repositioning themselves in relation to hierarchies that are already part of the sport, gender and disability discourses
Huang & Brittain (2006)	The role of elite athlete is regarded as a master identity. They are proud to be in front of others as elite athletes instead of just being another disabled person.	Most of the Taiwanese participants defined themselves as disabled people. Many people with an impairment are negatively labelled and identify themselves as disabled people.	I am impaired but I'm not disabled. However, despite rejecting a disabled identity, participants are all consciously aware of the physical difference that their

			individual impairments have from what they have been socially programmed to recognise as 'normal'.
Day (2013)	All participants identified themselves as successful athletes. Athletes participating in the Paralympic Games demonstrate the ability to make new life meanings after trauma and consequently may have experienced psychological growth.	Disability identity and its limitations can be made more apparent through sport. All participants reported difficulties in adjusting to their disability.	Growth will occur after an individual is able to negotiate distress and achieve a positive change in identity. Yet physical activity experiences often served to highlight identity changes perceived as negative, and consequently heightened distress. Success and achievements suggest that these athletes may embody the 'supercrip', an impaired athlete who is highly competitive and triumphs over tragedy.
Dunn & Burcaw (2013)	N/A	Disability qualifies as another identity context, one that clearly marks individuals as part of a group and as members of a minority, sometimes subject to prejudice or discrimination.	Disability identity entails a positive sense of self, feelings of connection with the disability community. Disability identity helps individuals adapt to disability.
Hutzler & Bergman (2011)	Identity as athlete: Feeling as being part of an elite group. Learned helplessness may occur if athletic and able-bodied social identity are not addressed.	Social-environmental factors are crucial as facilitators to maintain the career of swimmers with disability.	Elite disability sports is often associated with inherently disempowering mechanisms.
De Haan, Sotiriadiou & Henry (2016)	Identity often associated in individual disciplines in horse riding (e.g. Paralympic, dressage etc.). However, identity of a rider as collective is distinctive due to 'the horse being the most important part'.	Identity of being a rider is superior to being able-bodied or disabled.	Identity of a rider is used that is inclusive of both able-bodied and disabled athletes.

Goodwin, Johnston, Gustafson, Elliott, Thurmeier, & Kuttai (2009)	Athletes identified with a shared sense of community and the membership, fulfilment of need, influence, and shared emotional connections they used to express themselves through sport.	Identifying with being disabled and its lifestyle was fundamental to wheelchair rugby identity. However, understanding how disabled people perceive themselves and how they wish to be perceived by others is essential in defining the emerging identity of disabled people.	Participants validated their disability identity by providing plurality of points of view, freedom of action, and status that is grounded in history.

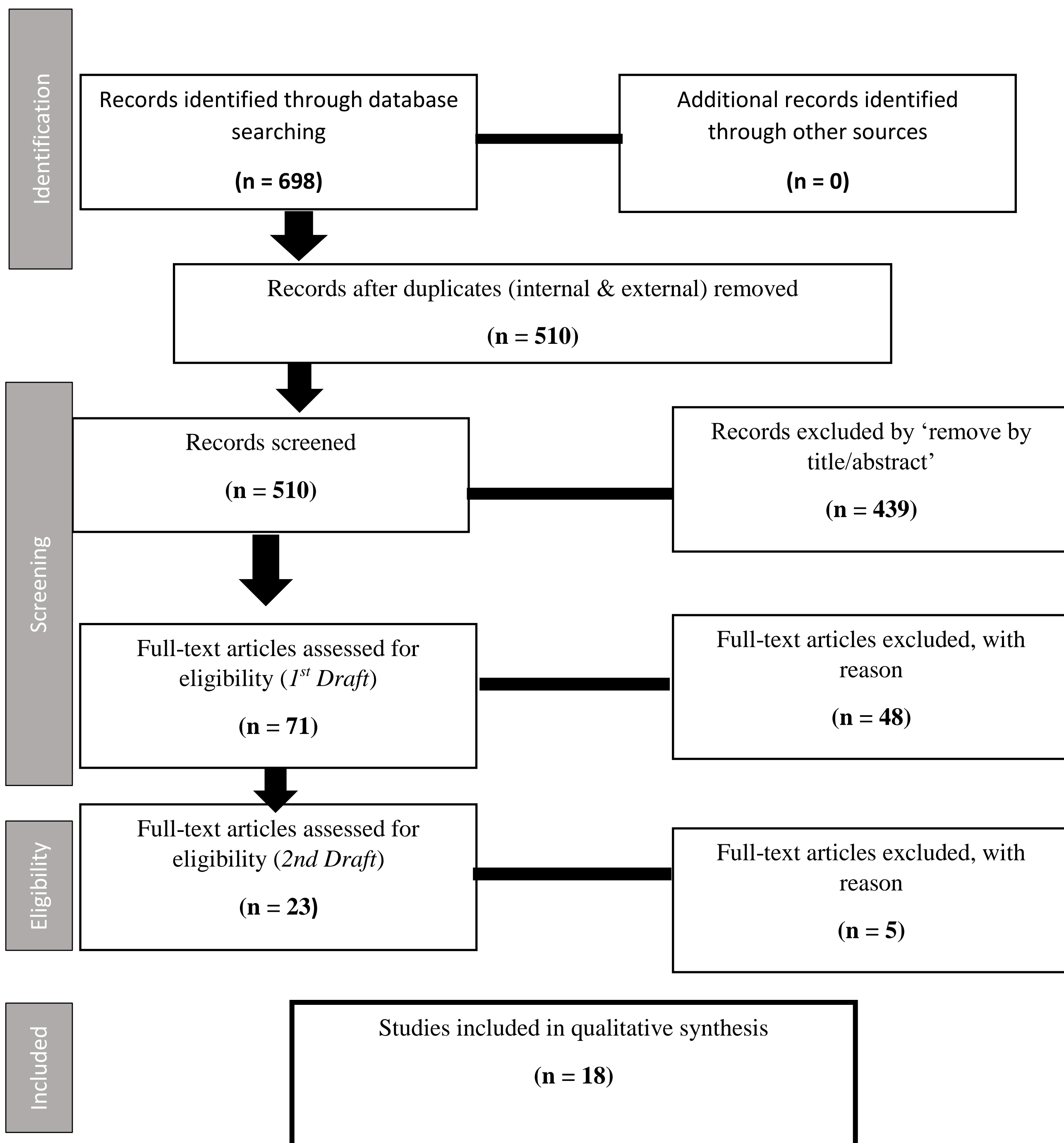

Figure 1. PRISMA Search Strategy Flow Diagram

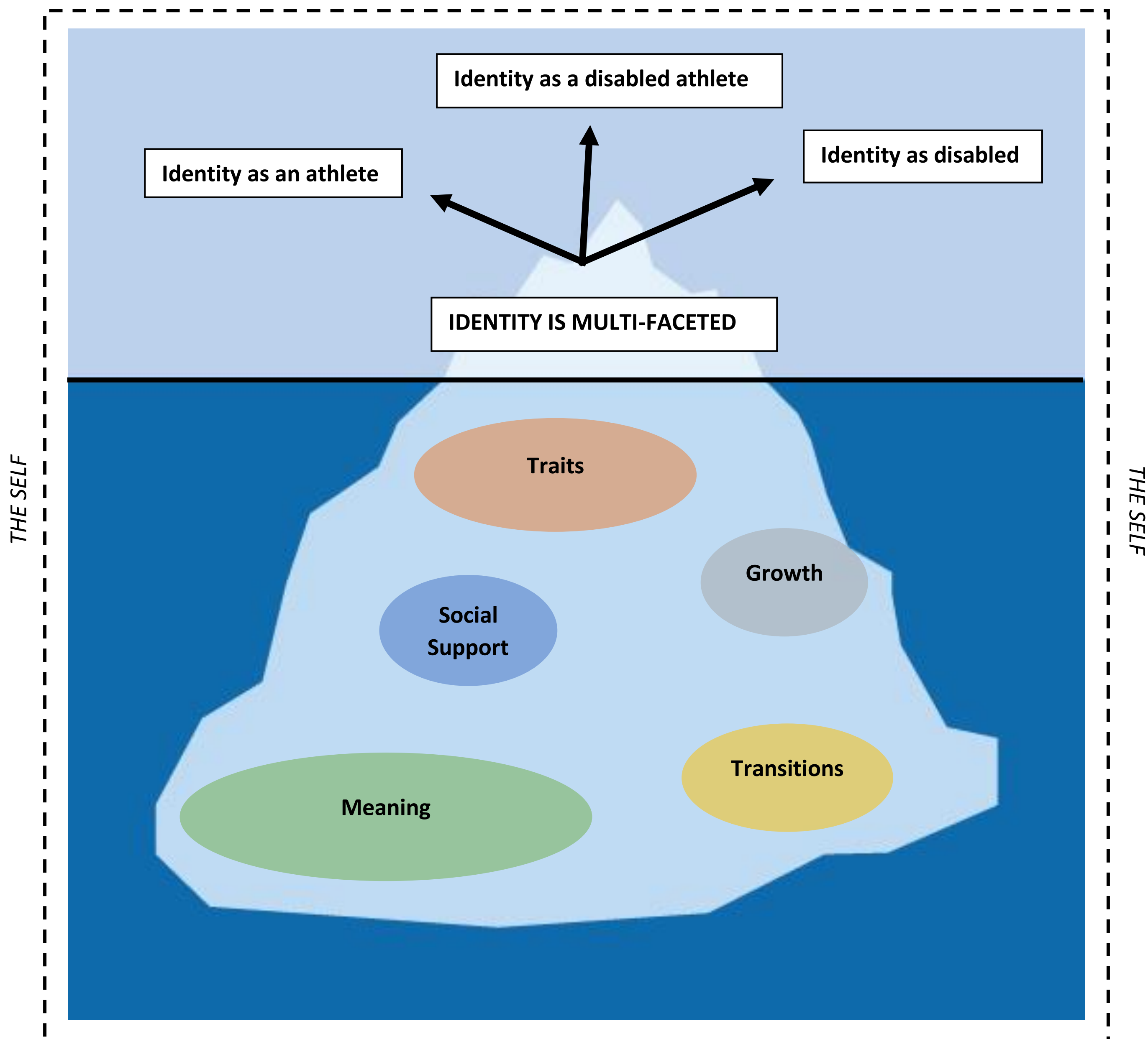

Figure 2. Identity in disabled sport is a multi-faceted concept underpinned by several key characteristics.

Appendix A: Enhancing Transparency in Reporting the Synthesis of Qualitative Research (ENTREQ) Statement.

No	Item	Guide and description	Page
1	Aim	State the research question the synthesis addresses.	7
2	Synthesis methodology	Identify the synthesis methodology/theoretical framework, which underpins the synthesis, and describe the rationale for choice of methodology (meta-ethnography, thematic synthesis, critical interpretive synthesis, grounded theory synthesis, realist synthesis, meta-aggregation, meta-study, framework synthesis).	7
3	Approach to searching	Indicate whether the search was pre-planned (comprehensive search strategies to seek all available studies) or iterative (to seek all available concepts until they theoretical saturation is achieved).	8
4	Inclusion criteria	Specify the inclusion/exclusion criteria (e.g. in terms of population, language, year limits, type of publication, study type).	8-9
5	Data sources	Describe the information sources used (e.g. electronic databases (MEDLINE, EMBASE, CINAHL, psycINFO, Econlit), grey literature databases (digital thesis, policy reports), relevant organizational websites, experts, information specialists, generic web searches (Google Scholar) hand searching, reference lists) and when the searches conducted; provide the rationale for using the data sources.	8-10
6	Electronic Search strategy	Describe the literature search (e.g. provide electronic search strategies with population terms, clinical or health topic terms, experiential or social phenomena related terms, filters for qualitative research, and search limits).	8-10
7	Study screening methods	Describe the process of study screening and sifting (e.g. title, abstract and full text review, number of independent reviewers who screened studies).	9-10
8	Study characteristics	Present the characteristics of the included studies (e.g. year of publication, country, population, number of participants, data collection, methodology, analysis, research questions).	Table 2
9	Study selection results	Identify the number of studies screened and provide reasons for study exclusion (e.g. for comprehensive searching, provide numbers of studies screened and reasons for exclusion indicated in a figure/flowchart; for iterative searching describe reasons for study exclusion and inclusion based on modifications of the research question and/or contribution to theory development).	9-10 + Figure 1
10	Rationale for appraisal	Describe the rationale and approach used to appraise the included studies or selected findings (e.g. assessment of conduct (validity and robustness), assessment of reporting (transparency), and assessment of content and utility of the findings).	10-13
11	Appraisal items	State the tools, frameworks and criteria used to appraise the studies or selected findings (e.g. Existing tools: CASP, QARI, COREQ, Mays and Pope [25]; reviewer developed tools; describe the domains assessed: research team, study design, data analysis and interpretations, reporting).	7-12
12	Appraisal process	Indicate whether more than one reviewer conducted the appraisal independently and if consensus was required.	12-13
13	Appraisal results	Present results of the quality assessment, indicate which articles if any, were weighted/excluded based on the assessment, and give the rationale.	8-10
14	Data extraction	Indicate which sections of the primary studies were analyzed and how were the data extracted from the primary studies? (E.g. all text under the headings "results /conclusions" were extracted electronically and entered into a computer software).	10-12
15	Software	State the computer software used, if any.	9
16	Number of reviewers	Identify who was involved in coding and analysis.	12-13
17	Coding	Describe the process for coding of data (e.g. line by line coding to search for concepts).	10-13
18	Study comparison	Describe how were comparisons made within and across studies (e.g. subsequent studies were coded into pre-existing concepts, and new concepts were created when deemed necessary).	10-13
19	Derivation of themes	Explain whether the process of deriving the themes or constructs was inductive or deductive.	11
20	Quotations	Provide quotations from the primary studies to illustrate themes/constructs and identify whether the quotations were participant quotations of the author's interpretation.	N/A
21	Synthesis output	Present rich, compelling and useful results that go beyond a summary of the primary studies (e.g. new interpretation, models of evidence, conceptual models, analytical framework, development of a new theory or construct).	16-30

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EMPIRICAL RESEARCH PAPER 1

“Well-being isn’t managed… it’s a natural consequence of working in a high performance environment”: The psychological well-being experiences of stakeholders working in Para-Football

Abstract

This study investigated the psychological well-being experiences of Para-Football stakeholders (coaches, managers, doctors, and support staff). Nine stakeholders took part in a semi-structured interview, with thematic narrative analysis used to explore core well-being components. Findings revealed that stakeholders’ well-being was impacted by four core components: a) perception of disability sport, b) work-life balance, c) overcoming barriers to well-being, and d) finding purpose and meaning, which consequently impacted on the stakeholders’ ability to provide effective support within Para-Football. This was managed effectively through self-care measures (exercise, health) and negotiating a balance between personal and professional roles. However, the demands of Para-Football also negatively impacted stakeholders’ psychological well-being, with repercussions of burnout, fatigue, and a lack of effectiveness. The applied implications outline the need for further investigation of the culture of Para-Football and its impact on its constituents, especially given the infancy of the field.

Keywords: psychological well-being; para-football; stakeholders; disability

Introduction

There has been a continuous increase in opportunities for athletes with disabilities to compete in elite sport (Marin-Urquiza et al., 2018). In recent years, disability football has undergone a range of developments from grassroots to elite level (Macbeth & Magee, 2006). These developments have caused a shift from a disaggregated approach towards a more aggregated approach (Macbeth, 2009). A core theme within this, is the development and impact sport can have on the psychological well-being (PWB) of disabled people (Caddick & Smith, 2014). Consequently, as a primary source of support for disabled individuals, stakeholders are valuable in offering options for physical and psychological development (Lundqvist & Sandin, 2014). However, an overcommitment to a role often comes at the expense of other aspects of their life (Horton & Mack, 2000). These individuals who support players through sporting and wider-life experiences, have generally received a lack of research attention within this domain. Social roles (being a stakeholder), which an individual holds in sport, often have salutary effects on PWB as they are identities that provide individuals with purpose and meaning in life (Thoits, 2012). Consequently, those involved in a supporting role will often experience a reduction in psychological distress and enhance physical health (Thoits, 2012) through the various roles they hold in and out of the sport.

PWB derives from the *eudaimonic* tradition of philosophical thought, which considers well-being in terms of flourishing and the fulfilment of human potential (Ryan & Deci, 2001). This emphasises six key elements: a sense of self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, a sense of purpose in life, living with a degree of self-determination or autonomy, an ability to manage one's environment effectively, and feeling that one is growing or progressing towards one's potential (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002). This moves away from the *hedonic* tradition, which emphasises that pleasure directly results in positive psychological health (Ryff, 1989), and instead incorporates a more diverse set of

principles that accounts for potential variations between individuals. What remains critical, is the need to better understand well-being within a field in its infancy, with stakeholders and social support amongst the key areas (Morris, Tod, & Oliver, 2016) to maintaining consistency in how PWB is understood in the disability environment. High-level sport, contains various physical and psychosocial stressors, which often either beneficially or detrimentally influence the individual's PWB (Bartholomew et al., 2011). Therefore, it is crucial that the athlete and those invested in the athlete, maintain synergy in facilitating the individual to fulfil their potential (McCalla & Fitzpatrick, 2016), with PWB central to this.

Historically, frameworks exploring how having a disability impacts your place in society, have located the problem of disability as being in the individual (Oliver, 1996). Initially, the Medical Model proposed an individual's deficiency was caused by a physiological or biological defect (Shapiro et al., 2012), with these individuals grouped by their disabling conditions, with a focus on symptoms and characteristics (Stanish, 2005). This model allowed for individual limitation to be grouped and applied to a societal level, with little consideration to how the environment may affect a person's functional abilities. Subsequently, this provided a basis for exclusion from society, and also the sanctioned exclusion from sport (DePauw & Gavron, 2005). Therefore, it is unsurprising that the medical model has provided societal divide and conflict in perceptions of disability. This has often addressed what the individual 'cannot do', as opposed to what they 'can do' (Lundquist-Wanneberg, 2014), and as a result, those with a disability often experience exclusion, feelings of unbelonging, and dependency upon varying levels of personal and social support (Kenttä & Corban, 2014). This directly conflicts with PWB tendencies of self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, and self-determination, amongst other core elements. With this in mind, investigating stakeholders based on the attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency, and identifying their underlying needs and expectations of

individuals, may allow resources to be efficiently allocated to support those in and out of the environment with a disability (Friedman et al., 2004).

The tension highlighted above, has resulted in disability activists proposing the social model of disability, which actively allocates the disability within society and does not deny it. The social model advocates disability as being different, and not less than, which has led to 'barrier removal' and promotion of disabled individual's empowerment (Barnes, 2003). A focus on positive terminology with disability has seen the value of the person come to the forefront, and the individual empowered to take an active role in their life. As a result, differences are 'celebrated' rather than 'questioned', and results in individuals embracing their disability, as oppose to hiding it (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013). There is now a greater shift towards the abilities of people with disabilities, and sport policies now formally acknowledge a conception of disability in line with the social model (French & Hainsworth, 2001). However, when applying this to sport, disability football research has invested its focus on those with a disability being involved as a player, referee, administrator, coach, or spectator (FA, 2010). Yet, although stakeholders have contributed to the development of how those with a disability and how disability sport itself are perceived, there remains a paucity of research exploring the considerations and benefits of a stakeholder involved in the sport and the impact this has on their PWB. Sport provides meaning and fulfilment to an individual's life, as such, the existing staff who assist with participation in adapted sport (Caddick & Smith, 2014) needs to be explored further to advance the field of disability football. With the FA now actively engaging with disabled groups and including equity and equality issues as a core requirement of their development programme (UK Sport, 2003); the role of stakeholders in the process is crucial to enhancing understanding moving forward. As provided by Shapiro et al. (2012), enhancing the knowledge of disability sport is crucial, so that the delivery of sport programs/services/support to people with disabilities are enhanced.

Those working within a stakeholder capacity (coaches, staff) in disability sport face significant challenges to develop the sport, through providing appropriate services and opportunities to ensure the needs of disabled people are taken into account. However, as outlined, the spotlight has remained firmly fixed on the PWB experiences of the athletes. Given the very definition of a 'stakeholder', is any individual or group who can affect the organisations' performance or who is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives (Freeman, 1984), it is surprising that these individuals' roles have not been explored further. A stakeholders' PWB and the six key dimensions listed above, will likely impact, and be impacted by the support they deliver and receive both in and out of the Para-Football domain. Alongside the promotion and empowerment of disabled individuals, stakeholders will likely provide PWB support to individuals, for the increased inclusion and barrier removal that is observed within the domain. However, given the core misunderstandings of staff in relation to people with a disability (French & Hainsworth, 2001), it is crucial to identify and understand stakeholders with different affiliations to the athlete and their perspectives, and how they inform the construction of the most accurate portrayal of the phenomenon (Cresswell, 2007). These stakeholder accounts will enhance research in an under-developed area in disability football (Macbeth, 2009). Furthermore, there has been general weakness in information provision, inadequacies in staff availability and provision of sports advisors, a lack of staff training and disability awareness, and also a lack of consistency and informed planning in existing provision (French & Hainsworth, 2001). Therefore, understanding the stakeholders' experiences and motivations for working in disability sport may address some of these issues.

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of multiple stakeholders (coaches, managers, support staff) involved in Para-Football and the impact these experiences had on their PWB. The specific aims of the research were to understand, a)

the impact of PWB on the participants' personal life and how this was managed; b) the role of PWB in the participants' role as a Para-Football stakeholder.

Method

The present study was accepted by Liverpool John Moores University research ethics committee.

Philosophical Assumptions

This study was informed by a critical realist ontology and constructivist epistemology. This allowed the primary researcher to adopt an approach to data collection and analysis that appreciated the individuality of each persons' experience, and that they likely perceive reality differently. This advocates the discussion of multiple realities rather than a single reality that is the same for everyone (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Therefore, the participants' individual, subjective interpretations of reality and experiences, are combined into a coherent whole to advance understanding. These ontological and epistemological approaches fell within an interpretivist paradigm, whereby single theories and concepts are often too simplistic to represent the full richness of the social world (Isaeva et al., 2015). Therefore, diversity in participant interpretations and the more understandings that are created through experiences and research (Crotty, 1998; Hatch & Yanow, 2003), accepts that social actors may create partially shared meanings and realities, but also may have different opinions and narratives that help account for different social realities (Isaeva et al., 2015).

Participants

Nine participants consented to take part in the study. The participants were all involved in a stakeholder capacity (Head Coach, Assistant Head Coach, Team Manager, Sports Psychologist, Doctor, and Physical Performance, and Classification Manager) with an England Para-Football team. Evaluative criteria assessed the quality of the study (Roulston, 2010), with participants recruited through maximum variation and criterion-based purposive

sampling strategies (Smith & Sparkes, 2014). This sampling allowed for a variety of Para-Football stakeholder roles across the squads. Potential participants were initially approached through a gatekeeper, who had viable access to each Para-Football squad in their role as Sports Psychologist for the England Cerebral Palsy squad, and co-ordinator for England Para-Football Sport Psychologists. Participants were provided with an information sheet outlining the nature of the study and what their involvement consisted of. Following this, a date was agreed to collect data on the participant's experiences of PWB in Para-Football.

Data Collection

This study employed a qualitative-based approach, with participants partaking in semi-structured interviews designed to explore the role of PWB in stakeholder experiences. The interview format consisted of two sections, with section one exploring the *conceptualised psychological well-being* of the stakeholder and how they defined PWB in their own sphere; section two consisted of the *contextualised psychological well-being* of the stakeholder and the role PWB played in the participant's role as a Para-Football stakeholder. By exploring well-being in this manner, it reinforced notions of ontological critical realism and epistemological constructivism, through discussing the possibility that PWB, although displaying similar constructs, participants' experience of PWB will perceive its role and impact to varying degrees. Consequently, it allowed for initial understanding of the stakeholder's well-being experiences, with this then informing its existence and promotion within the stakeholder's professional context.

The semi-structured interview was directed by a focused life history approach, with this collecting an individual's oral account of his or her life. The narrative is initiated by a specific request from the researcher, and the ensuing dialogue is directed by the participant towards his or her field of inquiry (Corradi, 1991). Thus, a life story involves a dialogical interactive situation in which the course of an individual's life is given shape and captures the

first hand subjective accounts of the actual experiences of individuals from their own perspectives. Moreover, it allows these individual voices to be compared to a group of individuals, to highlight both individual and communal issues or experiences raised by the participants in the study. Questions included in the guide were, “If you can, tell me what ‘psychological well-being’ means to you as a person away from your role?”, “What does healthy PWB look like to you?”, and “Does PWB fit into any specific areas of your work with players or the team?”. Use of prompts of follow-up questions allowed for clarification, elaboration, and detail-oriented probes, to elicit richer data from the participant experiences (Smith & Sparkes, 2014). Definitions and descriptions of certain concepts were also provided to enhance understanding.

Data Analysis

Interview data was subject to thematic narrative analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This involved the (re)formulation of participant’s stories, and comparison of the different experiences encountered by each individual, to identify key themes and common elements to theorise across cases (Riessman, 2007). The data analysis process involved reading the transcript several times and immersion in the data, inductive coding of information, developing themes and subthemes from these, and subsequently identifying core narrative elements within each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process allowed the primary researcher to focus on the ‘what’ of the stories (thematic approach), and specifically the events and cognitions to which language refers to (speech content) (Riessman, 2007). This allowed concepts and themes to be developed across participant experiences, to shape knowledge and understanding.

Research Reflexivity and Credibility

Several key areas shape the relationship between researcher’s philosophical underpinnings and how they undertake their research (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000). According to Day

(2012), in this sense, reflexivity concerns three interrelated issues: (1) researchers' underlying assumptions about knowledge production (epistemology), (2) issues of power, researchers' identity and positionality, and (3) reflexive techniques to produce good-quality and rigorous qualitative research. In the present study, it was understood how the researcher's interpretivist paradigm, critical realism ontology, and constructivist epistemology may shape the research gathering process. As a result, reflexivity showed awareness to how the study was choreographed, how the lived experience(s) was written about, and how the study creates a particular version of reality through (in)visibility of what is included or exclude in the write-up, which is often based on methodological choice (Ryba & Schinke, 2009). As a result, the present study looks to give 'voice' to subjugated knowledge, in that of disability sport and how PWB may be promoted in disability football, with researcher triangulation enabling reflexivity and additional insights into the data.

With validity a crucial component of research and a contested issue in qualitative inquiry (Smith & Sparkes, 2014); the difficulties associated with interpretation based on personal perspectives was offset through the use of 'low inference descriptors' (Johnson, 1997). This used examples of participants' verbatim quotes within the write-up, to demonstrate that the results are firmly grounded in the data. This meant that examples were not 'cherry picked' based on researcher interpretation or bias. Further to ensuring credibility, investigator triangulation involved the authors providing data observation and drawing multiple conclusions for confirmation of findings, adding breadth to the phenomenon (Denzin, 2017).

With complete objectivity impossible (Guba & Lincoln, 1981), the process was made transparent to the reader, so that they were able to trace the decision making process at each stage relating to personal orientation, context, theory, methodology, and analysis (Roberts & Priest, 2006).

Results

A thematic narrative analysis of the transcripts resulted in a final thematic structure containing 66 raw data theme categories. These themes were combined to form 22 subthemes, and 4 major themes, which illustrated the well-being experiences of stakeholders in Para-Football (see Table 1). The major themes of: Perception of Disability Sport, Work-Life Balance, Overcoming Barriers to Well-Being, and Finding Purpose and Meaning, were intended to capture the core foundations of stakeholders' well-being and how it impacted its variability. Based on this, a conceptual model displaying the PWB experiences of stakeholders was created (Figure 1.).

Perception of Disability Sport

Key stakeholders within Para-football maintained a consistent mindset that 'disabled sport is elite sport', whereby the commitment and sacrifices made to compete and perform in sport, portray the notion of an 'athlete' more so than being disabled or able-bodied. Crucially, it is the maintenance of an elite environment, where stakeholders operated congruently to align their personal values around professionalism, attitude, standards, and ability with their support with Para-footballers. This congruence prompted more effective support to evolve:

> The lads wanted me because they knew I have experience as a coach and felt I had great ideas… how we could get so much better and more professional, because that was important to me… bringing in that elite attitude straightaway (Paul – head coach).

In the quote, Paul demonstrates the value he places on an elite mindset when supporting players, stating its importance within his own personal fulfilment. Moreover, in the quote below, Ben captures the feelings of elation and fulfilment he experiences when supporting these 'talented' athletes. This encompasses a dedication to their craft, which reinforces the notion that it is the commitment and sacrifices made to excel in sport that define an athlete, irrespective of disability status. This attitude, in turn, impacts Ben's PWB:

> When I say to people what my job is, they always say ‘that must be really rewarding, you work with a Para-Footballer’… but it’s rewarding in the fact that you work with an elite level athlete and you see how dedicated and how talented they are… they inspire me because of how talented they are (Ben – assistant coach)

Given the additional challenges disabled individuals overcome in many areas of life, it is vital that key stakeholders working with disabled athletes, consider and appreciate such difficulties and how these may inform their own experiences. As outlined below, this often gives stakeholders a sense of acceptance in their flaws, which then empowers them to develop moving forward. This is mirrored in the experiences of the athletes they work with, whereby their growth through adversity and overcoming setbacks provides perspective to the stakeholder:

> I think the well-being does probably come from that part of acceptance, but that’s probably the most difficult thing to try and do… always looking to find answers to questions… sometimes there either aren’t any answers or there aren’t ‘easy’ answers to those questions… from the point of view of how I’ve viewed well-being… it’s being comfortable with who you are and how you then interact and accept those feelings for what they are. (Joe – team manager)

This feeling of self-acceptance and comfort was shared by Tom, who gained key eudaimonic aspects of flourishing, fulfilment, and self-determination in his support to athletes. This is demonstrated in the excerpt below, where elements of Tom’s PWB in purpose and value, are often contingent on the emotions and performances displayed by the athletes he works with, with success in competition a key outcome:

> See my players play at the top level of their ability and score a goal in an international, absolutely makes me go wild… I absolutely love it when you see the players who we have feel absolutely broken physically before the competition, who

> we then manage and get them up to playing, that really gives me a lot of well-being, a lot of sense of purpose, and that it's worthwhile.

In this quote, it is clear that Tom's sources of PWB are closely linked to purpose and doing something for his own sense of meaning, which are common determinants of an individual with a healthy PWB. Tom indicates that seeing the athletes he supports going on to perform and succeed, provokes positive emotions internally. Moreover, below, there is further evidence to suggest this shared understanding of experiences, emotional contagion, and reciprocated outlook on well-being. This prompts both players-informing stakeholders, and also stakeholders-informing players:

> Being happy with your own integrity and that you're doing the best you can… have to absolutely believe and practice what you preach… lead by example… you are displaying those behaviours that you are trying to instil with them. So, absolutely we have to be the pioneers (Alex – sport psychologist)
>
> Well-being… I try and put that in as much as possible… thinking about my own well-being… bringing in my own experiences because people relate more… I try and promote well-being as much as possible in the sessions, but also in terms of my behaviour and passing that on to them (Eleanor – sport psychologist)

As provided within this theme, stakeholders view disability sport as elite sport through the approach and behaviours they instil within their support. In turn, this positively impacts the maintenance of a healthy, balanced PWB. Central to this, are the shared experiences and qualities that the stakeholders' and their athletes possess, with this enabled through moving past viewing the individuals as athletes with a disability, and instead purely as elite athletes. Consequently, stakeholders look to pioneer this elite behaviour so that high levels of commitment are visible to the athletes, which in turn, facilitates an environment that is increasingly connected and less divided. This then allows shared values and behaviours to be

demonstrated, which fosters elements of positive growth and PWB (positive relations with others and the effective management of one's environment).

Work-Life Balance

Negotiating a balance between the stakeholder's working life and home life was another mitigating factor unearthed from their descriptions of well-being experiences. The work-life balance provided a major obstacle to experiencing PWB, with stakeholders varying in their ability to effectively cope with the demands it brought. The long hours, increasing commitment in build-up to camps and tournaments, and pressures of the role(s) often resulted in repercussions in both personal and professional domains. This view is demonstrated by Chris and Eleanor below, who describe their struggles in balancing a work life and personal life, which in the present sample, represents a key determinant of well-being imbalance:

> There's a tendency to try and do everything, and that has been a problem. I like starting and finishing projects… commit and wanna give it 100%... I was running my own company… I was working at Bolton… we had a young family; it was all too much… it was a seven day week to keep two jobs running. (Chris – head coach)

> I get to the point where I'm working six or seven days a week… I think do I have a social life or personal life? (Eleanor – sport psychologist)

As a result, stakeholder's may often blur the lines between work and wider life, with issues taken home from work, or the individual unable to distinguish between the two environments. This then impacts the relationship and support they receive from significant others:

> I struggle the most when I come back from a tournament… still talk like when I'm talking to players or management… 'go and make me a coffee (to wife)'… I don't mean it, but it just comes out. Yeah it's a struggle with it, I've not got a healthy work-life balance at all. (Paul – head coach)

As highlighted by Paul, his behaviour in work does not dissociate from his behaviour when returning home. On occasion, this results in conflict, with an unknowingness that work-norms and work-related behaviour are being drawn into his personal life as he has heavily invested himself in that role. It is only when these behaviours are pointed out by significant others, that the stakeholders are made aware: "*my wife is really important in counterbalancing me and my work-life balance*" (Tom). Moreover, Matt outlines when this commitment to work may become excessive, with a desire to achieve at all costs potentially leading stakeholders towards negative emotions and behaviours:

> I was on my own, making decisions on my own. I didn't have a partner or my family around me, I was working for long hours for the need to try and 'achieve' and 'prove' a point to people… it became quite a lonely place… you get frustrated… you get disillusioned. (Matt – coach)

Matt's quote illustrates a work-life imbalance, where the continual pressures and constraints of the role within Para-football, may potentially trigger emotions of; unhappiness, negative affect, and negative psychological functioning, if they are left unattended to. When considered alongside a lack of support, it creates unrealistic demands of oneself and begins to spiral out of control. However, the demands of the role are often subjective to the individual and how it impacts their PWB. Conversely, stakeholders may demonstrate an ability to evidence positive PWB, through enhanced clarity of the job role and the responsibilities it brings, to reduce the potential interference between the two domains:

> I often work till 9 o'clock at night, but similarly I enjoy my job, so it wasn't a problem… I didn't have a work-life balance, which wasn't ideal, but I wouldn't say it affected my well-being because it was an active choice I was making… things affect my mood, but they don't affect my well-being (Robert – support staff)

> Having a bad day, or something isn't going right in my home life, going onto the pitch with the lads I park that for however long I'm with them… I don't ever bring anything outside in, but also I don't bring anything from work home (Ben – coach)

As highlighted, Para-Football demands high investment from its stakeholders, with this enabling effective support to occur, due to the individual being passionate about the role they undertake. Subsequently, as Robert and Ben describe, healthy PWB is maintained through either: a) being able to separate the two environments from one another and reach a point where they can transition from one to the other smoothly; or b) positive elements are drawn from the values and behaviours from each environment, which are then applied to inform the other. Consequently, this allows them to balance their investment in either role, with the purpose and effective management of their environment(s) providing positive tendencies of PWB. Furthermore, by overcoming these and other barriers to PWB, stakeholders reach an informed understanding of the solutions they can put in place.

Overcoming Barriers to Well-being

Personal Life. Within the stakeholders' personal life, a common barrier to maintaining PWB, concerned burnout, with an ineffectiveness in how to manage themselves and find an outlet for self-preservation. Common triggers to this were fatigue and a lack of physical and emotional release (e.g. exercise, hobbies), and when a disrupt to the 'foundations' of PWB were apparent, it provided a challenging period for the stakeholder:

> The lack of sleep is, for me the foundations of good well-being… if everything falls away, it's the stanchions to a building. When my well-being just dropped off the face of the Earth… deep down in my mood I was happy, content, had meaning, purpose… physically I was burnt out… I was utterly exhausted (Alex–sport psychologist)

> My well-being was impacted if I didn't have the time to exercise… that's really important to me in terms of health and fitness, but also confidence in terms of appearance… (Eleanor–sport psychologist)

The foundations of self-care in sleep, good health, and exercise were consistent across the participants. However, there was often an inability for stakeholders to recognise when they were overextended, and as such a need for respite. Paul recounted that, "*spending an hour being on my own with the kids to just take my mind off things, that would be a good way of me switching off…*". However, in the same excerpt, he highlighted that, "*It's hard… I guess that's the problem, I don't know how to (switch off)".* Eventually, For Paul, this then came to a head: "*When I'm low, I'm like 'what am I going to do?', and I do take it out on the family*". Instances like this, demonstrate conflict potentially arising due to a lack of awareness surrounding burnout. Alternatively, when greater awareness is shown in committing to PWB maintenance, stakeholders like Robert, recognise how to overcome these potential barriers:

> If I don't manage to train on a day that I want to train, I could get slightly ratty about it… However, I'll manipulate my day to make sure I get that session in, because that's my release and what keeps me pretty cool.

Regarding these instances, it is evident that barriers to PWB are often reliant on the individual's ability to manage their emotional and physical resources. An imbalance between these and the demands placed on the stakeholder, often result in:

> not being able to do a job properly, because… you're not giving the adequate resources. My highest trigger for a lack of well-being in anything is… you need to be able to feel that you have the resources to do the job properly (Tom).

Tom's quote outlines a discrepancy between recognising a challenge, and then possessing the adequate resources to be able to effectively overcome it. As such, stakeholders within this

domain are often able to balance their PWB by maintaining awareness of potential barriers, and possessing means of overcoming these.

Professional Life. In their professional role, the major barrier identified to inhibit well-being was the nature of elite sport. Below, Joe highlights how stakeholder well-being generally isn't accounted for, as this often accompanies working in a pressurised role:

> I would say staff well-being isn't managed… I think it's just a natural consequence of working in a high performance environment.

This pressure of the role is central to the breakdown in PWB. For stakeholders like Paul, concerns around their job and an ability to perform, are ever-present and a key determinant of lapses in PWB:

> There's always been this 'threatening' of if I don't do my job properly or perform, I lose my job… constant of how do I make this better, literally a timebomb in the back of my mind, that when I'm on my own or switch off, that 'bang' comes straight back.

Similar to their personal life, stakeholders' will often experience an imbalance between demands and resources, with Ben outlining that his well-being suffers when:

> things get on top of me and I worry about a lot of things… that's probably when I'm not at my most comfortable… I worry about a deadline; I've got to do this… that's when my well-being takes a bit of a hit.

The sport of Para-Football has required these individuals to commit, like the players, wholeheartedly to the team, and as such this coincides with other areas being neglected. Previously, although this investment allows stakeholders to produce more effective support, it likely will mean an area has to suffer:

> Work with the team has ramped up, then you're doing less fitness work… time with the family becomes none… that pressure builds… you're not managing it 100% to

particular areas… that's when I think you don't feel good… it's out of your control (Chris – head coach)

These conflicts of interest likely coincide with the pressure and commitment that the stakeholder's themselves place on the players. As Robert demonstrates, "*my minimum expectation would be that they live the life of an elite athlete. One of my pet hates is getting to the pinnacle of your career representing England, and then your efforts are mediocre*". Subsequently, although the stakeholders may struggle (to varying degrees) with the role they are situated within; they comprehend that these are a by-product of the role they occupy:

> There's quite a lot of commitment… it is an elite programme, you are having to strap around other work as well, just to keep your head above water… it's just something I've gotta do, but then after it will be better. (Ben – coach)

Overcoming Barriers. In overcoming barriers to PWB, stakeholders employ multiple methods that enable them to cope with the demands on their resources. One core theme was self-care, with all stakeholders reducing the pressure they placed on themselves through exercise and time management. These practices enabled stakeholders to maintain a positive opinion of themselves and their appearance, which then allowed them to return to supporting athletes in a more effective manner. Specifically, the time management of self-care provides the stakeholder with control in balancing both the demands of the role and also when to be able to have these downtime periods. However, several stakeholders highlight the difficulty in ensuring self-care is managed: "*time management is pretty important… unrealistic time management, it's always a thing in football, everybody would like something done yesterday*" (*Tom*). Due to player contact often only occurring in camps and tournaments, it is increasingly difficult when constrained to these demands: "*I feel like I can never give myself the time to do it (time management)… usually won't finish until 2am… I'll be up at 6:30am, wake up and get tuned in*" (*Paul*). As such, for stakeholders like Robert it is the ability to

create time and opportunities to be able to engage in downtime and self-care, which enables them to maintain a good, balanced PWB:

> Arrange a time where we are going to do a session, if people are socially catching up… I don't care whether I'm involved or not, I'm going off and doing my session… unless there's a good reason why I can't… I will do it regardless

In summary, there are various barriers and challenges to stakeholders maintaining a balanced PWB. Within both their personal and professional life, the demands placed on their physical and emotional resources, can at times, be overwhelming. Although there is a diversity in the methods stakeholders employ to overcome these barriers (e.g. exercise, social release – drinking, fitness, family time); it is the ability of the stakeholder to utilise these opportunities efficiently, which are key to the upkeep of PWB. As captured, the pressurised environments of life and sport may often take precedence over one's ability to look after themselves, with an overcommitment to the role coming at the expense of other aspects of their life. Therefore it is the stakeholder's ability to identify self-care and coping strategies which allows them to 'recharge' and be able to maintain effective support

Finding Purpose and Meaning

The role of a Para-Football stakeholder provides individuals with high elements of purpose and meaning within their life. These elements directly contribute to the maintenance of a healthy PWB, with Alex signifying the importance of Para-football in promoting PWB and providing both himself and others with meaning:

> I think well-being is definitely perpetuated by being involved in Para-Football… they (those involved) are pursuing a meaningful and purposeful goal, which I always think is going to be useful for them… we know it ties into well-being.

Alex's thoughts are echoed by other key stakeholders, whereby purposeful goals and unity amongst those involved provides high levels of fulfilment and meaning. Chris articulates the power of this when discussing the development of players within Para-football:

> The lads feel like they are part of something... the disability hooks the lads together, being disabled helps them… whenever they come together, it's probably the only time in their lives that they're with people with similar issues… that gives them the strength… it's like the army… people have an affinity with each other.

As shown, in their roles, stakeholders and players are bonded by a shared purpose, which in turn brings meaning to the individual. This is especially powerful in times of hardship (conflict, losing tournaments), where a deeper meaning and trust amongst the members is fostered, which facilitates growth. When recollecting his experiences of being knocked out in consecutive semi-finals, Paul identified progress within his own development, through better understanding the players and their purpose:

> At half-time, I walked in, screamed, and shouted… 'we are all going to lose our jobs because of this'… and we lost, and we didn't lose our jobs, so why say it?... 2017 in Berlin, same principles apply… I was ultra-positive, changed things to make it better, gave them some tactical input and the right level of kick up the arse.

Paul's change in style fostered a more positive response from the players, as he understood that there was a shared purpose amongst the group. Although the team did not win in the second example, there was a shift away from a threat of loss of employment, and towards a more positive attitude, which likely nurtured more PWB from both himself and the players. Having worked for the same squad, Tom outlined a key determinant in this shift in style: "*You're a component in a cycle of development... you are there to ensure that the team rows in whatever way it does*". This emphasised that purpose and meaning within the professional environment was influenced by "*being content in myself, and if you're content in yourself...*

you do the things you enjoy… as opposed to being driven to do something to be the best at it, which actually might make you quite unhappy or unwell". Therefore, in terms of PWB and finding purpose and meaning, stakeholders, through finding contentment within their personal lives, it fosters more meaningful PWB within their professional role. As highlighted, Paul's struggle to maintain a healthy work-life balance has directly impacted his PWB both in and out of his stakeholder role. Consequently, by obtaining multiple role identities both in and out of Para-Football and finding purpose within these, it may refine that individual's understanding of the benefits well-being brings when balance is achieved. This may assist the individual in being able to moderate the interference of challenges and difficulties within one role or identity, from affecting them in other areas.

Discussion

This study explored and examined the well-being experiences of stakeholders involved in Para-Football. Findings revealed, that supporting athletes effectively within elite disability sport, requires the negotiation of personal and professional roles, with the balance between these crucial to maintaining positive PWB. A framework was created (see Appendix, Figure 1) to represent PWB in para-football stakeholders. This highlights positive PWB as being characterised by a healthy work-life balance, an ability to overcome barriers and challenges, and possessing adequate resources to offset PWB imbalance. Negative PWB is characterised by burnout, exhaustion, and an inability to manage the demands faced both in a personal and professional context, often due to a lack of resources to draw upon.

Within disability sport, stakeholders' perceptions are a key part of reshaping others' habitus (Purdue & Howe, 2012), therefore, in readdressing any core misunderstandings between staff and those with a disability (French & Hainsworth, 2001), it helps shape the support offered in these environments moving forward. The stakeholders' accounts of PWB were heavily influenced by their roles in and out of Para-Football, with the negotiation of the

two environments critical to the preservation of good PWB. Good management of well-being was characterised by a satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with a minimum of role conflict (Clark, 2000). Previously, the maintenance of good well-being was to not allow a 'spillover', where one world could influence the other in either a positive or negative way (O'Driscoll, 1996), however, the present study expanded upon this in a number of ways.

The first way this study adds to knowledge is, it highlights that a holistic approach to managing PWB is crucial in Para-Football stakeholders. Previously, a holistic view of the individual's complete situation in and outside of sport was cited as key to advancing understanding of well-being in elite sport (Lundqvist & Sandin, 2014). With this in mind, although previous research identified good well-being as being characterised by not allowing a 'spillover' to occur (O'Driscoll, 1996), the present study demonstrates that an overlap between personal and professional environments is both inevitable, and necessary. This is due to the commitment needed to excel in the stakeholder role, whereby positive PWB was experienced when a stakeholder was able to effectively 'merge' the two often conflicting environments. The study demonstrates that working in elite disability sport hinges on a pressure to succeed and the accompanying demands of working in a results-based environment. This pressure is critical in providing an individual with senses of purpose and meaning, with this purpose often unavailable in other environments (Lundqvist & Sandin, 2014), with a lack of engagement characterised by low levels of activation and pleasure (Maslach et al., 2001). A core element of eudaimonic PWB, self-acceptance emphasises this internal ability to acknowledge both good and bad qualities of each area, yet maintain a positive view of the self (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Therefore, the stakeholders demonstrate that when their personal PWB is managed effectively, their support with athletes is enhanced; the stakeholder will use experiences and strategies within their personal life to inform effective support within their professional role.

When PWB is handled ineffectively, stakeholders' burnout due to overextending themselves and 'blurring the lines' between personal and professional environments, where isolation, lower productivity and effectiveness, alongside greater personal conflict, emerge from burnout experiences (Maslach et al., 2001). This demonstrates that effective support in disability sport requires an ability to manage oneself and their environment(s), develop effective relationships with others, and apply appropriate coping strategies. The prevalence of negative PWB was the result of an imbalance between demands and the resources available, whereby an over-investment each stakeholder had given to Para-Football, resulted in a depletion of emotional and physical resources (Maslach et al., 2001). Therefore, stakeholders offset this imbalance, by maintaining optimal functioning of themselves (Ryan & Deci, 2001) and a balance of sleep, health and fitness, and downtime within their routines. This balances the demands of elite sport, by providing the individual with the resources to cope effectively, including effective time management to ensure each task is given maximum focus, and the individual does not cloud their judgement by focusing on multiple areas at once. Incorporating the use of self-care and downtime strategies allows the individual to maintain their own self-regulation if support for the stakeholder themselves is unavailable. Therefore, by ensuring that personal PWB is of high importance and employing appropriate strategies to maintain this, support within disability sport may be able to prosper.

Another way this research adds to existing knowledge, is by identifying how stakeholders PWB' is enhanced through the purpose and meaning their role in Para-Football provides. Frankl (1985) regarded the search for life's meaning as a basic human motive, even though its unidimensional or multidimension conceptuality is not clearly stated. Consequently, although stakeholders may vary in their Para-Football experiences, an ability to establish meaningful relationships with those in and out of the sport, provides positive tendencies of PWB. The shared values, beliefs, expectations, and practices within members

of a defined group (Para-Football) fosters positive growth (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012, p.340). Subsequently, exclusion, and/or dependency upon personal and social support (913Kenttä & Corban, 2014) is offset by either the disabled athlete's empowerment to excel, informing stakeholders (Barnes, 2003), or the stakeholder's ability to demonstrate leadership qualities that athletes can 'buy into' (Nesti, 2004). From this, the perception of disability sport illustrates how stakeholders gain key components of PWB, in purpose, meaning, and an ability to experience flourishing and fulfilment (Ryan & Deci, 2001). However, as provided, with the pressure that accompanies working in elite sport, stakeholders vary in their ability to manage the stress (internal and external) and constraints that accompanied their role. This results in ineffective coping (fatigue, burnout, isolation, conflict) or effective coping (healthy work-life balance, exercise, self-care), which is mediated by the aforementioned factors.

For a sport psychologist and other stakeholders entering the Para-Football environment, the implications illustrate how support surrounding PWB can be maximised. When coming into a role, individuals may experience a lack of supportiveness, an unwelcomeness, conflict, and separation (Young & Lundberg, 1996). Therefore, the stakeholder may reduce the impact of these factors through, as Chandler et al. (2016) outlined, best understanding the individuals and the environment in which they operate. The stakeholders identify that the perception of Para-Football should move away from limitation and disablement. Therefore, a sport psychologist may benefit from taking time to understand what the athlete(s) is able to do and building support based on that. A strengths-based approach to support would both inform their own prospects to support, and also the strengths possessed by the athletes (Day, 2013). This may involve forming positive relations with others, and promoting both health- and performance-related processes in both themselves and following this, the athletes (Ryan & Deci, 2001). These processes consist of modelling the behavioural processes you wish to see in athletes and others relating to PWB: maintaining

physical health and fitness through exercise; illustrating effective coping strategies (e.g. actively reflecting on and discussing experiences), and adopting self-care measures to prevent burnout and fatigue (going for a walk, engaging in a hobby, understanding the clear remits and boundaries of your role). Furthermore, the removal of any misconception and lack of awareness around disability that may inhibit support, helps reinforce the 'elite sport culture'. This relays to the athlete and members, that the commitment and sacrifices made to excel in sport define an 'athlete' and not their disability status (Perrier et al., 2014). Consequently, this aligns with the social model's approach of empowering disabled individuals, with this viewed as a viable means to enhance PWB (Smith et al., 2016). Stakeholders, through promoting the outlined behaviours, can satisfy key elements of healthy PWB, where they are able to form positive relationships with others, gain a sense of purpose in life through their role, live with a degree of self-determination through adopting their own processes, manage their environment effectively, and feel that they are growing (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002).

In light of the above, there are also limitations to consider. Firstly, well-being itself provides two relatively distinct, yet overlapping principles (Ryan & Deci, 2001), which may cause conflict in the definition of well-being. The eudaimonic, PWB tradition highlights positive psychological functioning and human development (Dodge et al., 2012), whereas the hedonic, SWB view, proposes well-being consists of pleasure or happiness (Kahneman et al., 1999). Consequently, the two traditions ask different questions regarding how developmental and social processes relate to well-being, and therefore by measuring it in different ways may enhance the understanding of well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001). As the present study adopted a eudaimonic PWB approach, crucial elements relating to the hedonic, SWB tradition may have been missed; with individuals who identify pleasure and happiness as central to well-being, not provided with questions targeting these areas. As such, consideration of both approaches within the interview guide may yield a more comprehensive overview of well-

being in disability sport. Moreover, with well-being likely best conceived as a multidimensional phenomenon that includes both hedonic and eudaimonic aspects (Ryan & Deci, 2001), it will provide both divergent and convergent factors within a well-being experience. The use of focus groups (Jones, 2002), may have enhanced the clarity of findings by allowing participants to collectively reflect on their experiences in and out of Para-Football. For example, the stakeholders' colleagues and athletes may have provided alternate interpretations of the well-being experiences and the aspects they regard as critical within the stakeholder's support. As a result, the data would reveal the well-being experiences of the stakeholder, and subsequently, the impact this has on support from the athlete point of view. A final limitation concerns the generalisability of data. Given the Para-sport population, it was hoped that findings were to be generalisable to a larger number of people that have demographic characteristics similar to those 'represented' in the study (Fendler, 2006). However, given 'disability' as a descriptor has unique implications for well-being (Gordon & Rosenblum, 2001; McLaughlin et al., 2004), there may be distinct challenges related to disability type, classification, and support, when attempting to apply findings from the current study, to those who are confined to a wheelchair, or are affected in other ways. This may highlight the specific nature of the current population (partially-sighted football), and as such, generalisations may be taken with caution.

In conclusion, the present study looked to develop the conceptualised understanding of well-being, and specifically PWB in stakeholders working in Para-Football. Given the further analysis needed in the disability football arena (Moore, 2014), it is vital that as the field receives increased awareness, that research is conducted to enhance understanding. The proposed framework (Figure 1.) identifies that a stakeholder working in disability football will need to manage various demands to maintain healthy PWB, balancing both personal and professional roles. The stakeholders' role within Para-Football provides purpose and meaning

for the individual and as such, positively influences their PWB if they are able to offset demands of the role with relevant coping strategies. If neglected, PWB may suffer, with demands outweighing the resources available, and the individual experiencing fatigue, burnout, and exhaustion, amongst other negative ramifications. Moving forward, the present study provides an account of the stakeholders' personal experience of PWB, however, as illustrated this significantly affects their role within Para-Football, which is often misconstrued. Consequently, investigating how stakeholders develop a PWB culture within Para-Football through stakeholder theory (if the organisations' constituents' needs aren't met, the threat of no success or participation could loom over Para-Football) (Friedman et al., 2004), may provide significant progress.

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Appendix

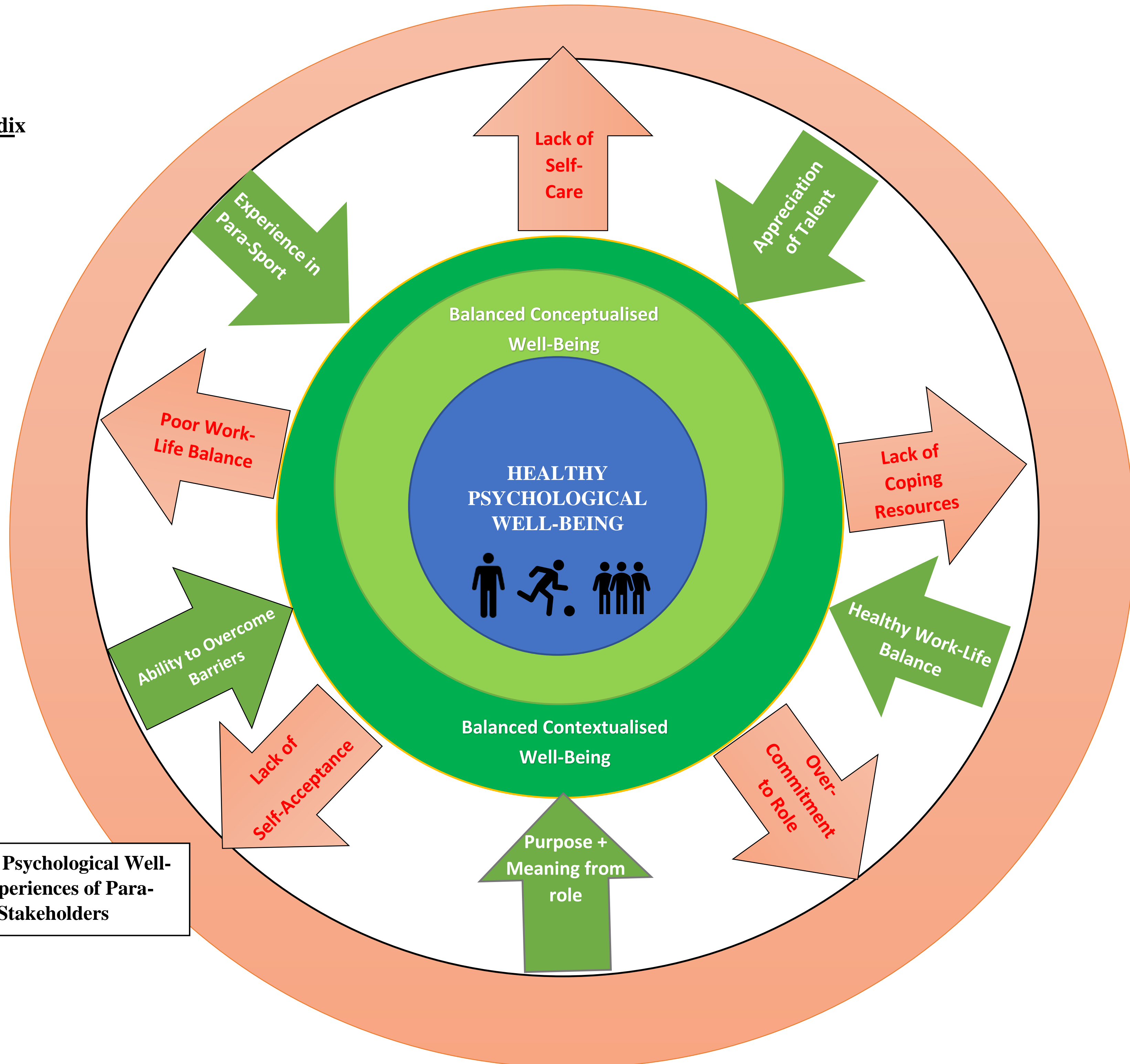

Figure 1. Psychological Well-Being Experiences of Para-Football Stakeholders

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EMPIRICAL RESEARCH PAPER 2

How stakeholders develop a psychological well-being culture in Para-Football

Abstract

This study investigates how stakeholders develop and promote a psychological well-being (PWB) culture in Para-Football. Previously (study 1), the PWB experiences of the stakeholders were explored, which identified that those working in a Para-Football culture obtain high amounts of purpose and meaning as a result of a high investment in their role. Positive PWB was characterised by an ability to balance the demands of their role with effective coping measures, with poor PWB illustrated by over-commitment and a work-life imbalance. Consequently, given that stakeholders' PWB influences the quality of the support they offer within the Para-Football environment, it was important to investigate how stakeholder can develop a well-being culture based on their personal experience. Semi-structured interviews sought to identify and explore the core components of the development of a PWB-informed culture. Stakeholder theory was incorporated as a guiding framework throughout, with the organisation's constituents all impacted in some form by the stakeholder. Findings revealed five core components of the development of a PWB culture: 1) social and emotional support, 2) managing roles and relationships, 3) performance and well-being dyad, 4) influence of elite disabled sport culture, and 5) future development. The findings informed the promotion of a humanistic approach to supporting individuals within the Para-Football organisational culture, which in seeking to support performance and well-being allows players to gain fulfilment and sense of purpose

Keywords: psychological well-being; para-football; stakeholders; disability; culture

Introduction

In the context of sport, disabled people face many barriers that may exclude them from participation (Kitchin and Crossin, 2001). Moreover, even when access to sport participation is available, there is often a negative perception around adapted, disability sport as 'not real sport' (Perrier et al., 2014). This may influence athletic identity and even prevent individuals from competing in disability sport. Those who do decide to compete often experience anger, alienation, and isolation, which potentially engender negative emotions and harms disabled athletes' well-being (Bundon et al., 2018). Within the context of the current study (disability football), this has a potential to maintain a disaggregated approach (Macbeth, 2009), with individuals with a disability not provided with the adequate information, opportunities, and resources to compete in sport. In light of this, there have been attempts to update and inform understanding within disability sport. Disability football has received increased attention and investment from the FA (Football Association), who have begun to actively engage with disabled groups and include equity and equality issues as a core requirement of their development programme (UK Sport, 2003). However, with those who are providing support being scrutinised (Martin, 1999; Legg and Wheeler, 1998), stakeholders are left asking how they can better support Para-athletes whilst in sport and once careers end (Bundon et al., 2018).

The current author has previously explored the psychological well-being (PWB) experiences of stakeholders involved in Para-Football (study 1). The study concluded that there were five core components of the PWB experiences of stakeholders: early Para-Sport experiences, appreciation of talent and qualities, work-life balance, overcoming barriers to well-being, and finding purpose and meaning. These components were critical in the management of both personal and professional roles, with positive PWB characterised by a healthy work-life balance, the possession of resources to manage demands and overcome challenges, and finding deeper meaning and purpose from their role within sport. However,

there were instances of negative PWB, whereby burnout, exhaustion, and an inability to manage the demands faced in work-life contexts were commonplace. Central to both the positive and negative notions of PWB was the demanding, volatile culture of disability football, which like their able-bodied counterparts, often exposes an individual to both very positive and negative situations repeatedly across one season (Nesti et al., 2012). Consequently, the previous study prompted consideration of the culture of high performance sport environments, and how they can negatively impact the wellbeing of individuals in terms of their prospects and progression through and into life phases (Bundon et al., 2018). Furthermore, with the limitations of the previous study outlining a need for follow-up interviews to expand upon key points of interest, including sport culture (Day, 2013) and the need for further specific research in the disability football arena (Moore, 2014), the present study looked to investigate how stakeholders involved within Para-Football help to develop a positive PWB culture.

Oliver (1990, p.23) suggested that disability is 'culturally produced through the relationship between the mode of production and the central values of the society concerned'. Consequently, with Westernised cultures often treating disability as a condition to be avoided, and the medical model demonstrating that society disables people by limiting their worth in society (Stone, 1995); there are opportunities to re-evaluate these perceptions, with the social model actively allocating disability within society and empowering disabled individuals (Barnes, 2003). From a societal perspective, research investigating culture within disability sport has provided an increased understanding of the experiences and issues disabled individuals encounter. Acculturation theory (Berry, 1997), and its incorporation within disability football (Kitchin and Crossin, 2018) highlighted two types of integration – assimilation and accommodation, which bridged the gap between able-bodied and disabled sport cultures. In light of this, stakeholder theory informs the present study in its aim to explore the development of a sporting culture that promotes PWB, and how stakeholders can utilise an

increased understanding of disability culture to inform the nature of their PWB support within the organisational context (Friedman et al., 2004).

Stakeholder theory is based on the understanding that an organisation should recognise the interests of its constituents that have a stake in the set-up and consider these adequately, or risk losing their support and/or participation. Consequently, this could threaten chances of success, or even the organisation's existence (Friedman et al., 2004). In the current population, there are several key considerations for stakeholders to recognise, which likely impacts the effectiveness of a PWB culture being developed. Firstly, the role of disability itself provides opportunity for disabled individuals to differentiate themselves from 'others' (Wickman, 2007), alongside a sense of commonality with one another, and a protective culture (Pack et al., 2017). Therefore, those working within disability sport such as Para-Football likely need to consider this, and as a result minimise the potential risk of a 'gap' occurring between disabled players and able-bodied staff and stakeholders. Additionally, stakeholders need to be aware of their role in the process, and how personal experience and other potential conflicts of interest may impact the support they offer. Friedman et al. (2004) highlighted that no set of interests is assumed to dominate others, and all stakeholders are entitled to have their multiple and often conflicting interests. Consequently, the present study attempts to understand how potential conflicts of interest and differing opinions are considered, to then contribute to the development of a PWB culture.

Previous research has highlighted several key components to the effective management of PWB within a sporting culture: self-efficacy and personal control, friendship and social networks, belonging and identity, and consultation with recreational organisations (Chalip, Thomas, & Voyle, 1996). This advocates that sport can be structured to provide experiences that enhance athletes' sense of self-efficacy, whereby stakeholders (e.g., coaches, doctors, administrators) may employ various methods to ensure self-efficacy development (e.g.,

modelling behaviour, goal-setting, and positive talk). Friendship & social networks involve participation with identifiable social groups and a sense of community, which contributes to quality of life and encourages PWB (Prezza & Constantini, 1998). These elements form a critical part of the organisation, whereby the evaluation of sport programmes and enhancement of athlete social integration are examples of organisational development (Chalip, Thomas, & Voyle, 1996). Consequently, these components may contribute to the effective creation and management of a PWB culture.

Ultimately, stakeholders are a core part of the development of a culture, with their perceptions being a key part of shaping others' habitus (Purdue and Howe, 2012). Therefore, with culture defined as the "dynamic process characterised by shared values, beliefs, expectations, and practices across the members of a defined group" (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012, p. 340), stakeholders hold a vital role in ensuring the culture adopted is the most effective one. Often, it is a shared, inclusive culture which significantly impacts the thoughts and actions of group members (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; 2013; Nesti, 2010). Although an individuals' PWB will substantially determine to what extent their disability plays a role (Campbell, 2018), it is an inclusion culture and understanding the experiences of those involved that often enables growth to occur (Day, 2013). As a result, the present study aimed to explore the underdeveloped nature and understanding of disability football culture (Macbeth and Magee, 2006), and identify how a PWB culture may be constructed and delivered effectively within an elite disabled sport setting and population.

Methodology

The present study was guided by a critical realist ontology and constructivist epistemology, which were informed by an interpretivist paradigm. Akin to study 1, this appreciated each participant's individual reality as unique, which enabled the researcher to understand the shared

meanings and realities between participants, but also differentiate opinions and narratives (Isaeva et al., 2015). However, crucial to the present study was the complexity, richness, and meaning-making of information, which was best understood through emphasising the importance of culture and history (experience) (Crotty, 1998). By adopting a critical realist ontology, the researcher understood the value in the empirical (experienced and observed events), the actual (events occur, whether observed or not), and critically, the real (causal mechanisms which cause events at empirical level to occur) (Fletcher, 2017). As such, when considered alongside epistemological constructivism, it provided the notion that participants will interpret and explain certain experiences more accurately than others due to their vividness (Ronkainen et al., 2019). In the present study, this meant that the deep, underlying experiences would be investigated, with the development of culture understood through its causal factors and constituent parts.

Nine participants consented to taking part in the present study, with these being involved in a stakeholder capacity (at the time of study) with an England Para-Football team. These teams consisted of the England Blind Team (B1), England Partially Sighted Team (B2 and B3), and the England Powerchair Team. Based on ensuring and assessing the quality of the study, evaluative criteria most appropriate for the research question was examined (Roulston, 2010). This meant that following the previous study, additional interviews were undertaken (when necessary) in order to obtain the most accurate description of the participants' experiences of culture. Participants were recruited through maximum variation and criterion-based purposive sampling strategies (Smith & Sparkes, 2014), with this sampling allowing for the representation of a variety of Para-Football stakeholder roles across the squads. These roles were: Head Coach, Assistant Head Coach, Team Manager, Sport Psychologist, Doctor, and Physical Performance and Classification Manager.

Prospective participants were initially approached through a gatekeeper, who had viable access to each Para-Football squad in their role as Sport Psychologist for the England Cerebral Palsy squad, and co-ordinator for England Para-Football sport psychologists. Participants were then provided with a participant information sheet outlining the nature of the study and what their involvement would entail. Following this, a date was agreed to collect data on stakeholders' experiences of a psychological well-being culture within Para-Football.

Data Collection

The present study employed a qualitative-based approach, with participants partaking in semi-structured interviews designed to explore stakeholders' development of a PWB culture within Para-Football. The interview format consisted of *conceptualised psychological well-being* of the stakeholder (section1) and its presence within the participant's own reality. The second section then incorporated the *contextualised psychological well-being*, whereby the role of PWB was investigated within Para-Football cultural development. The semi-structured interview took a focused life history approach, with this collecting an individual's oral account of their life experiences. The narrative is initiated by a specific request from the researcher, and the ensuing dialogue is directed by the participant towards his or her field of inquiry (Corradi, 1991). Thus, a life story involves a dialogical interactive situation in which the course of an individual's life is given shape, and captures the first hand subjective accounts of the actual experiences of individuals from their own perspectives. Moreover, it allows these individual voices to be compared to a group of individuals, in order to highlight both individual and collective experiences raised by the participants in the study.

Questions included were, "What do you feel psychological well-being means to the players?", and "Do you feel there are any distinct qualities that you believe identifies a strong psychological well-being culture in Para-Football, if so what?". A follow-up question approach was adopted, which allowed for clarification, elaboration, and detail-oriented probes, in order

to elicit richer data from the participant experiences (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Definitions and descriptions of certain concepts were also provided to enhance understanding.

Data Analysis

Interview data was subject to thematic narrative analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This involved the (re)formulation of participant's stories, and comparison of the different experiences encountered by each individual, in order to identify key themes and common elements to theorise across cases (Riessman, 2007). The data analysis process involved reading the transcript several times and immersion in the data, inductive coding of information, developing themes and subthemes, and subsequently identifying core narrative elements within each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process allowed the primary researcher to focus on the 'what' of the stories (thematic approach), and specifically the events and cognitions to which language refers (speech content) (Riessman, 2007). This allowed concepts and themes to be developed across participant experiences in order to shape knowledge and understanding.

Research Reflexivity and Validity

There are several key areas which shape the relationship between researcher's philosophical underpinnings and how they undertake their research (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000). According to Day (2012), in this sense, reflexivity concerns three interrelated issues: (1) researchers' underlying assumptions about knowledge production (epistemology), (2) issues of power, researchers' identity and positionality, and (3) reflexive techniques to produce good-quality and rigorous qualitative research. In the present study, it was comprehended how the researcher's interpretivist paradigm, ontological critical realism, and epistemological constructivism may shape the research gathering process. As a result, reflexivity showed awareness to how the study was choreographed, how lived experience(s) was written about, and how the study creates a particular version of reality through (in)visibility of what is included or exclude in the write-up, which is often based on methodological choice (Ryba &

Schinke, 2009). As a result, the present study gives 'voice' to subjugated knowledge in that of disability sport, and how a PWB culture may be promoted and developed in disability football, with researcher triangulation enabling reflexivity and additional insights into the data.

With validity, a crucial component of research and a contested issue in qualitative inquiry (Smith and Sparkes, 2014), the difficulties associated with interpretation based on personal perspectives was offset through use of 'low inference descriptors' (Johnson, 1997). This used examples of participants' verbatim quotes within the write-up to demonstrate that the results are firmly grounded in the data. This meant that examples were not 'cherry picked' based on researcher interpretation or bias. Further, with complete objectivity being impossible (Guba and Lincoln, 1981), the process was made transparent to the reader so they were able to trace the decision-making process at each stage relating to personal orientation, context, theory, methodology, and analysis (Roberts and Priest, 2006).

Results

A thematic narrative analysis of the transcripts resulted in a final thematic structure containing 62 raw data theme categories. These themes were combined to form 20 subthemes, and 5 major themes, which illustrated how stakeholders develop a psychological well-being culture in Para-Football (see Table 1). The major themes of: Social and Emotional Support, Managing Roles and Relationships, Performance and Well-being Dyad, The Influence of Elite Disabled Sport Culture, and Future Development, aimed to formulate an enhanced understanding of how stakeholders facilitate a PWB culture in disability sport, and namely Para-Football. As a result, a conceptual model was constructed (see Appendix; Figure 1) that illustrates the core components of a PWB informed culture in disability sport.

Table 1: Major Themes and Subthemes of how stakeholders develop a PWB culture in Para-Football

Major Theme	Subtheme	Raw Data Themes
Social and Emotional Support	trust and honesty stretch and support autonomy/independence relatedness	*"You do create those bonds and personal relationships that you probably wouldn't find in the mainstream game"* *"You can be in control of what you do… before I knew it they were having their own team meetings using the stuff I'd given them"*
Managing Roles and Relationships	role clarity identity boundaries person-first	*"Trust each other to do their jobs and their roles… they trust each other way from the court because of that group mentality"* *"Performance drops, coaches get on them… not pulling your weight… difficult side to elite sport and a difficult thing to balance with psych issues"*
Performance-Well-Being Dyad	holistic/humanistic approach balance awareness success/achievement	*"If you don't consider the personal side and holistic… you can make judgements that aren't fully informed"* *"The well-being piece is really important, but you can't lose sight of the performance element… that's what it takes to be a performer"*
The Influence of Elite Disabled Sport Culture	collaboration attitudes/values/behaviours fulfilment of potential purpose/meaning	*"Friendship groups… positivity… doing what you need to do to be your best… they are quite firmly embedded (culture and values)"*
Future Development	consistency management of staff well-being top-down approach out-of-camp support	*"There is the attitude of 'we've managed ok so far… it can be quite challenging to show the importance of mental health and well-being"*

Social and Emotional Support

The range of personal and interpersonal challenges that those in a football environment may encounter suggests a need for the provision of appropriate support mechanisms (Richardson et al., 2004). In the current population, the provision of stakeholder support on varying levels (emotional, social) was crucial in developing 'well rounded' individuals through a caring and nurturing approach (Richardson et al., 2004). This was characterised through elements of trust, honesty, and empathy in order to provide athletes with the support to maintain a healthy PWB. Matt (*assistant coach*) described the importance of understanding the players in as much detail as possible, to ensure that they were then able to receive the most effective support:

> *The most important thing is to understand where every player is at… any moment we come across them. From the very beginning we need to understand what their life looks like through their eyes, including their well-being and the struggles.*

This sentiment was echoed across the stakeholder population, whereby elements of relatedness and empathy enabled relationships to prosper. These elements formed the foundations of stakeholder support, where both Paul (*head coach*) and Ben (*assistant coach*) describe how being relatable to an individual will likely generate meaningful relationships within the environment:

> *If you want to get the best out of people, you've got to be relatable to them. They want you to be someone who is there for them. (Paul)*

> *We build up really strong bonds with these players… you can have some really honest conversations with that person… so the first thing I'd say is trust… they are quite reliant on you. (Ben)*

However, in order to develop a PWB informed environment, stakeholders valued the importance of maintaining a balance between support and independence with their athletes. In this instance, Joe (*team manager*) advocates that players are educated around autonomy so that

they are able to comprehend how and when to seek support, alongside when they have the adequate resources to deal with it themselves:

> *With the players there is a very clear structure, role, and remit to what they are expected to do, and they naturally develop a strong bond… individual members come up with their own ways of dealing with certain situations, and whether its removing themselves from a circumstance… immersing themselves completely.*

Ultimately, as Alex (*sport psychologist*) highlights the role of support in developing a PWB culture, identifies this balance as a mediating factor in ensuring that the organisation's constituents are aware of and actively managing their PWB. This educates players with the understanding of when support can be impactful, yet, independent decisions will allow players to inform their own choices moving forward:

> *Well-being is perpetuated by being involved in Para-Football… players have greater autonomy because they are challenged to deal and be independent, they are always encouraged to be stretched… they have a link and identity to a network of people, another support system.*

The delivery of support within Para-Football remains a contentious issue, with support staff often holding conflicting opinions on best courses of action (Cruickshank and Collins, 2013). As such, certain stakeholders maintain a view that the athletes they work with are "*part time, amateur players that are holding down jobs*" (Chris – *head coach*), and as such, require significantly more support, and are often reliant on this support. Conversely, stakeholders may uphold the opinion that they are "*an elite athlete… players rest on their laurels… they forget it's an honour to represent your country"* (Robert – *support staff*), and as such need to be 'stretched' as highlighted by Alex above. Ultimately, the effectiveness of support in developing a PWB culture is likely to operate somewhere between the examples provided. This combines elements of hands on support and collaboration in dealing with issues, with a balance of autonomy and players independently arriving at a solution.

Managing Roles and Relationships

The prevalence of balance as a mediating factor in Para-Football extends into the major theme of managing roles and relationships. Role clarity has been identified as a core component in understanding high performance cultures and a determinant of one's ability to be optimally successful (Cruickshank and Collins, 2013). Consequently, in the present study, it was the degree to which individuals attach themselves to their role, which provided both positive and negative notions of PWB. Within a high performance culture, it is this attachment and risk of an 'identity crisis' occurring (Carless and Douglas, 2013) against the enhancement of a salient sense of self, positive effects on performance, and greater likelihood of long-term involvement in sport (Phoenix et al., 2005), which places identity and management of roles at the centre of a PWB informed culture. Tom (*doctor*) highlights how his sense of well-being is contingent on prioritising himself outside of his role first and foremost:

> *I'm vocationally a doctor… it's always been 2nd to my family and life outside… I compartmentalise my life… I have my work, but I have my own private and social life, I find that when one impinges on the other, my sense of well-being gets eroded.*

Managing one's environment effectively is a core component of healthy PWB. As such, stakeholders agreed that fully aligning with their role was paramount, but there was awareness of their boundaries and capabilities to ensure that they didn't overextend themselves within the Para-Football culture. This demonstrated what they and others expected of themselves:

> *In that role, something that's quite key to me around well-being it's balance. With the role in particular, it's not full time… for me, the well-being side of it is setting your own boundaries so that you are setting expectations for yourself and others as well in their role. (Eleanor – sport psychologist)*

Yet conversely, employment insecurity and financial concerns often mean that the management of roles became increasingly difficult: "*insecurity around a job would be one that would affect*

it (PWB), but that would affect everybody because financial and health are key things for anybody" (Robert – support staff). Therefore, in developing a PWB culture, stakeholders offset these issues and other conflicts through demonstrating the values and behaviours critical to their role, which they would like their athletes and other staff members to exhibit themselves:

> *You're always learning, always self-aware as a practitioner… being able to 'lose' your position, you are able to better act and operate as a psychologist, and be your authentic self. Ties into good well-being, make sure you be the person you want to be.* (Alex)

Critical to the theme of managing roles and relationships is how the stakeholders ensure that they proactively manage themselves before supporting anyone else: "*if you can't look after yourself, then you are in no position to be supporting other people"* (Alex). Therefore, stakeholders, by "*being happy in their personal life, irrespective of playing*" (Matt), facilitates how they then promote PWB within the culture of Para-Football. As such, given that identity is identified as an ongoing project continually constructed and developed (Bruner, 1986), PWB is managed through the stakeholders ensuring that other aspects of life are not neglected in order to fulfil the role (Murphy et al., 1996) and that they help others manage this through their friendship and leadership: "*you hold that position where you can influence someone and you can affect someone's well-being… you represent yourself, the team, the institution, so you have to carry yourself in a way where you look after those you represent".* (Matt). Subsequently, the stakeholders will often adopt this leadership role and "*be a prototype of the behaviours you want to be shown in other people*" (Alex), and by exhibiting core values and behaviours within their role, it is anticipated that others will also.

Performance and Well-being Dyad

Cultures within football have increasingly adopted a holistic approach, with off-field issues becoming integral within the support given to players (Cruickshank and Collins, 2013).

Consequently, Para-Football stakeholders adopt a humanistic, athlete-centred approach to working with their players, with this being critical to performance-related outcomes: "*If you've got a happy player or a comfortable player, you're probably going to get a decent performance out of them. I see them going hand in hand.*" (Ben). Yet, it is configuring this dyad between performance and well-being which has often been challenging for stakeholders to navigate, whereby, referring back to the notion of 'balance' highlighted previously, those offering support need to identify when to focus on one or the other:

> *You need to have a high professional standard with the work you do, especially working in an international group… you are effectively working within a high-pressurised environment… the expectation is and always should be around how well you perform and the medals you come away with. (Joe)*

As Joe describes, there are various pressures and expectations that come with working in Para-Football. As alluded to previously, this is imperative when identifying the need to either 'support' or 'stretch' players, whereby stakeholders have become increasingly aware of when which one is required. An off-the-field development has seen stakeholders prioritise this, and shift away from the performance focus often adopted within Para-Football culture. Consequently, with players and staff often unaware of an enhanced well-being's impact on performance, it is at the stakeholder's discretion to ensure that well-being and performance enhance one another:

> *I don't necessarily think for the players, staff, and coaches they make that link if they look after their well-being that their performance likely will get better… I try to promote that when you look after yourself as a person and your well-being, then your performance is going to be in a better place. (Eleanor)*

The Para-Football culture has, over time increased its focus on PWB and the implications this has for enhancing performance. From a coaching perspective, stakeholders have "*gone from a commanding style… to a more open style… giving them that chance to do it themselves*" (Paul).

This is due to stakeholders investing increased emphasis on the athlete-centred approach, and the culture providing a more open and dual-discovery emphasis. As Paul goes on to describe, "*I don't know how they feel, I don't know what it's like to be a blind person, so they inform how I can coach better*". Consequently, the performance and well-being dyad is enhanced through stakeholders placing increased emphasis on 'whole' individuals, with the PWB culture structured more around enhancing athlete self-awareness, holistic growth and development (Cassidy, 2010). Chris summarises this notion: "*You've got to develop the individual on the pitch as well… the success will come if you develop individuals better as a whole*".

The Influence of Elite Disabled Sport Culture

Previous research has demonstrated that individuals have had their sporting performance framed within the context of a particular facet of their identity, which in this case is their impairment (Mastro et al., 1996; Bertling and Schierl, 2008). This is highlighted as influential in shaping our perceptions of an individual's engagement with sport (Purdue and Howe, 2012), and as a result, how the culture of disability is shaped will likely impact individuals' PWB. In the present study, a core component of enhancing and maintaining individuals' PWB was the collaboration between its in-group members. This collaboration was reported in the descriptions of the multidisciplinary team (MDT), whereby the support provided notions of PWB in flourishing and the fulfilment of human potential (Ryan and Deci, 2001):

> *I would say the interpersonal relationships in the team are amongst the strongest, the staff are very strong… if someone has a physical symptom and you can't put your finger on it… knowing other bits from mental illness… depression… performance anxiety… that sort of thing makes a difference… (Tom)*

Tom details that it is the collaboration he has with others within the culture that enhances his ability to perform to his potential. He highlights that by having this informative culture, it

assists staff in recognising certain behaviours and emotions that are/aren't there, which means that he and others can work more effectively together to understand the athlete better. Moreover, although emotional behaviour can heighten during tournaments and big games, there remains a cultural emphasis on specific behaviours, attitudes, and values within the squad(s), which are mutually agreed and often non-negotiable:

> *The language around coach- and player-led is a problem in itself, it needs to be team-led… it has to be a conjoined effort… can you create a team who can lose together, rather than a winning team, anyone can win, it's the easiest thing in the world.* (Alex)

As Alex describes, the culture adopted within B1 football has evolved to a more collaborative approach, where individuals are educated on how they react to one of the worst things in sport… losing. This sentiment is shared within B2 and B3 Para-Football, with Matt highlighting the power of shaping a culture that is mutually agreed and accepted by its constituents:

> *You're a product of your environment. When you're in an environment with people for a long period, they're going to impact your behaviour either in positively or negatively.*

Culture, defined as the shared values, beliefs, expectations, and practices across the members of its group, has a significant impact on the group member's thoughts and actions (Cruickshank and Collins, 2012). The stakeholders interviewed reiterated that the influence of disability culture was powerful, with the sense of commonality and protective culture (Pack et al., 2017) essential in developing PWB. Ultimately, Chris captures the power of this, with the togetherness and camaraderie demonstrated within Para-Football illustrating the core components of PWB in a sense of purpose in life, positive relationships with others, and self-determination (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002):

It's probably like the army, people have an affinity with each other… there is this backs to the wall, siege mentality that's been created, that actually helps the group… I think in an absolute weird way it keeps them together.

Future Development

The final theme, future development, focuses on how stakeholders look to enhance the development of PWB further within Para-Football moving forward. With the performance and well-being of football teams varying constantly due to the dynamic nature of the sport (Liu et al., 2015), stakeholders within Para-Football are continually looking to re-evaluate their PWB support to ensure a more consistent approach. One such way is through the management of staff well-being, where, especially in competitive situations it may be neglected in order to maintain complete focus on the players. Herein, Joe shares his concerns around how it is currently managed and maintained:

I would say staff well-being isn't managed… there is a lot of expectation and pressure put upon the staff either indirectly or implicitly… it is more difficult to judge.

This view is shared amongst the Para-Football set-up, with Eleanor detailing how this may result in the onset of burnout: "*when you go away on trips its magnified. We had about 8 days solid… from when you got up to then when you go to bed, you were with people all the time*". Previously, stakeholders highlighted the leadership qualities they attempt to exhibit when providing support around well-being. However, the management of their own PWB presents a potential contradiction to this: "*Well-being was defined before as basically keep quiet about anything that's worrying you. Get on, perform… basically take one for the team.* (Tom). As a result, with an increased awareness of how they are managing their own PWB and its potential flaws, moving forward stakeholders feel there is value in developing resources to ensure that all involved are maintaining a balanced PWB of self and actively attending to this:

You have to keep good people, so I think staff having individual development plans… this is what we think you are good at… this is where we want you to improve… this is where we see you contributing long term (Matt)

Ultimately, Para-Football stakeholders see PWB encompassing a broader coverage within the organisation moving forward. As Alex explains, this may reconceptualise how PWB is defined: "*The previous mindset was much about outcome performance = play better… now they're taking a more holistic perspective… seeing the person over the player… you can't just chuck out these programs and think it's going to work*". Consequently, the stakeholders contend that a top-down approach must be adopted, with the organisation (The FA) driving the core values and behaviours for squads to adopt, with the stakeholders themselves often at a disadvantage of attempting to do this on their own:

Develop this systems approach where every team has a similar way of handling how to incorporate well-being more, that would be more impactful… if it comes from the FA rather than 'little old me' trying to introduce something, that would be definitely more impactful. (Eleanor)

In sum, stakeholders identify various ways in which PWB can be more effectively developed and maintained within the Para-Football culture. However, the most significant area they look to attend to is out-of-camp support, whereby the culture of Para-Football is often guilty of only supporting PWB when its players and staff are 'on-camp'. This may result in key opportunities for support and development being missed away from face-to-face contact:

There's actually not a lot post-tournament (support), and after such a high of being with like-minded people… have success… team cohesion… you come away from that and back to your day-to-day job, it can be quite deflating… in the run-up teams are good at monitoring people's well-being, but post-tournament I'm not sure. (Matt)

Discussion

The present study investigated how Para-Football stakeholders develop a psychological well-being culture. The results identified that the culture of Para-Football often finds itself in a state of 'between-ness' (Titchkosky, 2003, p.228), whereby those involved in the environment find themselves attempting to negotiate between an elite, full-time, performance culture, and that of an amateur, part-time, participatory one. Consequently, the stakeholders attempt to ensure that the opportunities they do have to support the culture are maximised, and that PWB is at the forefront of this. To achieve this, stakeholders emphasised five core components that were crucial to consider and impacted the effectiveness of their support: social and emotional support, managing roles and relationships, performance and well-being dyad, the influence of elite disabled sport culture, and future development.

Cruickshank and Collins (2012) highlights that group culture significantly shapes the well-being of its members. As such, the stakeholders, who hold a key part in reshaping others' habitus (Purdue and Howe, 2012), felt a duty of care to ensure that the culture facilitates healthy PWB amongst its members. A humanistic, person-centred approach was viewed as an effective way of ensuring the above, whereby holistic support was recognised as a key consideration needed to inform well-being (Lundqvist and Sandin, 2014). Consequently, stakeholders based high levels of support on developing the individual both on and off the pitch, whereby they maintained that developing a core PWB principle in the fulfilment of human potential (Ryan and Deci, 2001) enabled individuals to perform more effectively in their role. This effectiveness consisted of negotiating a balance between performance and well-being, through understanding when to challenge and 'stretch' players to be out of their comfort zone in order to experience growth (Ronkainen and Nesti, 2017), versus supporting individuals and considering their personal requests to better their development (Friedman et al., 2004). Moreover, with individuals highly invested in their role as a professional working with England

(playing or offering support), stakeholders identified the value in recognising the boundaries and remits of their role, and also other staff and players. This introduced the other roles and relationships possessed outside of Para-Football, whereby identifying as an individual away from Para-Football greatly enhanced the upkeep of a healthy, salient sense of self. This recognised the management of one's environment effectively (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002), with stakeholders developing individual(s) holistic identity to then inform the individual's role within Para-Football.

Another key determinant in developing a PWB culture within Para-Football is that of the type of support provided to the members within the organisation. The present study demonstrated a strong link between social support and PWB (Zourbanos et al., 2006), whereby alongside emotional support, social support helped form strong bonds between stakeholders and athletes. This bond was based upon elements of trust, honesty, and empathy, with stakeholders versatile in their approach to both leading athletes to attend to their PWB, yet also encouraging autonomy in how each individual adopted successful coping measures. This balance consisted of the 'to and fro of social power' (Cruickshank and Collins, 2013), with both stakeholders and players/staff involved in a continuous feedback loop until an issue was resolved, or PWB was understood or achieved. This involved PWB support being driven by stakeholders around core values, beliefs, and attitudes, with the receiver then entrusted to tailor the support so it was meaningful for them. For example, if the core value was 'being true to the team', the individual would often run outdoors five times a week, as this provided them with fulfilment, yet also kept them in optimal physical shape for the team. Indeed, this was only possible by the stakeholders reaching an informed, trusted, and respected position (Cruickshank and Collins, 2012). Furthermore, through showcasing their own vulnerability to athletes, stakeholders were able to forge increasingly meaningful and effective relationships. As the athlete(s) was able to see that the stakeholder was indeed a human first and professional

second (Anderson et al., 2004), it allowed them to acknowledge when to, as Alex stated: "*know when they can be vulnerable… but be confident and step up and be that macho person on the pitch and dominate*". As such, this provided the dynamic nature of PWB, whereby alongside flourishing and human potential (Ryan and Deci, 2001) there are also elements of purpose and meaning, which are achieved when moving beyond notions of purely being satisfied and happy (Dodge et al., 2012).

In driving behavioural and cultural change, stakeholders provided ideologies on how the field of PWB in Para-Football can be optimised. Increased clarity and normality in the use of PWB is viewed as critical in enhancing its effectiveness within the culture, with members often experiencing negative notions of PWB (lack of purpose, inability to manage one's environment, negative relationships). This is due to the pressure these stakeholders are often under to deliver instantaneous and lasting high performance upon appointment (Cruickshank and Collins, 2012): "*it's always a thing in football, everybody would like something done yesterday… it's 'work out how you can do it now*" (Pete). Consequently, stakeholders were united in their belief(s) that any future development in PWB had to 'come from the top', with the stakeholders themselves trying and struggling to establish a consistent, effective PWB culture. Given the uncertainty around who's role it is to develop culture, with it often falling to the role of the sport psychology consultant (whom may have not received adequate training) (Henriksen, 2015), this outlines a potential concern. As highlighted by Cruickshank et al. (2014), with the creation and sustainment of empowered staff at the upper echelons within the organisation, alongside the self-interests of staff themselves, it provides one of the greatest culture change challenges and indicates a potential follow-up area for research.

As suggested by Cruickshank and Collins (2012), culture development in football likely needs to consider the optimisation of the coherency of members' values and beliefs to support sustained high performance. Therefore, as stakeholder theory suggests, if an organisation does

not consider the interests of its members, it may inhibit the chances of success and risk losing the members themselves. Consequently, the stakeholders now prioritise out-of-camp face-to-face contact with players, as post-tournament support often leaves individuals isolated following the tournament and fails to pick up impact on their PWB: "*tournament, three months after there's been nothing really lined up, and nothing to recognise what they've done… if it's about well-being, it's really recognising that and celebrating it*" (Chris). This indicates that members within the organisation may not be supported as effectively, which may debilitate the sense of purpose and fulfilment they obtain from Para-Football. However, this is often difficult, with Alex highlighting this may be due to: "*the nature of Para-Football… people train and isolate a lot on their own and that is the biggest challenge*".

Given the nature of Para-Football, and as such the context of the present study, there are several limitations to consider when interpreting the key findings. Firstly, given that stakeholder perceptions alone were examined, and not the targets of change themselves (i.e., the athletes and the culture) (Cruickshank and Collins, 2013), it is more challenging to draw conclusions about the effectiveness and extent to which PWB was implemented within the Para-Football culture. Moreover, although the interviews were a follow-up to initial explorations into stakeholders' experiences of PWB, there may remain elements of retrospective recall bias from participants. These limitations may be overcome with the adoption of a longitudinal-based study, whereby stakeholders' experiences of the development of a PWB culture could be monitored over longer-periods of time, and following tournaments, with this being especially pertinent given the 'part-time nature' of the support stakeholders provide. While different stakeholders within the same team identified similarities in their perspectives about developing PWB culture, they also provided differing accounts of how culture was developed within their squad. Here, a longitudinal study would have been valuable

in monitoring the consistency of themes and patterns over an extended period, which may provide a more comprehensive overview of how PWB is developed.

In terms of future directions, stakeholders identify several key areas to focus on to enhance the development of a PWB culture moving forward. Firstly, the management of staff PWB in terms of improving the mental health literacy of those working in sport may be crucial (Sebbens et al., 2016). Coaches and support staff in elite sport are not currently required to undergo mental health training, and subsequently may not possess adequate mental health knowledge (Sebbens et al., 2016). Therefore, when stakeholders themselves are promoting PWB, it may be counterproductive in the support they are offering in this area if they themselves are not attending to a healthy, balanced PWB, and suffering burnout and strains from pressure. A key future development is to establish clear guidance regarding PWB for Para Football, which must include not just the athletes but also support for stakeholders in how to balance the demands (e.g., training, traveling, competition, and home-life) associated with their role. Secondly, consistency of support (and associated policy and protocol) needs development with informal and formal conversations, video calls, and meetings, viewed as potential methods to enhance the development of stakeholder PWB. Rather than be overtly 'led', Para-Football culture is increasingly shifting toward individuals being liberated to make their own decisions (Cruickshank and Collins, 2013). Therefore, with stakeholders identifying this as an area worthy of exploration, it would be worthwhile developing how support is structured to allow athletes and other staff to be able to self-govern and direct their own PWB behaviour on a day-to-day basis. Bespoke life support, social connectivity, and mental health support were areas highlighted as key to consider in the future, whereby resources such as profiling, questionnaires, staff individual plans, and well-being documents were all viewed as potential methods to enhance these moving forward.

In summary, the present study investigated how stakeholders develop a PWB culture within Para-Football. As such, given the range of developments disability football has undergone in recent years (Macbeth and Magee, 2006), it is hoped that the present investigation heightens the awareness and increases the understanding of the sport, its culture, and the importance of PWB development for players and stakeholders within its context. It is only through further investigation and discussion with those involved that a more coherent and rigorous policy and process can be put in place. Athletes and staff within Para-Football are often in a state of limbo, whereby they represent their country in global tournaments and are expected to "*live the life of an elite athlete*" (Robert), yet only receive part-time, sporadic support. As such, the present study provides an understanding that a humanistic approach, which balances both performance and well-being, is critical to maintaining a PWB culture in disability football. Within this, social and emotional support assists individuals in better understanding their roles and relationships with key others, with this support vital in balancing the pressures of both personal and professional life. Further research into this area, with a broader range of squads and roles, is essential in establishing more concrete plans of action.

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Appendix

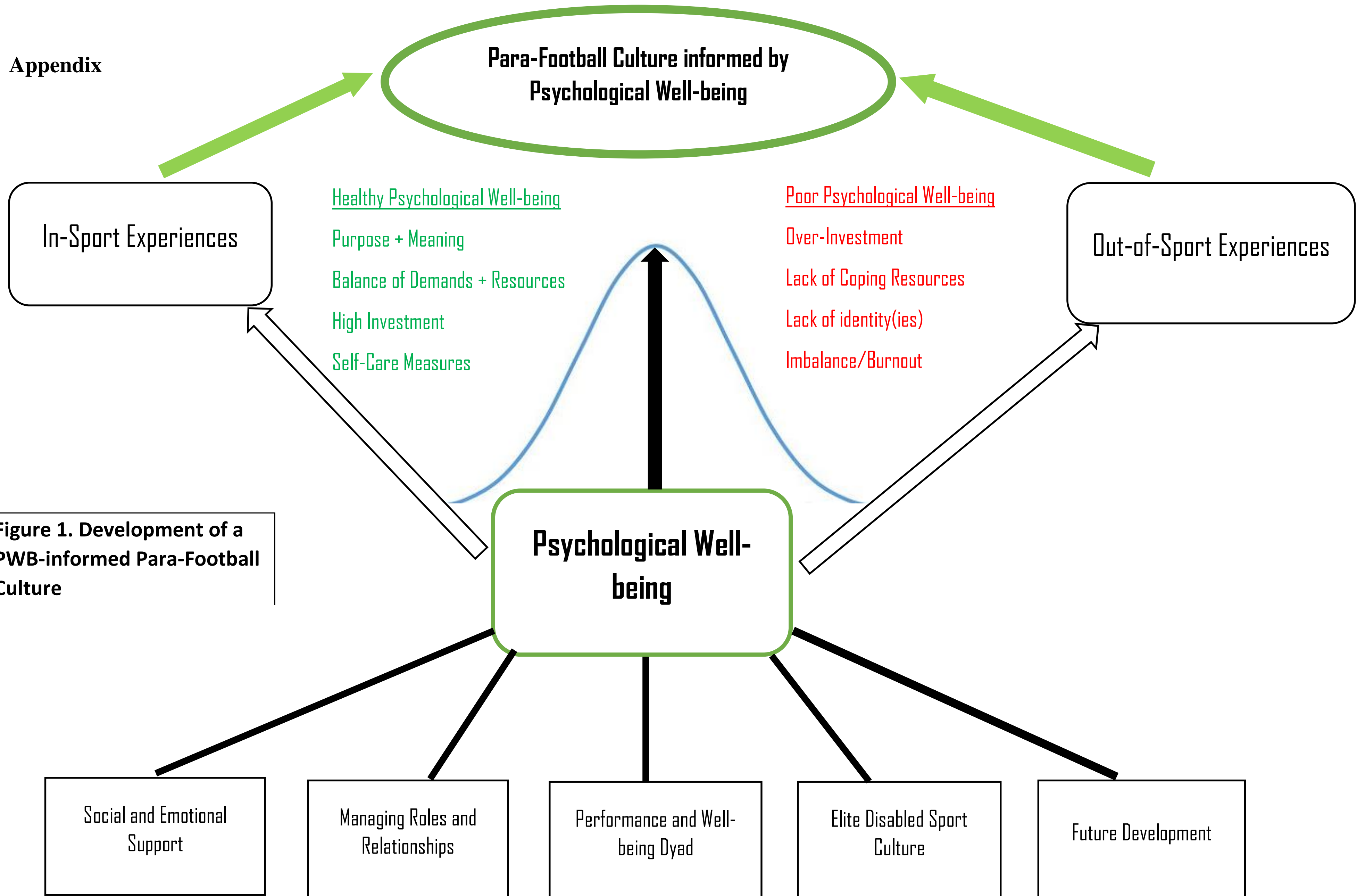

Figure 1. Development of a PWB-informed Para-Football Culture

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RESEARCH COMMENTARY

Research Commentary

This commentary details the development of the research process within the Professional Doctorate in Sport and Exercise Psychology. The commentary presentation is in chronological format, detailing the progression from inception to completion, underpinned by continual reflection. After demonstrating the core learning themes of the process, the focus turns to the main conclusions drawn from the academic research process. This involves ontological and epistemological positioning and its application to research, research-informed practice and assessing real-world impact, then ventures into ongoing ethical dilemmas. Although difficulties and setbacks were prominent, it was through negotiation of these areas through a multitude of resources that good practice research occurred, and through subsequent reflection of 'self' that developed my research and research-to-practice philosophy.

When starting out on the research process, I attempted to gain an understanding of the key concepts that underpinned social-science research. This would allow me to clarify the direction my studies would head in, and crucially, the foundations that would underpin the approach I took. Having completed a BSc. and MSc. in Sport Psychology, I had been exposed to the 'building blocks' of social research (Grix, 2002), and specifically how ontology, epistemology, methodology, and data-gathering sources may inform my research work. However, just because I had been exposed to these 'blocks' of learning did not mean I fully comprehended and understood what they were, let alone be able to implement them into my research and applied practice! As a result, I had often relied on supervisory and peer support to guide the decision-making process. Subsequently, I sought to achieve a heightened awareness and understanding of the 'directional relationship' of, and between, key components of the research process (Hay, 2002; p.163), and then identify and actively incorporate this into my studies moving forward.

Ontology and Epistemology

Ontology refers to “that is, what is out there to know about” (Grix, 2002 p.175), and describes what units make up and interact with one other to ultimately constitute social reality (Blaikie, 2000). In a research context, it explores how I deal with the realities I encounter in my research and the ways in which I see and study my research questions. When combining this with assumptions made about human knowledge, epistemology: “that is, what and how can we know about it” (Grix, 2002; p.175); the interrelationship between ontology and epistemology becomes a defining feature of the research process. Within the early stages of the Professional Doctorate, I often struggled to understand how a particular view of the world may affect the whole research process. How did adopting one ontological approach to another actually impact my research, was it even that relevant? Would it matter if I changed ontology/epistemology to fit the research question? Do researchers categorically align themselves with their ontological and epistemological philosophies at all times? – These were some of the circulating questions that were impacting my judgement and decision-making when beginning the research process.

At the outset, although aware of the formulaic research process I needed to engage with to complete the required research components (i.e. systematic review, empirical papers), I often disregarded my ontological/epistemological roots, and collapsed the methodology and research methods into a more ‘digestible’ format. What ensued, was a method-led approach (use of interviews and thematic analysis) as it was familiar, which allowed me to pose research questions in my own format, and enabled me to work back through the process and what/how my research question would be structured (Grix, 2002). However, following glaring errors in the first draft of my systematic review, I became increasingly aware of its lack of interconnectedness, and that good research is not just the result of a specific method and subsequent discussion, but the result of how one employs, cross-checks, collates and analyses the data through the method(s) one employs (Grix, 2002). Subsequently, following a period of

self-reflection and supervisory meetings, I begun evaluating and attempting to justify the reasons behind my research decisions (Anderson, Knowles & Gilbourne, 2004). For me, this began a more 'question-led' approach to research moving forward, where I explored how ontological and epistemological philosophies may impact and shape the research I conduct.

Initial confusion around the methodologies I employed in research, and a subsequent lack of transparency (Weed, 2009), was gradually substituted for a more informed and coherent approach. With this, an interpretivist paradigm surfaced, which aligned congruently with my belief in the over-arching notion that single theories and concepts are often too simplistic to represent the full richness of the social world (Isaeva et al., 2015). Therefore, diversity in participant interpretations and the richer understandings that are created through experiences and research (Crotty, 1998; Hatch & Yanow, 2003) allow for a more comprehensive understanding of a phenomena. This guided ontological critical realism and epistemological constructivism underpins the ideology that each person (participant) experiences and perceives reality differently, and subsequently it makes more sense to discuss multiple realities rather than a single reality that is the same for everyone (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). This prompted me to explore individual interpretations of reality and experiences, and then combine these experiences into a coherent whole to ultimately contribute to further understanding of the subject area. Fundamentally, this put forward the idea that social actors create partially shared meanings and realities, but may have different opinions and narratives that help account for different social realities (Isaeva et al., 2015). A metaphor I have found useful demonstrates how a 'table' may be interpreted as having '4 legs' and the ability to 'hold objects'. Yet, one individual (post-positivist) may feel that this is solely what constitutes a table (objective fact), whereas another individual (interpretivist) may attach experience and meaning to the table, recollecting 'that time' when a table had been dropped on their foot. Therefore, it is not about

disregarding alternative interpretations, but instead about appreciating why the table appears as it is to the individual in question.

Application to Research

In research terms, the aforementioned paradigm, ontology, and epistemology supported the creation of new, richer understandings and interpretations of social worlds and how we go about researching them. Ultimately, I felt that the complexity, richness, and meaning-making of information was best understood through emphasising the importance of culture and history (experience) (Crotty, 1998). As a result, by acknowledging and actively reflecting on my values (Cunliffe (2003) calls this ‘radical reflexivity’), I sought to understand the different realities of the individual to be able to make sense of and understand their motives, actions and intentions in a way that was meaningful (through their lived experiences). In terms of the systematic review (*Identity in Disabled Sport*), the ‘question-led’ write-up (Grix, 2002, p.180) afforded a more sequential process, whereby each stage of the process was proceeded by a more informed understanding of the next. However, it also acknowledged that one component does not solely determine the next, and instead provides a more rationale, thought-out process.

The staged-process supplemented the systematic review well, as I wanted to take the audience on a ‘journey where you have a companion who knows what they are talking about’ (Boland, Cherry, & Dickson, 2017). This involved full transparency of the process, why each method was adopted, and how this informed the next stage of the process. *Figure 1.* outlines this staged process (Hay, 2002, p.64), whereby I help the audience to understand the research area, through locating, appraising, and synthesising the best available

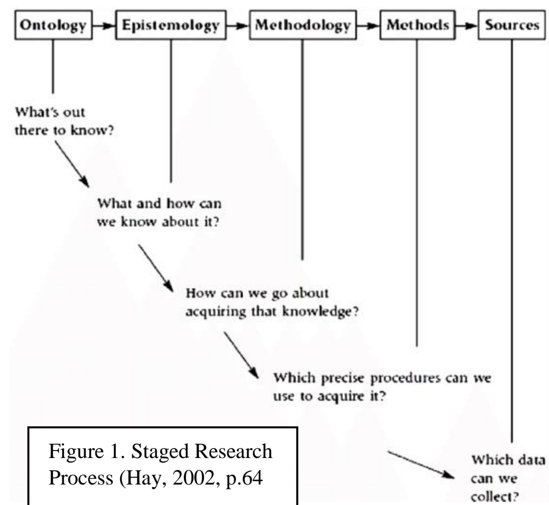

Figure 1. Staged Research Process (Hay, 2002, p.64

evidence in that area (Boland, Cherry, & Dickson, 2017). To elaborate, my critical realism ontology emphasised what the participants (in my empirical paper studies) experienced, and their accompanying thoughts and behaviours at the time, followed by the mental processing that goes on after the experience, with collective reasoning of the underlying reality that may have caused the initial experience (Reed, 2005). This began by seeking to understand what was actually experienced in their identity encounters, which then incorporated the events that may have led to the experience in order to view 'the bigger picture' (Bhaskar, 1989). This encompassed a constructivist epistemology, whereby each individual likely experienced and perceived identity differently, which subsequently seeks to then understand what the different realities and varieties are through an in-depth qualitative approach looking at the meaning-making of these experiences. As a result, this led to the adoption of semi-structured interview methods (with a potential of focus-groups) to obtain the data and subsequently analyse and determine certain themes and features of these experiences. With this in mind, both the systematic review and empirical papers' journeys' have enabled me to understand how my own experiences and interpretations of an event may influence the ways in which I research. Ultimately, although challenging, this has allowed for a greater coherence and fluidity throughout the subsequent research.

The above account allows for an understanding of the interrelationship between the stages in a research process. However, this process has not been without its challenges, with a potential 'overemphasis' on having a strict adherence to a 'staged-process' and rigidness with professional boundaries at all times, which may often be counterproductive (Williams & Andersen, 2012). As a result, I have often found myself occasionally 'letting go of the need to be a real psychologist' at all times (Williams & Andersen, 2012, p.146) and instead understanding that there are situations where a rigorous approach needs to be adopted, and other times where being a person first and sport psychologist second (Anderson, Knowles, &

Gilbourne, 2004) may be more beneficial. This is particularly pertinent when applying research into practice.

Research-informed Practice

Over the past 20 years, there have been persistent calls for more reflexivity in the social sciences, and for researchers to establish an increasingly meaningful, applied relationship between research and practice (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000). As a neophyte practitioner it is crucial I understand the logic taken by myself and others, in order to make my own approach increasingly clear and deliver research-informed practice (Grix, 2002). As a result, this often fosters pragmatism within areas of my work, and a need to be versatile in how different philosophies may inform my research and practice. Within applied experiences, I have increasingly found the need to be able to adapt and deliver whatever the client needs, and an almost "get the job done" approach (Keegan, 2015, p.54). While this degree of 'flex' may be important for applied practice, with a potential ambivalence towards the underpinning theory and the research (-informed practice), how does this look?

In the initial periods of my training, I maintained strict adherence towards a holistic approach, and felt that this applied wholly to both research and practice. The long-term development of both the performer and person (Friesen & Orlick, 2010) was a critical part of my practitioner ethos, and in conjunction with other areas, something that distinguished me as a sport psychologist. Critically, holism ran coherently with my own personal and practitioner-based values (Chandler et al., 2016), however, when this needed to be adapted, I struggled. At this point, I explored alternate approaches within practice, and in particular, it was an interview experience which exposed me to the use of pragmatism within both practice and research. The interview itself was unsuccessful, however, a scenario-based question around a football dressing-room encounter at half-time, and how I may potentially deal with it, evidenced how

there is often a need for a solution-focused approach, with knowledge in research being practically relevant and useful (Isaeva et al., 2015). Subsequently, I began developing an appreciation of pragmatism, whereby its roots in research relate to reality being a practical effect of ideas, and knowledge is valued for enabling actions to be carried out successfully (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Research-informed practice, in this instance, emphasises beginning with a problem, and aims to contribute practical solutions to inform future practice. As a result, my scaffolded progression began to have considerable variation in terms of how 'objectivist' or 'subjectivist' it was, whereby my stance of excluding my own values as a researcher was likely impossible (subjectivist), yet appreciating the interference of values, and keeping research free of them (objectivist), was crucial. My pragmatism sought to overcome this objectivism-subjectivism divide in research, and subsequently engaged me in multi-paradigmatic research as a viable alternative (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). This is done through considering research theories, concepts and findings not in an abstract form, but in terms of the role they play as instruments of thought and action. Therefore, within my own research process I now use this pragmatist position to inform how I am able to appreciate and familiarise myself with alternate approaches. Yet, through consideration of their practical consequences in specific contexts, I am able to have considerable variation in terms of how objectivist or subjectivist my research turns out to be.

Ethical Considerations within Research-informed Practice

After being exposed to years of scientific writing and research exercises, one would be forgiven for thinking that application to practice followed a relatively linear process (Rowley, Earle, & Gilbourne, 2012). Yet, it is this somewhat 'swampy lowland of professional practice' (Schön, 1987) that continues to provide challenges in maintaining consistent research-informed practice and adhering to ethical guidelines. Relating back to my own practitioner philosophies and approaches, the ongoing 'grapple' between my differing researcher and practitioner

identities was commonplace within my research's ethical considerations and dilemmas (Tod, Andersen & Marchant, 2009; Tod & Bond, 2010). Specifically, it was the blurring of ethical guidelines, and potential practice outside of my competency areas that caused concern. For example, whilst obtaining research for my empirical studies, I experienced high attrition rates and setbacks (Gardner, 2009), whereby I became seemingly 'positively afraid' of ethics. Although I wanted to excel and have a positive impact on others (Knapp & VandeCreek, 2006), the strict boundaries and areas I 'could' and 'could not' cover, took precedence within my own cognitions. Furthermore, the slight nuances within the 'methodology', 'methods', and 'sources' stages of research outlined a need for me to understand: role clarity, boundaries, confidentiality, and self-regulation in order to progress with my own ethical understanding.

Transitioning from a practitioner within the squads, to a researcher, and then back again, was understood from a boundary-crossing vs. boundary-violation perspective (Gutheil & Gabbard, 1998). This allowed me to deviate from the typical practitioner-client interaction, in order to explore the potential empirical underpinnings of practice within Paralympic Football. As I did not cause harm and instead was helpful and constructive, this, alongside role clarity and expectations of what I was researching, ensured that boundary-crossing in terms of researcher-to-practitioner was beneficial and not problematic (Windsor, Barker, & McCarthy, 2011). Moreover, although being initially uneasy about some areas that were brought into conversation (previous experiences of depression etc.), I discussed these researcher-practitioner experiences with my supervisor in order to clarify my positioning and any required action e.g. aligning to ethical principles around research and practice confidentiality. As I was the first sport psychologist in role with the England Partially-Sighted squad, there were occasions where I was the only person in the environment with knowledge of professional roles, responsibilities, and ethics. Although daunting, I was increasingly self-aware where the "tangible embodiment of a practitioner's core self, which relates to my values, virtues, and

beliefs" (Chandler et al., 2016, p.3), was aligned with the research I was conducting. This involved integration of my ontological and epistemological underpinnings, whereby I respected and valued my own holistic, interpretivist, and pragmatist approaches to practice and research, and that of the individualised experiences of those in the environment. What this ultimately allowed for was knowing, understanding, and accepting my 'self', as both a practitioner and researcher in these environments (Petitpas, Giges, & Danish, 1999).

Conclusions from the Research Process

In summary, the research component of my training experience has been one of my greatest areas of practitioner development in relation to understanding of research philosophy and process and quality of research product. Having previously been insufficiently aware of the philosophical underpinnings of research, due to either my own naivety or disinterest, the training experience enabled me to question my own thinking and actions, and I learnt to explore my own beliefs with a far greater level of critical scrutiny. This scaffolded progression has seen me restart core research assignments, be unsuccessful in interviews, deliver, at times, ineffective applied practice, all of which have allowed me to continually evaluate and then re-evaluate the processes I engage in and what underpins them. As a researcher, I must accept responsibility for ensuring I fully understand the ontological, epistemological, methods and methodologies I employ, whereby it is my role to actively seek to successfully understand the experiences of others through my own reflexivity.

Moving forward, research-informed practice is central to my practitioner ethos, and as such, maintaining coherence between these two areas is essential in successfully spanning the science-practice gap. Ultimately, I am now in a position, where I appreciate the impact research has on practice, and that by furthering my understanding and logic behind my approaches I am

increasingly able to defend my own stance and fully grasp the directional relationship of key components of the research process (Grix, 2002).

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META-REFLECTION

Meta-Reflection

The Professional Doctorate in Sport and Exercise Psychology provides a two year supervised practice training programme, with the individual's competence developing as the process unfolds. The training process has enabled me to demonstrate scaffolded progression of my understanding and awareness of the situational factors and personal processes that underlie human behaviour (Smith, 2006), and to synthesise this to the competencies that underpin and represent my professional standards, consultancy, research and teaching and training practice. Through increased accountability of my ideas and work, I have developed into a 'player' as opposed to a 'spectator', in other words, moving from more passive acquisition of knowledge in my undergraduate and master's qualifications, towards active and autonomous development of competent and innovative research and practice skill, and rigorous practitioner identity, at doctoral level. Critical to this, are the reflective experiences I have engaged in (reflective practice diary, reflective commentary, meta-reflection) throughout the training process, which help me to demonstrate practitioner competence and development that align with a consistent approach and persistent adherence to best practice (Alves, 2005).

In what follows, I will review the key experiences of my Trainee Sport and Exercise Psychologist journey, to demonstrate the 'how' and 'why' of the development I have made, in terms of both personal and practitioner-based learning. Although not a comprehensive list, the current reflection will focus on: philosophy and values, synergy across learning outcomes, and 'leaving my mark'. It is hoped that the current reflection will be interesting to the reader, but also benefit prospective trainees in better understanding themselves and their experiences as a neophyte practitioner seeking to 'find their feet'. Before reflecting on these key experiences, I will briefly outline my own journey regarding the use of different reflective models, and how this has evolved to help me engage in reflective practice that resonates with and works for me.

Reflective Models

Reflective practice has become a requirement for professional qualifications and continuing professional development (BASES, BPS) within sport psychology (Knowles et al., 2007). Reflection forms a fundamental aspect of delivering psychological practice and research to the highest possible standard, as the individual has delivered, evaluated, and reflected upon their previous experiences and used this to inform practice moving forward. Central to this, is the usefulness of these reflections in developing the trainee practitioner's self-knowledge and understanding of practice, with the Professional Doctorate requiring evidence of professional skills and reflection in and on supervised practice over the training period within the reflective diary. As evidenced in the reflective diary within the portfolio, my use of reflective practice frameworks adopted an interchangeable approach. This enabled me to apply and tailor my reflection based on circumstance and opportunity. Initially, the use of Gibbs reflective model introduced me to the formal nature and process of reflecting to provide richer and more meaningful experiential learning. From this, the direct nature of 'what?', so what?', 'now what?' allowed me to reflect 'in' and 'on' action in short periods of time that I could revisit. Furthermore, the introduction of Anderson's (1999) notions of reflective practice allowed me to rewrite stages of my reflective process to clarify meaning and increase the relevance of the experience (Anderson et al., 2004), and also enabled me to bridge the gap between declarative and procedural knowledge to inform my practice (Alves, 2005).

The reflective model I chose to use initially followed Gibbs (1988) reflective cycle, incorporating: *description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion*, and *action plan* elements, which allowed a comprehensive feel of how I viewed the situation, what was carried out, a summary, and what could be improved. For example, following early consultancy experiences, through reflection I recognised a lack of self-awareness around the nature of contracting, case formulation, and monitoring of intervention. Up until that point, my consultancy had largely

consisted of an intake process, needs analysis, and subsequent delivery of intervention, with little attention given to the application of theory as a framework to guide the decision-making process, and how I would ultimately measure effectiveness towards the end of the intervention. Gibbs' cycle (1988) exposed me to the sheer fact that discussions of my experiences had never gone beyond a description of what had happened, or how I felt. Moreover, it demonstrated that I had likely returned to these processes continually, instead of focusing on implications and action plans. In addition, my early reflective write-ups, although an honest, emotive evaluation of my experiences, also lacked sufficient reference to the extant professional practice and practitioner development literature, and as such there was a disconnect between professional knowledge (e.g. theory) and practice (Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004).

As I grew as a practitioner, my reflections began to evidence an informed understanding of how I developed my effectiveness. For example, I improved my contracting process prior to delivery, whereby previously I had ongoing payment issues due to a lack of clarity from the outset. I implemented case-appropriate frameworks in order to underpin the methods that guided my practice (Nestel et al., 2011), and I evaluated my effectiveness through means of profiling, client feedback, and psychometric measures. However, moving forward I still felt the need to demonstrate better quality reflection, and critiqued Gibbs' cycle (1988) as having the potential to be a superficial reflective model that does not foster deeper reflection (Husebø et al., 2015). Consequently, I understood the need to expand on my reflective practice, however, given the dominating 'author evacuated' style of social science and scientific writing (Knowles et al., 2007, p.111), I sought to maintain embracement of the contextual and personal experiences I underwent (Anderson et al., 2004). Subsequently, I began diversifying my reflective practice process, where Anderson (1999) provided an increasingly relevant model for sport psychology practice, that helped to clarify meaning and increase its relevance for sport psychology (Anderson et al., 2004). The model interrogated the underlying causes of the

experience (what factors contributed to this experience? who are the significant actors?), which in turn helped me to understand the governed, hierarchical nature of the environment. The model allowed me to better evaluate how effective I currently was with my support, the methods that were acting as precipitating factors (what internal/external factors influenced my actions?), and how I could deliver more effective support moving forward (could I have dealt with the situation better, what other choices did I have?). This reflective model gave me the opportunity to critique the processes I was engaging with in the environment, with the depth and richness of the model providing a more meaningful experience.

As the Professional Doctorate neared its conclusion, I read more about, and began to gravitate towards, the use of the 'What went well? What did I learn? What can I do better next time?' reflective framework (Rolfe, Freshwater, & Jasper, 2001). With this approach, a more succinct and direct reflective experience can emerge, with it offering an essence of freedom to write about the self (Knowles et al., 2007). This has allowed me to better place my experiences at the centre of my reflection, as how it has influenced myself, which then informs my practice, is ultimately critical to my professional and personal development (Anderson et al., 2004). As I have begun moving away from needing to be 'convinced' of the benefit of reflective practice (Tod, 2012), I have found great meaning and value in reflecting on uncomfortable and awkward experiences. Moving forward, the value of reflection offers the opportunity to make sense of my experiences and my management of self, and has ultimately increased my personal and professional effectiveness.

Philosophy and Values

It seems inevitable than any reflective based item of work will consider the role and impact of one's guiding philosophy and values. With philosophy prominent in research, applied practice, consultancy, and teaching, it is no surprise that effective sport psychologists are often cited as

being fully aware of their own practitioner philosophy (Fortin-Guichard, Boudreault, Gagnon and Trottier, 2018). At the beginning of the process, I found myself seemingly unaware of any notion of philosophy, let alone its significance in my role as a practitioner and person. Like many neophyte practitioners, I became aware of my inadequacies through the conflicts and struggles I engaged with early on in my training (Keegan, 2010), and through extensive dialogue with my supervisor. These struggles refer to examples such as being presented with a question within an interview asking, 'how does your philosophy inform your practice?' Like the proverbial 'rabbit in the headlights', I stumbled across several albeit relevant philosophies, however, there was little depth as to how they shaped my practice. As practitioners, we are continually exposed to demonstrating competence within our work, and ability to capture key tensions and experiences regarding the philosophy we have engaged with (Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004). As such, I did manage to respond with a brief description of practitioner philosophies in Richard Keegan's 'Being a Sport Psychologist' (2015), yet, ultimately, this experience was invaluable in exposing my flaws, and how I potentially was not quite ready for applied work at that moment in time (if I didn't understand my own experience, how could I possibly understand others?). Following this, I actively pursued the negotiation of my consulting philosophy, in order to refine both mine and others understanding of what it constituted, and why.

Applied Practice

As I grew in experience, it was encounters within my applied work that provided an insight into what my key values and approach was to 'being' a sport psychologist. Initially, due to a desire to demonstrate my competence, I often looked towards immediately offering solutions to the athlete's problems, and, as many have done before me, look to mental skills training to enhance or reduce the symptoms of an experience (Corlett, 1996). This would consist of emotional control and managing anxiety through methods such as imagery, self-talk, and goal-

setting, whereby more often than not, I was pre-occupied with my own cognitions as oppose to the clients (Tod, Hutter, & Eubank, 2017) and prioritising the demonstration of my competence. However, following this, I begun to explore the development of my basic abilities (Fink, 2013) through a deeper self-reflection and reflective practice of my experiences (Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004). This allowed me to identify an incongruence and inconsistency between my personal- and practitioner-based values, and that I needed to harness increased self-awareness of my core values and beliefs in order to live out my values in my work (Chandler et al., 2016). With sport psychology so often being synonymous with the performance enhancement of athletes (Friesen & Orlick, 2010), it can be forgiven for a naïve trainee such as myself, to get drawn into substantiating this. Moreover, in my applied practice, I had always attempted to draw conversation back to how the matter impacted the athlete's wider life. This support incorporated how an athlete's capabilities in a sporting arena is often facilitated by the growth and improvement of the athlete as a human being (Friesen & Orlick, 2010), and as such, humanistic philosophical tenets became more prominent within my applied practice. This enabled me to integrate short-term support with the long-term, holistic development of the person, and subsequently allowed me to align my personal and practitioner-based values. Furthermore, I felt that people are inherently motivated to self-actualise, in that psychological growth, fulfilment and satisfaction are crucial, with these motivating individuals when they are unmet (McLeod, 2007).

As my development unfolded, the increased opportunities in consultancy, practice, and CPD, had allowed me to become more of that 'player' I epitomised within my practice. This concerned 'putting myself on the line' with my work, theories, research, and ideas, which in turn allowed new connections to form and consolidate (Fink, 2013). This prompted the understanding that as a trainee practitioner, over my initial years of practice there will be transitions between consulting philosophical approaches (Tod & Bond, 2010). As such, there

were situations where I found myself aligning with pragmatism, and a performance-focused approach with clients. This was heavily-guided by the organisational context and culture and a need to meet conditioned and sometimes pre-determined objectives and goals. Context and culture, outside of the personal vacuum of core values and practice philosophy, is something that practitioner psychologists are likely to face, and need to be able to navigate, on a frequent base, particularly in the sport domain. Alternatively, I encountered practice situations that were less constrained, where I was comfortable in knowing that there may not be a 'result', and instead the client would be assisted in arriving at their own conclusion (Keegan, 2015). Ultimately, what remained key was the knowledge that there was congruence and authenticity in my support, and that I had the interests of the client at the heart of my practice (Keegan, 2015).

Research

There is significant difficulty in highlighting the different philosophical perspectives and lived experiences of how a trainee constructs their identity as a teacher, researcher, subject specialist, and/or practitioner (Thorpe and Garside, 2017). However, the training process has enabled me to evidence clarity of my research (and guiding pedagogy), so that others are able to understand why I made the decisions I did (Crotty, 1998). With this in mind, there are several key areas that have actively helped me to shape the relationship between my philosophical stance and how I undertake my research (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000).

Prior to understanding and fully appreciating the significance of the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of my research, I had predominantly conducted research in a method-led manner (Grix, 2002). However, whilst transitioning through my assignments and being further exposed to the 'building blocks' of social research (Grix, 2002); I gained a heightened awareness and understanding of the 'directional relationship' of and between key

components of the research process (Hay, 2002; p.163). This concerned an interpretivist paradigm, where I attempted to discover reality through the individual's view, their own background, and their experiences (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2011). This emphasises "accepting and seeking multiple perspectives, being open to change, practising iterative and emergent data collection techniques, promoting participatory and holistic research, and going beyond the inductive and deductive" (Willis, 2007, p.583). As such, I approached research with a view to study the components from the reality of the subjects, and people who own their experiences within a particular group or culture. This inclusive form of research accepts differing viewpoints, ultimately forming a more comprehensive understanding of the situation (Morehouse, 2012). This then facilitated ontological critical realism and epistemological constructivism, which underpinned the ideology that each person (participant) experiences and perceives reality differently, which subsequently supports a rationale to discuss multiple realities, rather than a single reality that is the same for everyone (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). As a result, my philosophy within research often demonstrates an overlap between approaches. Philosophies within research are often person-specific, and as such I advocate the value of my subjective thoughts on that of objective reality. That is, something is actual (it exists) and independent of my mind, but it is my mind that interprets or attaches meaning to it, whereby ultimately, it is formless.

When summarising this section, it is important to visit the notion that there is a consistency between my applied practice and research philosophies. Through emphasising the person-centred approach of humanism, which is based more on counselling than mental skills training (Holt and Strean, 2001), I am able to align more readily with the value of understanding the depth of human beings and their relationship with their environment (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). As such, I am able to demonstrate a solid foundational layer of professional philosophy within sport psychology, as my personal core beliefs and values are congruent across

disciplines (Poczwardowski, 2019). Similarly, as a researcher, in drawing on the 'philosophy' that people perceive reality differently such that there are multiple realities, and a need to discover these realities through the individual's world view, background, and experiences, I experience alignment between the epistemology and ontology that underpins my research and practice. In sum, although I maintain adherence to my humanistic roots, it is only through the blending of philosophies and approaches (context-dependent) that enables me to ensure that I demonstrate versatility and best practice within my practice and research.

Synergy across Learning Outcomes

A core element of the professional doctorate are the learning outcomes that assess candidates' competence. After completing the programme, the trainee should be able to (a) develop, implement, and maintain professional standards and ethical practice (b) apply psychological concepts and theories derived from reproducible findings (c) research and develop new and existing psychological information (d) communicate psychological knowledge, principles, methods and requirements. Subsequently, it is the demonstration of competence across these key areas that ultimately defines whether one passes and meets the standards to be BPS Chartered and HCPC registered. Within my own experience, the greatest challenge of evidencing the requisite competence has been the ability to bridge the 'twilight zone' in which the professional doctorate operates, i.e., between the university-based learning environment and actual working life outside of it (Scott et al., 2004). The distinction between these two cultures of learning (Butcher and Sieminski, 2006) has often meant that I have undergone extended periods of uncertainty when negotiating research, teaching, and applied practice encounters and their accompanying learning outcomes, and really emphasises the value of effective supervision in helping to bridge the gap between the 'two worlds'.

Key Role 1 – Ethics and CPD

The professional doctorate has been developed at a time when continuing professional development and lifelong learning have had an important influence on the policy climate (Bourner et al., 2001). Therefore, my development in key role 1, and establishing, evaluating, and specifically, implementing processes to develop myself professionally, provides a standout competency measure I've undergone in my two years. Given the requirement to evidence an active commitment to continuing professional development (CPD) (Campbell & Moran, 2014) as a trainee, the up-front costs of the doctorate, alongside the expense of training programmes external / in addition to the doctorate training sessions themselves, makes this challenging! I was able to 'exploit' cheaper alternatives via HE teacher training and DSEP training events and the Divisional conference to provide supplementary CPD and opportunities to interact with other trainees and qualified practitioners (Wright, Trudel, & Culver, 2007). One training opportunity in particular (Staffordshire Performance Psychology conference) provided a networking opportunity, which ultimately ended up with me attending an interview and being deployed in my role within the England Para-Football set-up, and generated much of the research and practice that forms a significant component of this portfolio. This was a major turning point within my training, as I had landed my first employment role as a sport psychologist, which helped remove some of the self-imposed 'imposter syndrome' that I had long felt, and the associated self-doubts around feeling a fraud, and whether opportunities for me to demonstrate that I wasn't would ever come. Beyond that, it a perfect illustration of the influence and power of networking, and the importance of who you know!

During the doctorate, I've found myself increasingly aligning with a "self-effacing approach" (Dorfman, 1990, p.344), in that I am less reliant on other's perceptions of whether I have developed, and instead focus more on self-awareness of my personal qualities in different practices to aid my decision making (Chandler et al., 2016). Early on, I would actively seek

praise and recognition from external others in order to gain self-fulfilment and measure the effectiveness of my work. However, through the uptake of reflective practice, CPD, and recording my thoughts, feelings, and actions, it has allowed me to think more critically (Hettich, 1990), and recognise that I am the biggest determinant in the development of oneself.

The development and understanding of my self-identity has been a core feature across the different disciplines. With this, self-identity refers to a 'clearly delineated self-definition comprised of those goals, values, and beliefs which the person finds personally expressive and to which they unequivocally commit' (Waterman, 1985, p.6). This is significant, due to the fact that exploring different roles and behaviours associated with identity formation (Brewer et al., 1993) has not only led to increasing employment opportunities, but also the development of a more authentic and coherent sense of self. This self, promotes a person-centred, process-focused approach, whereby I maintain that performance and well-being are inextricably linked (Brady & Maynard, 2010). As such, within each discipline (applied practice, teaching, research), I uphold the view that in order to deliver the most effective work, you need to first understand the situation, and build a connection with the athlete or what you're studying, to create a positive change (Sharp & Hodge, 2011). This promotes a recognition of self, where 'an individual perceives an authentic connection between their work and a broader transcendent life purpose beyond the self' (Bailey & Madden, 2016, p.55). As such, although my 'self' is important and will diversify slightly dependent on the environment, I always attempt to bring it back to showing a genuine interest and care, and how can we help the person 'articulate and better understand their own situation?'. Therefore, reverting back to values such as honesty, integrity, commitment, and professionalism, I am able to reinforce the notion of congruency across practitioner and personal-based beliefs.

Key Role 2 and Key Role 3 – Consultancy and Research

The synergy across the professional doctorate learning outcomes remains fundamental within key role 2 (consultancy) and key role 3 (research), and the importance of bridging the potentially problematic philosophical and role-related 'gap' between research and practice (Hassmén et al., 2016; Hutter et al., 2016). In the embryonic stages of the professional doctorate, I struggled to comprehend how 'pseudoscientific, ineffective practice', would be relevant to 'incomprehensible, pointless, and boring research' (Vealey, 2006, p.148). Although theory and frameworks were present in consultancy to guide the direction in which I might head, I determined that it was exclusively my delivery and how I was able to fix struggling athletes with mental problems as they approached competition (Holliday et al., 2008) that was the sole determinant of consultancy effectiveness. Furthermore, there remained a notion that the use of complex terminology and psychological 'jargon' that was prominent in research, would be irrelevant and potentially damaging to the athlete. Ultimately, within sport, there are people's jobs on the line, and there is a need to demonstrate effectiveness rather quickly and efficiently, as you are just there for performance enhancement…right? Consequently, it can be forgiven for a 'get the job done approach' to be taken and to just 'do something' (Keegan, 2015, p.53), especially given the dynamic nature of sports such as football, where performance varies constantly (Liu et al., 2015). Yet, for me, this mind-set soon shifted.

As I've progressed through my time in different environments within research and applied practice, I've witnessed that blindly ignoring the value of either resource presents the risk of missing a significant opportunity to advance both practice and research (Norman, 2010). Firstly, given the significance of philosophy within my experience and the impact personal- and practitioner-based values have on my support, it is clear to see how using empirical literature to inform applied sport psychology support advances knowledge and understanding (Poczwardowski et al., 2014). Secondly, the use of frameworks, models, and data have

provided a ‘start point’ for consultancy, where I am able to progress through the stages of support, with confidence that I have implemented a reliable, scientific model and process to guide my conversations and proposed intervention. This becomes crucial when monitoring effectiveness, and being able to understand and demonstrate progress from consultancy inception to endpoint. A further key area detailing research-informed practice (and vice versa), is the comprehension that in my experiences, elite performers often possess outstanding mental skills (Fifer et al., 2008). Subsequently, at the start of the process I found myself ‘hung up’ on attempting to deliver in these areas, with limited effectiveness, and therefore quickly found the value of counselling-based work and how critical skills such as active listening (Ivey, 1983) and the ‘power of silence’ are. These elements are now at the forefront of my support interventions, along ‘me’, the practitioner, as the most important intervention tools. I have found these elements to be especially crucial in ‘pre-contemplation’ and ‘contemplation’ stages within consultancy; and they can help develop more effective support provision and the formation of better client-practitioner relationships (Breckon, 2015).

In sum, as Keegan et al. (2015) highlights, there is often a notable disconnection between scientific research and applied practice, which works to undermine the professional image of the field. As practitioners have a duty of care towards our athletes and the field, whereby the use of credible models of practice, and consistent vocabulary across both research and consultancy environments will allow us to deliver and effective scientific support service, and inform the professional training of future practitioners (Keegan, 2017).

Key Role 4 – Teaching and Training

The ongoing education and training I’ve received in key role 4 have better prepared me to address the organisational demands within my role, develop awareness of my personal qualities, and crucially, has provided me with the opportunity to critically explore my qualities

within practice (Chandler et al., 2016). In beginning the training process, I was acutely aware of a gap in my own understanding around how I could 'brand' myself, and my services, and how to best disseminate my knowledge to various populations and environments. A 'resistance' towards the incorporation of the psychological side of the game has long been an issue for those attempting to get others to understand the impact it can have on performance (Robinson, 1897). However, through overcoming feelings around feeling a fraud, and fooling people into believing I was more capable than I actually was (Clance, 1985), I began to appreciate my experiences and the approach I brought into my consultancy. This centred around the approach I had adopted across my different environments, whereby my initial humanistic, person-centred approach demonstrated all the relevant characteristics around placing the client at the centre of the experience, adapting my approach based on them and their cognitions, and how this was ever-present within my support. Moving forward, the incorporation of a more pragmatist-based approach that incorporated cognitive-behavioural elements and how cognitions influence behaviour and are adapted through challenging them, highlighted my ability to improve emotional regulation in challenging circumstances, and offer relevant interventions and coping strategies, linked to cognitions and based on the client's situation. What these two approaches demonstrate (alongside others), is my ability to adapt to the environment, athlete, and behaviour at hand, in order to produce support that is the most appropriate and effective at that time, based on my knowledge and experience as a growing practitioner in the field.

The dissemination process of preparing, presenting, evaluating and feeding back information for individuals, groups, and organisations was a key component within key role 4. Learning about salient and effective teaching and training techniques, and associated pedagogical theory, benefited me greatly within my own teaching and training experiences. In addition, undertaking LJMU's '3i's' programme, open to doctoral students who provide teaching support in the academic curriculum, was invaluable to develop my teaching and

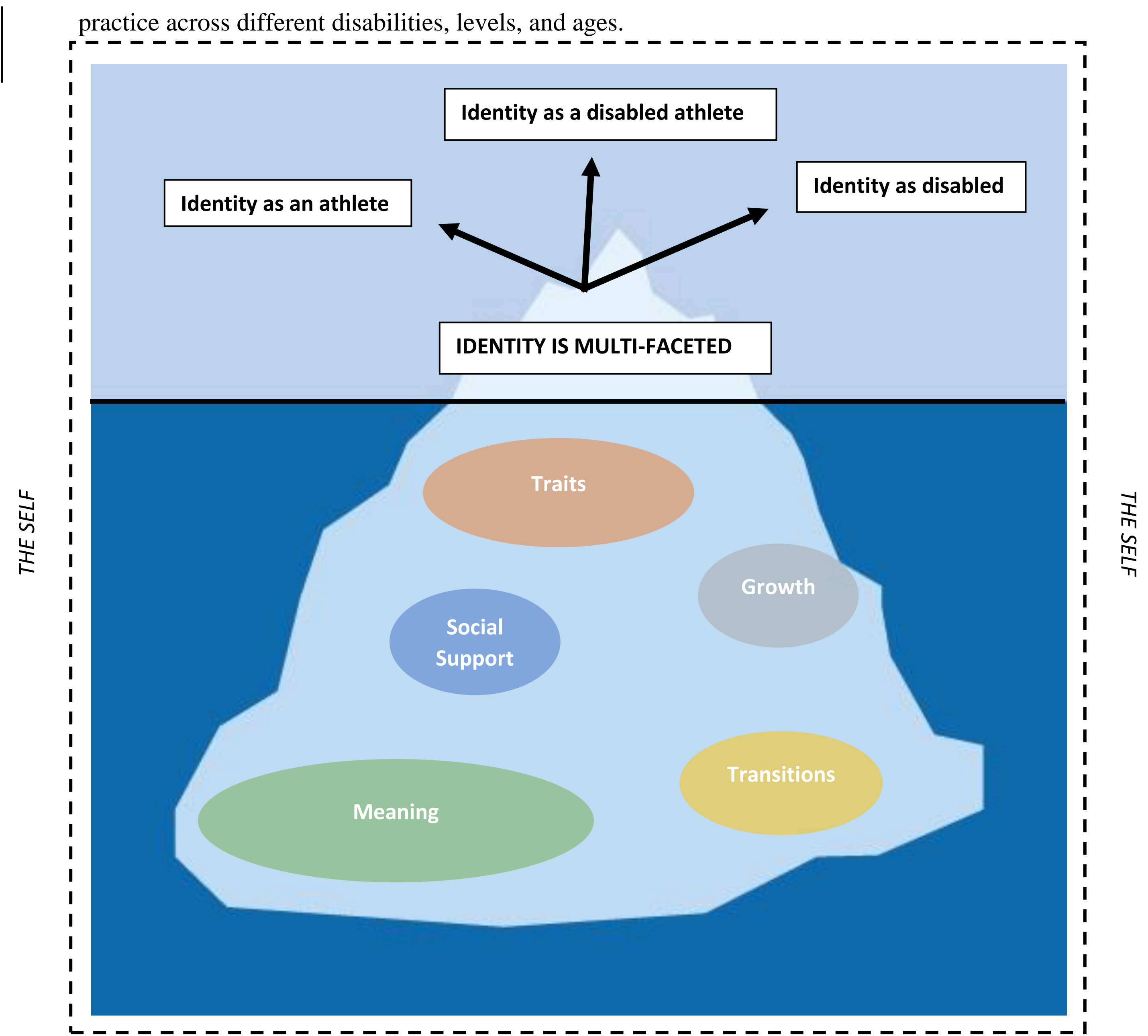
training competence within my own experiential ‘on the job’ encounters (Chandler et al., 2016), which then informed how I delivered within an educational setting. The ability to understand the personalised learning environment within academia (Simpson and Ure, 1994) was supported by the CPD opportunities I engaged in, and I would have felt less prepared for teaching in an HE environment (Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009) had I not. Research demonstrates the importance of language and communication being critical for keeping people (students or otherwise) engaged, motivated and interested in the topic at hand (Pennebaker, Mehl and Niederhoffer, 2003; Watzlawick, Bavelas and Jackson, 2014). As such, my meta-reflection on my underpinning approach across teaching, research, and consultancy enabled me to identify synergy in the core, common ingredients of my approach across the different contexts. As a teacher, researcher and consultant, I align my approach to the humanistic, person-centred principles I value and can actively see a consistency in my psychologist ethos and style.

Leaving my Mark

As I near the end of the professional doctorate qualification, I am able to best appreciate the journey I have been on, in not only crafting my knowledge, but most importantly, how I have developed personally and professionally, and hopefully advanced the profession (Scott et al., 2004) to give something back to the discipline.

From a research perspective, my work investigating identity and well-being concepts within disability sport is a research area that is often devoid of stakeholder training and disability awareness, alongside a lack of consistency and informed planning in existing provision (French and Hainsworth, 2001). I hope that my research will enable those working within the disability sport environment to gain a more informed understanding of how to best support their athletes, and themselves. On a micro-level, this work supplements existing support provision but also facilitates conversations in knowing what approach to take with

players, and how well-being can influence performance (and vice versa). On a macro-level, this research can combat the limited awareness of the opportunities that exist and the complex structure and organisation of disabled football (in England) (Macbeth & Magee, 2006), so that stakeholders, organisations, and the wider population can better understand disability sport and those working in it moving forward. Through the negotiation of holistic identities and the long-term development of the individual (Friesen & Orlick, 2010), my research enhances understanding of 'identity as athlete', 'identity as disabled', and 'identity as disabled athlete', and advances knowledge concerning the multi-faceted role of identity in disability sport (see Figure 1). As a result, my research is now informing the FA's Para-Football programme, with its overarching scope and transferability across squads enabling it to inform PWB policy and practice across different disabilities, levels, and ages.



Within teaching, it is hoped that my experiences highlight the ongoing challenges a trainee may encounter when delivering in this environment, and how to negotiate and overcome at least some of them! Working in Academia as a sport psychologist often requires a clear alignment of class learning outcomes with local and/or national standards (Forehand, 2005). Consequently, working within such constraints is a good example of a situation where there is a need, but also a personal struggle, to 'flex' your practitioner style, as the organisation has a commitment to educational and government standards (e.g. AQA and DFE). However, my work in the environment demonstrated how a robust learning taxonomy (SOLO), versatility within teaching style (student-led, teacher-led, practical's, independent learning, debates, case studies), and ongoing reflection to continually evaluate and enhance effectiveness, will provide support that best understands the context of both the environment and the individual (Fifer et al., 2008). Furthermore, this is very much transferrable to other applied environments, where I was able to use teaching and training experiences to inform my practice within the England Para-Football set-up (and vice versa). Therefore, by ultimately respecting the culture of the organisation, it points to gaining a heightened experience of learning, understanding, and improving based on past performances (Kaplan, Gheen, & Midgley, 2002).

Offering support within a consultancy environment was probably the most challenging experience I encountered across the professional doctorate, where the apprehension around isolating yourself and being fully accountable for any repercussions has been an ever-present issue. This relates to the importance of being competent to: - market yourself, build a client base, deliver and monitor successful interventions, and measure effectiveness. For me, what is central to overcoming these challenges is understanding your own personal situation, and having core values and beliefs that are consistent and congruent across different contexts and situations (Poczwardowski, Sherman, & Ravizza, 2004). Irrespective of whether these are micro-based i.e., spending more time in needs analysis and case formulation, or macro-based

i.e., developing a good relationship with your client, it is understanding how these inform your approach (in my case a humanistic, person-centred framework), and promote responsibility, personal growth, and self-actualisation in clients(Poczwardowski, Sherman, & Ravizza, 2004) that are fundamental within your support. Ultimately, athletes don't care what you know until they know that you care.

In sum, it is hoped that the current reflection provides a comprehensive overview of my professional doctorate experience and the major influencing factors during its course. There are instances that are unique to my situation, which may benefit those wishing to work within disability sport, golf, athletics, football, and teaching; however, the principles around philosophy, reflection, research-informed practice, ethics, training, and CPD, will likely provide common challenges for trainee sport and exercise psychologists to overcome. Ultimately, I believe it is only by experiencing these uncomfortable and awkward experiences (Andersen, 2000), that we are able to grow as individuals and drive the profession forward.

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