

SPORT & EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE
PORTFOLIO

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

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Abstract

The present portfolio illustrates the development of a trainee sport and exercise psychologist on a professional doctorate programme from January 2018, through March 2024, conducted through Liverpool John Moores University. More specifically, this portfolio provides insight into the trainee's development and fulfilment of the British Psychological Society (BPS) and Health Care Professional Council's (HCPC) respective required standards for sport and exercise psychology accreditation. These standards (professional standards, consultancy, research, and dissemination) are explored and reflected upon throughout this portfolio. Detailed professional practice and reflective practice logs outline the trainee's experiences throughout her time on the programme accompanied by a reflective account of her development within each of the four competencies. Consultancy case studies, followed by a consultancy contract and report, provide insight into the trainee's applied sport psychology practice in various sports and with a variation of clients, with a focus on the holistic development of clients through a foundation in humanistic values. Following this, a teaching case study and teaching diary illustrate critical, reflective accounts of the trainee's engagement and development with teaching and dissemination across sport and academia. Subsequently, this thesis provides a systematic review exploring women's experiences of sexism in sport, an empirical study exploring mental health conceptualisations in Premier League football academies, and an empirical study examining women's experiences of sexism in sport. Finally, a reflective commentary reflects upon the trainee's development experience and the importance of continued holistic development, authenticity, and congruency.

Declaration

There are no known conflicts of interest associated with this portfolio. No portion of the presented work has been submitted in support for an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other institute of learning.

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Even the smallest person can change the future



This journey would not have been possible without the love and support of those around me.
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To Dr. Martin Eubank and others at LJMU who facilitated my development – thank you.

Practice Log of Training

Professional Standards			
Location	Date(s)	Nature of Activity	Contact Hours
LJMU	18/01/18	Professional Doctorate Induction	6
WFH	19/01/18	Professional doctorate reflections, plan, website considerations	4
WFH	16/02/18	Sort out BPS Graduate membership	1
WFH	w/c 30/02/18	Reading up and reflecting on philosophy of practice; specific focuses on existential and humanistic, but also considering more directive	12
LJMU	01/02/18	Prof Doc lectures	6
WFH	w/c 06/02	Gantt chart and SWOT analysis – learn, reflect, consider, write, edit, etc.	20
LJMU	15/02/18	Prof doc lectures	6
WFH	16/02/18	Systematic review research	2
WFH	19/02/18	Begin website development	10
WFH	w/c 19/02/18	Further reading on philosophy of practice and intervention approaches	18
LJMU	15/03/18	Prof doc lectures	6
LJMU	15/03/18	Supervisory meeting ME; subsequent reflections	2
LJMU	09/04/18	Radox event – mental health and well-being in horse racing	6
LJMU	12/04/18	Prof doc lectures	6
WFH	13/04/18	Professional philosophy reading and reflection	4
WFH	13/04/18	Website development/brainstorming	2
WFH	w/c 16/04/18	Professional philosophy reading and reflection; reading into sport-specific cultures	20
LJMU	26/04/18	Prof doc lectures	6
WFH	27/04/18	Reflect on previous lectures and how this applies to website; more website brainstorming	4
AJ Bell Stadium	28/04/18	Attend networking event	5
LJMU	10/05/18	Prof doc lectures	6
WFH	w/c 14/05/18	Reading and reflecting – being a sport psychologist, formulation, applying this to philosophy reflections	12
LJMU	24/05/18	Prof doc lectures	6

LJMU	28/06/18	Prof doc lectures and supervisory meeting	7
WFH	Summer 2018	<p>Various professional standards readings and relevant reflections including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport-specific culture • Philosophy of practice (humanistic) • Learning how to do counselling psychology • Formulation • Working with equine athletes <p>Engaging in marketing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing website • Designing business cards <p>Ensuring I am up to date on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liability insurance • BPS membership 	120
WFH	22/08/18	Prepare and send application for Castleford Tigers	3
University of Bolton	31/08/18	Meet with NW ('prof doc buddy') to discuss prof doc experience, priorities, consultancy, etc.	3
WFH	03/09/18	Read up on existential humanistic psychology	3
WFH	12/09/18	Read about boxing, issues surrounding the sport and mental health and ethics, etc.	6
WFH	15/09/18	Reflect on potential client; get in touch with ME about organising meeting to discuss	3
WFH	20/09/18	Supervisory phone call with ME about potential client; reflection	3
WFH	25/09/18	Post- first client reflections	2
LJMU	27/09/18	Prof doc lectures and supervision	7
Staffordshire University	03/10/18	Performance Psychology Conference	6
WFH	04/10/18	Reflections – performance psychology and humanism/humanistic psychology; gather further reading	6
WFH	05/10/18	Reflected on ethics and values re above	2
WFH	08/10/18	Reading on performance psychology and humanistic psychology; reflections	4
LJMU	11/10/18	Prof doc lectures and supervision	7
Liverpool	25/10/18- 26/10/18	ACT Workshop	22

WFH	06/11/18	Reflections on CPD to engage in (primarily, struggling to find humanistic CPD). Joined 'existential humanistic institute'	8
LJMU	13/12/18	Prof doc lectures	6
LJMU	31/01/19	Prof doc lectures and supervision	7
WFH	01/02/19	Reflections based on lectures and supervision	2
WFH	20/02/19	CVs and cover letters; apply to Waterloo rugby	4
LJMU	28/02/19	Prof doc lectures; chat with MN about Waterloo role	6
WFH	01/03/19	Reflections on rugby	2
WFH	04/03/19	Waterloo interview prep and interview	3
WFH	15/03/19	Research and draw up Waterloo contract	4
WFH	w/c 18/03/19	Research and reflections on rugby and issues between teammates	10
WFH	20/03/19	Reflection on similarities/differences between rugby and boxing	2
WFH	21/03/19	Emails with MN about starting at Waterloo	1
LJMU	28/03/19	Prof doc sessions and supervision	6
LJMU	11/04/19	Prof doc sessions and research chat	8
WFH	March-May 2019	Various readings and reflections about working in rugby and boxing and the issues experienced in both.	30
WFH	29/05/19	Reflections on finishing with Waterloo	2
WFH	w/c 18/06/19 and w/c 24/06/19	Deep-dive into research on transition, athlete well-being, mental health, athlete injury. Trying to get prepped for last LJMU meeting with research ideas	20
LJMU	27/06/19	Prof doc session, student welcome day support. Supervisory meeting regarding potential research	10
WFH	Summer 2019	Various reading and reflections. Primarily: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanistic psychology and rationalising other beliefs • Working in very contact based sports • Mental health and well-being – various models. Wrapping my head around well-being literature. Leaning towards Keyes model (compared to 'flourishing' or 'thriving') • Reflections on how the Keyes model fits well with role of sport psych 	120

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to best lean into this in research? How does well-being tie into performance? Etc. 	
LJMU	21/08/19	Chat with RM about Crewe opportunity	1
WFH	22/08/19	Emails regarding Crewe position	1
WFH	23/08/19	Revise resume, apply for Crewe role	3
WFH	03/09/19	Email ML about equestrian psychology opportunities; research into equestrian sport psychology	2
LJMU	05/09/19	Football Psychology Conference; networking; chat with MN and ML about potential football project	10
Crewe Alexandra	13/09/19	Interview for psychology role (prep and interview)	3
WFH	16/09/19 and 17/09/19	Researching and reflecting for upcoming Crewe role; general preparing and organising	15
St. George's Park	03/10/19	PFA Mental Health Conference	12
WFH	04/10/19	Reflections from conference and prep for following week	6
WFH	September- December 2019	Various reflections surrounding my experience at Crewe; research to support and develop appropriate interventions, workshops, etc. Examples (<i>Psychology in Football, The Psychology of Soccer</i>) (Reflections averaged 4-6 hours/week).	100
LJMU	01/11/19	Prof doc lectures; chat with RM about Crewe	7
WFH	19/11/19	Developing and sending expression of interest and CV to Changing Minds	2
WFH	14/12/19	Reading and reflection – humanistic psych and self-actualisation	3
WFH	04/02/20	Reflect on/prepare how to prep the club for my three weeks away. Reflect on how this will impact progress within club (especially after seeing education intervention struggling)	10
WFH	04/03/20	Emails to Changing Minds etc.	1
LJMU	12/03/20	Supervisory meeting ME	1
WFH	26/03/20 and 27/03/20	Zoom course and reflections	8
WFH	29/03/20	Supervisory meeting (virtual) with ME – COVID and Crewe delivery; subsequent reflections	3
WFH	w/c 31/03/20	Positive Psychology Online Course (Coursera)	20
WFH	08/04/20	Supervisory meeting and reflections (client experiencing bullying)	4

WFH	21/04/20 and 22/04/20	Positive psychology Zoom course	8
WFH	29/04/20	Philosophy of practice reflection	4
WFH	05/05/20	Humanistic and positive psychology course	3
WFH	06/05/20	Humanistic psychology reflections	2
WFH	06/05/20	Humanistic psychology reading and reflections	6
WFH	09/07/20	Women in football chat	1
WFH	14/07/20	Marketing a SEP business course	3
WFH	22/07/20	Changing Minds interview day	6
WFH	30/07/20	Meet with FC (FLAME, WLP)	1
WFH	Lockdowns and Summer 2020	Engagement in various development, including reading and reflections surrounding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning about positive psychology • Literature surrounding critical moments and transition • How was the pandemic impacting athletes? • Writing blogs for website • How to be a good psychologist over zoom 	100
WFH	12/08/20	Supervisory meeting ME	1
WFH	18/08/20	Meet with FC and ME Meet with LS Feedback session from Changing Minds	6
WFH	26/08/20	Supervisory meeting ME	1
WFH	01/09/20	Reflective practice	4
WFH	07/09/20 and 08/09/20	WiSEP Conference	12
WFH	14/09/20	Supervisory meeting ME	1
WFH	23/09/20	Supervisory meeting ME	1
WFH	05/10/20	Supervisory meeting ME	2
WFH	03/11/20	Online Changing Minds early career support	5
WFH	18/11/20	Positive psychology webinar	2
WFH	16/12/20 and 17/12/20	DSEP Conference	12

WFH	14/01/21	Prof doc supervision ME	1
WFH	22/02/21	Renew professional indemnity insurance	1
Liverpool	08/03/21	Women in Football event	4
WFH	17/02/21	Women's Leadership Programme reflections	2
WFH	31/03/21	Interview for USW research role (prep and interview)	4
WFH	15/04/21	Participate in practitioner development interview	1
WFH	20/04/21 and 21/04/21	WiSEAN Conference	16
WFH	21/04/21	Meet with Vana about FLAME conference	1
WFH	27/04/21	Research and reflect on upcoming research role	6
WFH	w/c 10/05/21	New USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 17/05/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 24/05/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 31/05/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 07/06/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 14/06/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 21/06/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 28/06/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 05/07/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 12/07/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 19/07/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 26/07/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 02/08/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	05/08/21	Supervisory meeting FC	1
WFH	w/c 09/08/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	15/08/21	Research and reflections on working with golfers	2
WFH	w/c 16/08/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 23/08/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 30/08/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 06/09/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 13/09/21	USW role development activities	10

WFH	w/c 20/09/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 27/09/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	27/09/21 and 28/09/21	3i's Course	8
WFH	01/10/21	Supervisory meeting FC	1
WFH	04/10/21	3i's Microteaching	1
WFH	w/c 04/10/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	06/10/21	Reflection on my own experience with injury, compromised well-being, etc. after interesting physio session	2
WFH	w/c 11/10/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 18/10/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 25/10/21	USW role development activities	10
WFH	24/11/21	Interview for WSL team (interview and prep)	4
Liverpool	28/11/21 and 29/11/21	DSEP Conference; presenting, learning, networking	24
WFH	08/12/21	Reflection on WSL team situation	2
WFH	14/12/21	Reflection on first research role experience	4
WFH	11/01/22	Reflection on new client and their experiences with 'isms'; reflection on my privilege	4
WFH	w/c 21/02/22	Sexism, patriarchy, equity, etc. reading and reflecting	16
WFH	09/03/22	Football Exchange Women's event	1
WFH	18/03/22	Sessional marking meeting	1
WFH	w/c 21/03/22	Sessional marking for Science in Football	20
WFH	30/03/22	USW Interview (prep, interview)	3
WFH	18/04/22	Various readings and reflections (politics, patriarchy; <i>Psychology of Prejudice</i> reading, notes, reflection)	20
WFH	w/c 23/05/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 31/05/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 06/06/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 13/06/22	USW role development activities	10
LJMU	15/06/22	Football Exchange Conference	6
WFH	w/c 20/06/22	USW role development activities	10

WFH	w/c 27/06/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 04/07/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 11/07/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 18/07/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 25/07/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 01/08/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 08/08/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 15/08/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 05/09/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 12/09/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 19/09/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 26/09/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 03/10/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 10/10/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	12/10/22	Supervisory meeting with AW and notes/planning	2
WFH	w/c 17/10/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 24/10/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 31/10/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 07/11/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 14/11/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	15/11/22	Meet with TS about LJMU culture research; notes	2
WFH	w/c 21/11/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 28/11/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 05/12/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 12/12/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 19/12/22	USW role development activities	10
WFH	03/01/23	2022 year reflection and plans for 2023	4
WFH	w/c 03/01/23	USW role development activities	5
WFH	w/c 09/01/23	USW role development activities	10
WFH	11/01/23	Football Exchange Women's Network Symposium	5
WFH	w/c 16/01/23	USW role development activities	10

	18/01/23- 20/02/23	Reading and reflecting (e.g., Discrimination in sport; <i>Feminist Applied Sport Psychology</i>)	8
WFH	w/c 23/01/23	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 30/01/23	USW role development activities	10
WFH	31/01/23	Supervisory meeting AW (previous eDoc paperwork, etc.; post meeting notes and planning for 2023)	3
WFH	w/c 06/02/23	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 13/02/23	USW role development activities	10
WFH	w/c 20/02/23	USW role development activities	10
WFH	21/02/23	Reflection on MA consultancy	2
WFH	w/c 20/02/23	USW role development activities	10
WFH	March 2023	Caught up on books, e.g.: <i>Sport, Gender, and Development</i> ; <i>Gender Equity in UK Sport Leadership and Governance</i> ; <i>Reflective Practice in the Sport and Exercise Sciences</i> . Notes and reflection	40
WFH	12/04/23	Call with DP about potential work	1
WFH	19/04/23	Zoom with EW about autism and working in sport psychology; reflection	2
WFH	09/05/23	Culture and values reflection	2
WFH	19/04/23	Introduction meeting for potential work (confidential)	1
WFH	18/05/23	Autism and sport psychology reflection	2
WFH	15/06/23	Autism assessment 1	2
LJMU	21/06/23 AND 22/06/23	Attend WiSEAN Conference	20
WFH	03/04/23	Autism assessment 2	3
WFH	04/07/23	Autism assessment 3	3
WFH	10/08/23	Supervisory meeting FC	1
WFH	22/08/23	Prof doc supervision meeting; notes and plans Placement and projects TSO meeting	3
WFH	03/10/23	Reflective day (working on endoscopy project; new teaching and training opportunity)	6

University College Birmingham	01/11/23	Attend SPARC23	6
WFH	07/11/23	Reflective practice day	6
Coventry Building Society Arena	16/11/23	Attend BASES conference	8
WFH	01/12/23	Supervisory meeting AW; planning	2
WFH	05/12/23	Supervisory meeting AW/LS; prof doc planning	2
WFH	12/12/23	CPD/2023 dissemination reflection	2
WFH	08/12/23	2023 reflection and 2024 planning day	6
LJMU	26/01/23	Networking at British Council research day	2
WFH	28/02/23	Portfolio reflection	3
WFH	March 2023	Various development-related reflections	6
			Total: 1954

Consultancy					
Client Details	Location	Date(s)	Nature of Activity	Contact Hours	Placement Host (if applicable)
N/A	WFH	24/01/18	Reaching out to various clubs regarding potential consultancy	4	N/A
N/A	WFH	30/01/18	Reaching out to various clubs regarding potential consultancy	3	N/A
N/A	WFH	01/05/18	Follow-up phone call with potential rugby team client (prep and call)	2	N/A
CE	WFH	25/05/18	Phone call with CE manager to discuss potential consultancy	1	N/A
CE	London	05/06/18	Intake with CE (prep, session, notes, and reflection)	5	N/A
CE	WFH	06/06/18	Contract work (write up, research, send)	2	N/A
CE	London	28/06/18	Session (prep, session, notes/formulation)	4	N/A
CE	London	18/07/18	Session (prep, session, notes/reflection)	3	N/A
CE	London	14/08/18	Session (prep, session, notes/reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	06/09/18	Online session (prep for online side of things, session prep, session, notes/reflection)	5	N/A
DA	Coffee Shop	12/09/18	Meet with potential client to discuss needs/see if we might be a good fit	2	N/A
CE	WFH	25/09/18	Online session (prep, session, notes)	3	N/A
DA	Coffee Shop	27/09/18	Intake session (prep, session, notes, reflection, formulation notes)	6	N/A
DA	Coffee Shop	03/10/18	Session (prep, session, notes, formulation)	4	N/A
DA	Newcastle Arena	12/10/18	Session (pre, session, notes)	3	N/A
DA	Newcastle Arena	13/10/18	Match day support	6	N/A
CE	WFH	16/10/18	Session (prep, session, notes/reflection)	3	N/A
DA	Coffee Shop	30/10/18	Session (prep, session, notes/reflection)	3	N/A

CE	WFH	05/11/18	Session (prep, session, notes/reflection)	3	N/A
DA	Manchester Arena	10/11/18	Match-day support	6	N/A
CE	WFH	28/11/18	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
DA	Coffee Shop	28/11/18	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	19/12/18	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	10/01/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	17/01/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	24/01/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	29/01/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	07/02/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	27/02/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
DA	Coffee Shop	27/02/19	Final session (prep, session, notes, reflection, final report and report sending)	5	N/A
CE	WFH	06/03/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	21/03/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
Waterloo Rugby	WFH	20/03/19	Various conversations to stakeholders (phone calls); relevant notes, reflecting, research	3	N/A
Waterloo Rugby	Waterloo	21/03/19	First day on-site	6	Waterloo
CE	WFH	27/03/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
Waterloo Rugby	Waterloo	28/03/19	Work at Waterloo Rugby club	8	Waterloo
CE	WFH	02/04/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
Waterloo Rugby	Waterloo	10/04/19	Work at Waterloo; start individualised sessions	9	Waterloo
CE	WFH	10/04/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
Waterloo Rugby	Waterloo	17/04/19	Work at Waterloo	8	Waterloo
Waterloo Rugby	Waterloo	24/04/19	Work at Waterloo	8	Waterloo
CE	WFH	30/04/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
Waterloo Rugby	Waterloo	08/05/19	Work at Waterloo	8	Waterloo
CE	WFH	13/05/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	29/05/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	19/06/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A

CE	WFH	17/07/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	23/07/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	21/08/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	29/08/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	04/09/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	11/09/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	17/09/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
Crew Alexandra FC	CAFC	18/09/19	First day at Crewe	9	CAFC
CAFC	CAFC	26/09/19	Work at CAFC	9	CAFC
CE	WFH	27/09/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CAFC	CAFC	04/10/19	Work at CAFC	8	CAFC
CE	WFH	09/10/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CAFC	CAFC	11/10/19	Work at CAFC	8	CAFC
CAFC	CAFC	18/10/19	Work at CAFC	8	CAFC
CAFC	CAFC	24/10/19	Work at CAFC	8	CAFC
AC	WFH	25/10/19	Chat with parents of potential client	1	N/A
CE	WFH	30/10/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CAFC	CAFC	01/11/19	Work at CAFC	8	CAFC
AC	Coffee Shop	06/11/19	Intake session (prep, session, notes, reflection, initial formulation work)	5	
CAFC	CAFC	08/11/19	Work at CAFC	8	CAFC
CE	WFH	20/11/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
AC	Coffee Shop	20/11/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	4	N/A
CAFC	CAFC	29/11/19	Work at CAFC	8	CAFC
AC	Coffee Shop	04/12/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	4	N/A
CE	WFH	06/12/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CAFC	CAFC	06/12/19	Work at CAFC	8	CAFC
CAFC	CAFC	13/12/19	Work at CAFC	10	CAFC
CE	WFH	18/12/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
AC	Coffee Shop	23/12/19	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A

CAFC	CAFC	09/01/20	Work at CAFC	6	CAFC
CAFC	CAFC	10/01/20	Work at CAFC	6	CAFC
CE	WFH	15/01/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
AC	Coffee Shop	17/01/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CAFC	CAFC	16/01/20	Work at CAFC	8	CAFC
CAFC	CAFC	23/01/20	Work at CAFC	8	CAFC
CAFC	CAFC	30/01/20	Work at CAFC	8	CAFC
AC	Coffee Shop	31/01/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CAFC	CAFC	03/02/20	Work at CAFC	9	CAFC
CE	WFH	05/02/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CAFC	CAFC	06/02/20	Work at CAFC	8	CAFC
CAFC	CAFC	10/02/20	Work at CAFC	9	CAFC
CAFC	CAFC	05/03/20	Work at CAFC	9	CAFC
CE	WFH	06/03/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
AC	Coffee Shop	06/03/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CAFC	CAFC	09/03/20	Work at CAFC	8	CAFC
AC	Coffee Shop	11/03/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CAFC	CAFC	12/03/20	Work at CAFC	8	CAFC
AC	WFH	26/03/20	Session (first online session; prep, session, notes)	3	N/A
CAFC	WFH	02/04/20	Online planning meetings	4	CAFC
PF	WFH	02/04/20	Intake session (planning, session, notes, reflection)	3	CAFC
AC	WFH	02/04/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
PF	WFH	07/04/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	CAFC
PF	WFH	15/04/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	CAFC
AC	WFH	17/04/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	18/04/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
PF	WFH	24/04/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	CAFC
AC	WFH	01/05/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
PF	WFH	06/05/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	CAFC

AC	WFH	13/05/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
AC	WFH	20/05/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	03/06/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
AC	WFH	09/06/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
AC	WFH	09/07/20	Phone call with AC's mom	1	N/A
AC	WFH	15/07/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	15/07/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
AC	WFH	17/07/20	Session with AC's parents, coach; prep, session, notes, reflection	4	N/A
AC	WFH	21/07/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
AC	WFH	11/08/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
AC	WFH	12/08/20	Catch-up with AC's mom	1	N/A
CE	WFH	13/08/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
AC	WFH	19/08/20	Catch-up with AC's mom	1	N/A
AC	WFH	24/08/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
AC	WFH	02/09/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
AC	WFH	15/09/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	15/09/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
AC	WFH	02/10/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
AC	WFH	13/10/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	21/10/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
AC	WFH	27/10/20	Phone call with AC's mom	1	N/A
AC	WFH	08/10/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
AC	WFH	12/11/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	08/12/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
AC	WFH	08/12/20	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CAFC	WFH	13/01/21	Meet with OW to discuss support for injured first team players	1	CAFC
AC	WFH	13/01/21	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	13/01/21	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A

CAFC	WFH	15/01/21	Prepare CAFC contract; design and prepare intro pack for players	6	CAFC
CAFC	CAFC	18/01/21	Meet with injured OW and injured athletes to discuss support and planning; intake sessions and initial information gathering	4	CAFC
CAFC	CAFC	19/01/21	On-site support for athletes	3	CAFC
CAFC	CAFC	21/01/21	Design and create CAFC wellness binder; send to printer	6	CAFC
D @ CAFC	WFH	22/01/21	Zoom session (prep, session, notes, reflection, initial formulation brainstorm)	4	CAFC
C @ CAFC	WFH	27/01/21	Zoom session (prep, session, notes, reflection, initial formulation brainstorm)	4	CAFC
AC	WFH	29/01/21	Chat and planning with AC's mom	1	N/A
D @ CAFC	WFH	29/01/21	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CAFC	CAFC	02/02/21	On-site support	5	CAFC
CE	WFH	24/02/21	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
D @ CAFC	WFH	24/02/21	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	CAFC
CAFC	WFH	03/03/21	On-site support	5	CAFC
D @ CAFC	WFH	23/03/21	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection; client notes and reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	09/04/21	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
AC	WFH	13/04/21	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
AC	WFH	26/04/21	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	27/04/21	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	26/05/21	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RC	WFH	19/08/21	Online potential client meeting	1	N/A
RC	Coffee Shop	27/08/21	Intake session (prep, session, notes, reflection, formulation notes)	4	N/A
RC	Coffee Shop	02/08/21	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	08/09/21	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RC	Coffee Shop	10/09/21	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A

RC	Coffee Shop	23/09/21	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RC	Coffee Shop	08/10/21	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	Coffee Shop	22/10/21	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RC	Coffee Shop	26/10/21	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
MA	WFH	16/11/21	Intake session (prep, session, notes, reflection, formulation notes)	4	N/A
RC	Coffee Shop	26/11/21	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	10/12/21	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RC	Coffee Shop	16/12/21	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RC	Coffee Shop	12/01/22	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	19/01/22	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
MA	WFH	02/02/22	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
SY	WFH	02/02/22	Intake/initial meeting	2	N/A
CE	WFH	18/02/22	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
MA	WFH	04/03/22	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RC	Coffee Shop	08/03/22	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RC	Coffee Shop	14/04/22	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RC	Coffee Shop	25/04/22	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	18/05/22	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RC	Coffee Shop	26/05/22	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RC	Coffee Shop	07/07/22	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	08/07/22	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RC	Coffee Shop	25/07/22	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RC	Coffee Shop	15/08/22	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RC	Coffee Shop	11/10/22	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
MA	Coffee Shop	14/10/22	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RC	Coffee Shop	21/10/22	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
MA	WFH	03/11/22	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	07/11/22	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
MA	WFH	04/01/23	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
MA	WFH	30/01/23	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A

MA	WFH	06/02/23	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
MA	WFH	17/02/23	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection, client feedback and reflection)	4	N/A
EW	WFH	17/03/23	Virtual intake meeting (prep, meeting, initial notes)	2	N/A
EW	Coffee Shop	22/03/23	Official intake session (prep, session, notes, reflection, initial formulation notes)	4	N/A
EW	Coffee Shop	03/04/23	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RP	WFH	15/04/23	Phone call with RP's mom to discuss sport psychology	1	N/A
RP	WFH	19/04/23	Zoom call with RP to determine fit/initial casual intake	1	N/A
RP	Home office	26/04/23	Intake session (prep, session, notes, reflection, initial formulation notes)	4	N/A
RP	Home office	10/05/23	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
EW	Home office	11/05/23	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	15/05/23	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	15/05/23	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RP	Home office	16/05/23	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RP	Home office	19/06/23	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
EW	Home office	12/07/23	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RP	Home office	19/07/23	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
CE	WFH	10/08/23	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
EW	Home office	15/05/23	Session before EW's US break (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RP	Home office	14/09/23	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RP	Home office	05/10/23	Final session (prep, session, notes, reflection, client notes)	4	N/A
CE	WFH	23/10/23	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
RP	WFH	23/10/23	Handover session: RP to university sport psychologist (prep, meeting, reflections)	2	N/A

CE	WFH	25/01/23	Session (prep, session, notes, reflection)	3	N/A
					Total: 781

Research			
Location	Date(s)	Nature of Activity	Contact Hours
LJMU	05/09/19	Chat with MN and ML about football academy project	1
WFH	w/c 09/09/19	Research on mental health in football. Various emails and meetings about football project (FLAME)	12
WFH	w/c 16/09/19	Research on mental health in football. Various emails and meetings about football project (FLAME)	8
Manchester United Training Ground	17/09/19	Meet with DR to discuss potential systematic review topics and football more broadly	2
WFH	25/09/19	Design interview schedule for FLAME	4
WFH	27/09/19	Meetings with FLAME team, notes	2
WFH	16/10/19	Developing participant recruitment emails, participant information sheets, consent forms, etc.	8
WFH	12/11/19	Research ethics training	3
WFH	13/11/19	Development and submission to FLAME ethics application	6
WFH	20/11/19	Various emails and meeting about starting the FLAME project	5
WFH	04/12/19	Various emails and meetings about starting FLAME after ethics approval	4
WFH	05/12/19	Various emails and meetings about starting FLAME after ethics approval	4
WFH	10/12/19	Emails to gatekeepers/potential participants for FLAME	4
WFH	12/01/20	Various emails to participants; interview preparation	3
Manchester United Training Ground	22/01/20	FLAME interviews	4
WFH	22/01/20	Develop FLAME update presentation for meeting	3
WFH	23/01/20	FLAME meeting (prep, meeting, notes, reflection)	4
Everton Training Ground	06/02/20	FLAME Interviews	5
WFH	07/04/20	Covid study meeting	1

WFH	17/03/20	Equestrian research; meeting with SP and research group	3
WFH	w/c 23/03/20	FLAME Interview transcriptions	20
WFH	01/04/20	Systematic review research/exploration	8
WFH	02/04/20	Systematic review research	2
WFH	02/04/20	Zoom FLAME interview	1
WFH	06/04/20	Systematic review research	3
WFH	w/c 06/04/20	Work on FLAME study (emails, transcribing, research for literature review, start lit review outline), systematic review potential topics, covid research	20
WFH	20/04/20	Purposive sampling section write-up (covid study)	2
WFH	22/04/20	Covid research team meeting	2
WFH	23/04/20	Ethics form – covid study	2
WFH	29/04/20	Call with SP equestrian research	1
WFH	30/04/20	Call with potential FLAME gatekeeper/participant	1
WFH	01/05/20	FLAME interview	1
WFH	04/05/20	Jockey research zoom	1
WFH	04/05/20	Covid study interviews x 2	3
WFH	05/05/20	Covid study call	1
WFH	07/05/20	Covid study interview	1
WFH	12/05/20	Equestrian research zoom	1
WFH	15/05/20	Equestrian reading	3
WFH	18/05/20	Transcribing	4
WFH	20/05/20	Jockey meeting with ME	1
WFH	26/05/20	Transcribing	4
WFH	27/05/20	FLAME interview	2
WFH	27/05/20	Transcript analysis (FLAME)	6
WFH	29/05/20	FLAME interview	2
WFH	01/06/20	Covid study meeting	1
WFH	02/06/20	FLAME transcript analysis	4
WFH	03/06/20	FLAME transcript analysis	2
WFH	04/06/20	Covid transcript analysis	6
WFH	08/06/20	Covid transcript analysis	6

WFH	09/06/20	Covid analysis meeting	2
WFH	10/06/20	FLAME interview	1
WFH	12/06/20	Finalise initial codes for Covid study	4
WFH	17/06/20	Equestrian study ethics application design and submission	3
WFH	16/06/20	Data analysis meeting (Covid study)	2
WFH	22/06/20- 25/06/20	Research and write Covid study introduction	12
WFH	01/07/20	Research/brainstorm for book chapter section	4
WFH	07/07/20	Rough draft work Covid study	4
WFH	08/07/20	Rough draft edits Covid study	3
WFH	14/07/20	Work on myths book chapter	6
WFH	15/07/20	Myths chapter zoom	1
WFH	16/07/20	Covid study zoom; study edits	3
WFH	16/07/20	Covid interview	1
WFH	16/07/20	Phone call re equestrian study	1
WFH	20/07/20 and 21/07/21	Myths chapter writing; Covid study edit; women in football writing	12
WFH	24/07/20	Racing research zoom	1
WFH	24/07/20	Covid study interview	1
WFH	30/07/20	FLAME catchup FC	1
WFH	04/08/20- 06/08/20	Covid study discussion and edits	16
WFH	13/08/20	FLAME data Reflective thematic analysis	4
WFH	19/08/20	FLAME RTA	4
WFH	20/08/20	FLAME RTA	6
WFH	25/08/20	Covid 2 study meeting	1
WFH	25/08/20	FLAME RTA/figure out NVivo	4
WFH	26/08/20- 28/08/20	FLAME RTA NVivo	16
WFH	01/09/20	Research on jockeys/equestrians	6
WFH	02/09/20	Covid research interview	1

WFH	03/09/20	FLAME RTA	3
WFH	04/09/20	FLAME RTA	2
WFH	09/09/20	FLAME RTA	2
WFH	11/09/20	Chat with MT about equestrian study	1
WFH	14/09/20	Covid study 2 interview; Equestrian interview	2
WFH	18/09/20	Covid research zoom	1
WFH	21/09/20	Start FLAME results outline (research)	6
WFH	22/09/20	Jockey study interview	1
WFH	22/10/20	FLAME meeting FC	1
WFH	28/09/20	Equestrian study interview	1
WFH	29/09/20	Flame literature review research Equestrian interview	8
WFH	30/09/20	FLAME lit review outline Equestrian interview	5
WFH	01/10/20	Finalise FLAME outline	2
WFH	05/10/20	FLAME intro- write	4
WFH	06/10/20	Equestrian interview	1
WFH	08/10/20	Equestrian interview FLAME methods	4
WFH	12/10/20	Covid research phase 2 meeting	1
WFH	13/10/20	Covid final edit FLAME writing and edit	4
WFH	14/10/20	Equestrian interview	1
WFH	19/10/20	Research participant emails FLAME edits	3
WFH	21/10/20	Equestrian interview	1
WFH	22/10/20	FLAME meeting FC	1
WFH	23/10/20	Equestrian interview	1
WFH	27/10/20	Equestrian interviews x 4	5
WFH	28/10/20	FLAME theme refinement	2
WFH	29/10/20	Write FLAME results	6

WFH	02/11/20	FLAME results	2
WFH	05/11/20	FLAME results	2
WFH	09/11/20	Equestrian interview	1
WFH	12/11/20	Equestrian interviews x 3	4
WFH	10/11/20	FLAME results edit	2
WFH	16/11/20- 19/11/20	FLAME paper	16
WFH	01/12/20	FLAME paper	6
WFH	02/12/20	Covid research meeting	1
WFH	07/12/20- 10/12/20	FLAME paper	16
WFH	14/12/20	FLAME paper	6
WFH	14/01/21	Meet with EW Covid study	1
WFH	18/01/21	Covid paper 2	3
WFH	19/01/21	FLAME final editing	3
WFH	26/01/21	Covid paper 2 zoom	1
WFH	27/02/21	Meet with FC regarding FLAME submission Outline for equestrian study	4
WFH	w/c 22/03/21	Finalise FLAME draft for submission	3
WFH	w/c 19/04/21	Research into sexism in sport	16
WFH	21/04/21	FLAME resubmission meeting; subsequent edits	4
WFH	29/04/21	Sexism in sport meeting	1
WFH	30/04/21	Sexism in sport ethics application	2
WFH	07/05/21	SIS survey design	3
WFH	w/c 10/05/21	Start research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 17/05/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 24/05/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 31/05/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 07/06/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 14/06/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 21/06/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30

WFH	w/c 28/06/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 05/07/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 12/07/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	14/07/21	Sexism in sport reading	3
WFH	w/c 19/07/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	19/07/21	Sexism in sport reading	2
WFH	20/07/21	SIS catch-up	1
WFH	w/c 02/08/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 09/08/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 16/08/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 23/08/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 30/08/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 06/09/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	07/09/21	SIS data	3
WFH	w/c 13/09/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 20/09/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	24/09/21	SIS meeting (survey data)	1
WFH	w/c 27/09/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 04/10/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 11/10/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 18/10/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	20/10/21	Sexism in sport meeting	1
WFH	w/c 25/10/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 01/11/21	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	03/11/21	SIS meeting	1
WFH	w/c 15/11/21 and 22/11/21	SIS literature review and writing	20
WFH	14/12/21	West Ham research meeting	1
WFH	07/01/22	West Ham research meeting	1
WFH	17/01/22	SIS data analysis planning meeting	1
WFH	19/01/22	SIS research team meeting	1

WFH	w/c 24/01/22	SIS reflective thematic analysis (RTA)	8
WFH	04/02/22	SIS RTA meeting	2
WFH	14/02/22	SIS RTA	4
WFH	23/02/22	SIS team meeting	1
WFH	24/02/22	WH research meeting	1
WFH	03/03/22	WH participant interview	1
WFH	04/03/22	SIS RTA meeting	2
WFH	19/04/22	WH team meeting	1
WFH	11/04/22	Literature review for sexism work; outline	6
WFH	13/04/22	SIS meeting	1
WFH	20/05/22	WH team meeting	1
WFH	w/c 23/05/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 30/05/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	01/06/22	SIS meeting	1
WFH	w/c 06/06/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	08/06/22	WH research meeting	1
WFH	10/06/22	SIS research meeting (write-up)	2
WFH	w/c 13/06/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 20/06/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 20/06/22	Initial SIS results writing	6
WFH	w/c 27/06/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 04/07/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 11/07/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 18/07/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 25/07/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 01/08/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	08/08/22	SIS meeting	1
WFH	w/c 08/08/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 15/08/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 05/09/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 12/09/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30

WFH	12/09/22	SIS meeting	1
WFH	13/09/22	SIS research and writing	3
WFH	w/c 19/09/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 26/09/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 03/10/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 10/10/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 17/10/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 24/10/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 31/10/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 07/11/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 14/11/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 21/11/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 28/11/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	28/11/22	SIS funding bid meeting and work	3
WFH	w/c 05/12/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	05/12/22	SIS paper edits	2
WFH	06/12/22	SIS Paper edits	3
WFH	07/12/22	FLAME edits	2
WFH	w/c 12/12/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 05/19/22	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 03/01/23	Research role at USW; various research tasks	25
WFH	w/c 09/01/23	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 16/01/23	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	17/01/23	<i>Feminist Research Methods</i> reading and reflecting	3
WFH	w/c 23/01/23	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 30/01/23	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 06/02/23	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 13/02/23	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	w/c 20/02/23	Research role at USW; various research tasks	30
WFH	16/03/23	Systematic review webinar and subsequent notes/brainstorming	4

WFH	w/c 20/03/23 and 27/03/23	SIS paper preparation	16
WFH	March 2023	SIS paper work and FLAME finalising	12
WFH	21/04/23	SIS team meeting (manuscript)	1
WFH	24/04/23	Finalise SIS	3
WFH	11/05/23	Endoscopy TA research meeting	1
WFH	16/05/23	Endoscopy reading	4
WFH	17/05/23	SIS meeting	1
WFH	19/05/23	Endoscopy reading	3
WFH	25/04/23	Finalise SIS paper details	1
WFH	31/05/23	Endoscopy thematic analysis meeting	1
WFH	03/07/23	Systematic review planning session	2
WFH	11/07/23	Systematic review engagement day	8
WFH	17/07/23	Endoscopy research meeting	1
WFH	27/07/23	Meet with JF to go through systematic review search logistics. Subsequent practice searches	3
WFH	11/08/23	Systematic review initial searches; refine search terms	5
WFH	08/09/23	Endoscopy research meeting	1
WFH	w/c 11/09/23	Endoscopy data analysis	16
WFH	w/c 18/09/23	Finalise endoscopy coding; initial coding report	16
WFH	20/09/23	Systematic review searches	3
WFH	23/09/23	Systematic review supervisory meeting with FC	1
WFH	November 2023	Systematic review RTA	30
WFH	10/11/23	Endoscopy research meeting	1
WFH	December 2023	Systematic review RTA	10
WFH	18/01/23	Systematic review critical friend meeting; subsequent RTA	4
WFH	w/c 15/01/23	Systematic review excel document finalise	10
WFH	08/02/23	Systematic review critical friend group meeting	1
WFH	February 2023	Write systematic review (including lit review research and writing, methods, results, results table)	20

WFH	14/03/23	Conduct endoscopy interview	1
WFH	March 2023	Finalise systematic review	12
			Total: 2, 622

Dissemination					
Client Details	Location	Date(s)	Nature of Activity	Contact Hours	Placement Host (if applicable)
Website blog	WFH	09/08/19	Write blogs for website content	6	N/A
CAFC	WFH	24/09/19 and 25/09/19	Develop introduction to sport psychology educational sessions	10	CAFC
CAFC	CAFC	26/09/19	Introduction to sport psychology – athletes, stakeholders, parents (separate workshops)	4	CAFC
CAFC	WFH	w/c 30/09/19	Preparation and creation for educational workshop; teaching philosophy, education in football, workshop brainstorm	20	CAFC
CAFC	WFH	02/10/19	Research on teaching philosophy	4	N/A
CAFC	WFC	w/c 07/10/19	Designing educational workshop for CAFC	30	N/A
CAFC	CAFC	18/10/19	Deliver teaching/workshops for stakeholders CAFC; deliver workshops to athletes	4	CAFC
CAFC	CAFC	24/10/19	Educational delivery to stakeholders (prep, session, notes)	2	CAFC
CAFC	CAFC	01/11/19	Educational delivery to stakeholders (prep, session, notes)	2	CAFC
CAFC	CAFC	08/11/19	Educational delivery to stakeholders (prep, session, notes); Athlete workshops (prep, session, notes)	5	CAFC
CAFC	CAFC	06/12/19	Educational delivery to stakeholders (prep, session, notes)	2	CAFC
CAFC	CAFC	09/01/20	Educational delivery to stakeholders (prep, session, notes)	2	CAFC
CAFC	CAFC	10/01/20	Consider programme effectiveness; conversations with stakeholders	3	CAFC
N/A	WFH	25/03/20	Website blog posts	3	N/A
Horse and Hound Magazine	WFH	31/03/20	Interview with Horse and Hound Magazine, impact of COVID-19/delayed Olympics on equestrian athletes (prep, interview, reflection, email to ME(5	N/A
N/A	WFH	24/04/20	H&H release; reflection, email ME	2	N/A
N/A	WFH	28/04/20	Participate in research interview	1	N/A

N/A	WFH	05/06/20	Book chapter meeting LS & SB (Myths of Sport Psych)	1	N/A
N/A	WFH	14/07/20	Work on myths book chapter	6	N/A
N/A	WFH	15/07/20	Myths chapter zoom	1	N/A
N/A	WFH	24/09/20	Myths book meeting and edits	2	N/A
N/A	WFH	23/10/20	Book chapter writing and editing	4	N/A
N/A	WFH	26/10/20	Book chapter writing and editing	3	N/A
University of Bolton	WFH	03/11/20 and 04/11/20	Prepare for delivering lecture	8	N/A
University of Bolton	University of Bolton	05/11/20	Deliver lecture	2	N/A
N/A	WFH	10/11/20	Myths chapter meeting	1	N/A
N/A	WFH	04/11/20	Create video for covid research at DSEP	2	N/A
N/A	WFH	10/11/20	Myths chapter meeting	1	N/A
N/A	WFH	17/12/20	Covid study presented online at DSEP	1	N/A
N/A	WFH	28/02/21	FLAME submission (final preparations, submission)	2	N/A
N/A	WFH	w/c 12/04/21	Case study 1	20	N/A
N/A	WFH	15/04/21	Participate in study interview	1	N/A
N/A	WFH	19/04/21	FLAME promotion	2	N/A
N/A	WFH	22/04/21	FLAME resubmission (meeting, prep, submission)	3	N/A
ERASMUS	WFH	21/05/21	FLAME ERASMUS conference meeting; prep for conference presentation	4	N/A
N/A	WFH	25/05/21	Present at online FLAME conference	2	N/A
Bridgewater USA	WFH	23/08/21	Presenting on sport psychology for US boarding school; prep, presentation, conversations	6	N/A
FA	WFH	2021	FA WLP development project; data collection, consultation, accumulation, presentation	80	N/A
FA	WFH	17/09/21	Presentation of WLP data to FA	3	N/A
USW	WFH	22/09/21	Present USW work to marketing company (prep, design, presentation)	6	N/A

N/A	WFH	08/10/21	FLAME interview	1	N/A
USW	WFH	18/10/21	DSEP Poster brainstorm	4	N/A
USW	WFH	w/c 25/10/21	Design DSEP poster	7	N/A
USW	Liverpool	27/11/21	Present Poster at DSEP	4	N/A
FA	WFH	11/02/22 and 12/02/22	Presentations for FA WLP (prep, presentations, conversations)	6	N/A
University of Salford	WFH	18/04/19	Alumni research presentation (prep, design, presentation)	5	N/A
LJMU	LJMU	15/06/22	Present SIS work at Football Exchange event (prep, presentation)	6	N/A
USW	WFH	20/06/22	Marketing presentation	2	N/A
USW	WFH	19/07/22	Marketing presentation	2	N/A
FA	WFH	2022	FA WLP development project; data collection, consultation, accumulation, presentation	80	N/A
LJMU	LJMU	19/10/22	Sexism in sport lecture MSc Sport Psychology (prep, lecture)	4	N/A
Core Additives	Chester	19/10/22	Culture and Values Day	6	N/A
FA	WFH	27/10/22	FA WLP monitoring and evaluation presentation meeting	1	N/A
NTU	WFH	03/11/22	NTU lecture meeting and initial prep	2	N/A
NTU	WFH	08/11/22	Guest lecture catch-up	1	N/A
NTU	WFH	14/11/22	Guest lecture (prep, lecture)	3	N/A
NTU	WFH	16/11/22	Guest lecture 2 (prep, lecture)	3	N/A
LJMU	WFH	06/12/22	Culture analysis and dissemination meeting	1	N/A
FA	WFH	09/12/22	FA WLP Presentation (prep, presentation)	4	N/A
LJMU	WFH	03/01/23- 31/03/23	LJMU Website development project	20	N/A
LJMU	WFH	07/02/23	Sexism workshop development meeting, subsequent notes and work for upcoming lecture	3	N/A
LJMU	WFH	08/02/23	LJMU RDC data collection meeting	1	N/A

LJMU	LJMU	09/02/23	Deliver sexism in sport lecture	3	N/A
LJMU	LJMU	13/02/23 and 14/02/23	Sexism workshop (design, delivery)	8	N/A
N/A	WFH	20/02/23	Myths chapter webinar preparation	2	N/A
N/A	WFH	22/02/23	Webinar discussing our “role of sport psychologist” chapter in <i>Myths of Sport Coaching</i>	1	N/A
LJMU	WFH	23/02/23	LJMU RDC project meeting	1	N/A
LJMU	WFH	01/03/23	LJMU RDC project meeting	1	N/A
Routledge	LJMU	20/03/23	Book chapter development day (chapter for <i>International Studies for Supporting Sport Coaches</i>)	5	N/A
LFC	WFH	27/03/23	LFC Mentor Programme Meeting	1	N/A
LJMU	WFH	April 2023	LJMU RDC project (meetings, emails, developing surveys, preparing interview guides)	20	N/A
N/A	WFH	w/c 17/04/23 and w/c 24/04/23	Work on teaching and training case study	16	N/A
FA	WFH	April 2023	FA WLP work	8	N/A
N/A	WFH	11/04/23	Chat with NW about potential paper	2	N/A
LJMU	WFH	May 2023	LJMU RDC project (meetings, emails, organising interviews, conducting interviews)	20	N/A
N/A	WFH	w/c 01/03/23	Finalise teaching and training case study Finalise and submit FLAME for publishing	10	N/A
BASES	WFH	05/05/23	BASES presentation preparation chat	2	N/A
BASES	WFH	10/05/23	BASES Sexism presentation (prep presentation)	6	N/A
N/A	WFH	17/05/23	SIS Poster meeting for WiSEAN; notes and work	3	N/A
N/A	WFH	w/c 29/05/23	Poster design for WiSEAN conference		
LJMU	WFH	June 2023	LJMU RDC project (conducting interviews)	15	N/A
N/A	WFH	19/06/23	Prepare for WiSEAN conference presentation	3	N/A

N/A	LJMU	21/06/23 and 22/06/23	Present poster at WiSEAN conference; discussions about research throughout	8	N/A
N/A	WFH	23/06/23	Resubmit SIS paper to new journal	1	N/A
LJMU	WFH	27/06/23	Meeting and subsequent work for sexism professional doctorate lecture	4	N/A
LJMU	LJMU	29/06/23	Deliver sexism lecture to S&E psychology professional doctorate programme	3	N/A
LJMU	WFH	July 2023	Finalise LJMU RDC data collection; begin organising data for report	15	
LFC	WFH	03/07/23	LFC Mentor programme delivery meeting	1	N/A
N/A	Liverpool	24/07/23 and 25/07/23	Research writing retreat	12	N/A
LJMU	WFH	August 2023	LJMU RDC – analyse interviews for appropriate RDC goals	15	
LJMU	WFH	September 2023	LJMU RDC – design and write RDC culture report; meet to check against client criteria; finalise report	15	
N/A	WFH	19/09/23	SIS for publication – make edits and resubmit to journal	4	N/A
N/A	WFH	27/09/23	Deliver endoscopy coding results and potential themes to team	2	N/A
LFC	WFH	02/10/23	Meeting to discuss teaching and training aims; notes	2	N/A
LJMU	WFH	03/10/23	NVivo lesson for endoscopy project lead	2	N/A
LFC	WFH	October 2023	LFC mentor programme development (meetings, program design, content design, etc.)	20	N/A
LFC	LFC	10/10/23 and 24/10/23	LFC Women’s Coach Mentor Development delivery	12	N/A
LJMU	WFH	25/10/23	Sexism workshop preparation	2	N/A
LJMU	LJMU	31/10/23	Deliver sexism lecture/workshop for LJMU Sport Coaching	3	N/A
UCB	UCB	01/11/23	Deliver keynote at SPARC23 (prep, delivery)	5	N/A

LFC	WFH	November 2023	Mentor programme November delivery development	6	N/A
LFC	WFH	13/11/23	LFC mentor programme delivery	2	N/A
N/A	WFH	10/11/23	SIS edits and resubmission	3	N/A
N/A	Coventry building society arena	16/11/23	Present sexism work at BASES conference (prep, delivery)	6	N/A
LFC	WFH	06/12/23	LFC mentor session planning and design	3	N/A
LFC	WFH	11/12/23	Deliver LFC mentor session	2	N/A
LJMU	WFH	January 2024	Delivery development for Psychology in S&C course	10	N/A
LJMU	LJMU	15/01/23	Psych in S&C lecture delivery	3	N/A
LJMU	WFH	17/01/23	British Council project meeting and notes	2	N/A
LJMU	WFH	22/01/23	Psych in S&C lecture delivery	3	N/A
LJMU	LJMU	26/01/23	Run British Council focus group	4	N/A
LFC	WFH	29/01/23	LFC programme catch-up	1	N/A
LJMU	LJMU	05/02/23	Psych in S&C prep and lecture delivery	4	N/A
LJMU	LJMU	06/02/23	Level 4 sexism lecture (prep and delivery)	3	N/A
N/A	WFH	w/c 12/02/23	Portfolio: reflective practice	15	N/A
LFC	WFH	12/02/23	LFC mentor programme catch up	1	N/A
LJMU	LJMU	13/02/23	MSc Sport and Exercise psychology sexism lecture (prep and delivery)	3	N/A
N/A	WFH	w/c 19/02/23	Portfolio: T&T commentary, contract and report, research commentary	20	N/A
LJMU	WFH	23/02/23	Here come the girls meeting	1	N/A
N/A	WFH	w/c 26/02/23	Portfolio: finalise case study drafts	10	N/A
LJMU	WFH	27/02/23	HCTG meeting	1	N/A
N/A	WFH	w/c 04/03/23	Porfolio: metareflection	10	N/A

LJMU	WFH	04/03/23	HCTG meeting; delivery prep	3	N/A
LJMU	LJMU	08/03/23	HCTG International Women's Day Event presentations	7	N/A
N/A	WFH	22/03/23	Finalise and submit systematic review	2	N/A
N/A	WFH	March 2023	Finalise professional doctorate portfolio	20	N/A
					Total: 830

Reflective Practice Diary

As will be reflected upon more explicitly in my Reflective Practice Commentary, reflective practice has been an extremely important mechanism through which I have engaged with my personal and professional development throughout the last several years. The method of reflection I engaged in was generally determined by my 'aim' of reflection (e.g., am I noting and considering differences to think about in a broader context later, do I need an outcome from a reflection, or do I require deeper exploration into a specific event?). I have many reflections that are mere bullet points to consider in a meta-reflection in the future, while others are more organised and nuanced. I began the programme using the Gibbs cycle exclusively, but never found this efficient and struggled at times with certain prompts; namely, working through the emotional aspect of my experiences often caused me more confusion, which I can now link back to alexithymia. I still use Gibbs for some reflections, but I often still become annoyed at the 'feelings' prompt, especially when the reflection is too soon after a specific event (which I can now link to delayed processing). When I needed a reflective outcome, I often employed Driscoll's (2007) model, finding it much more clear-cut and focused.

However, I would estimate that the majority of my written reflective practice can be described as meta-reflections of the written bullet-point and mental reflections that accumulated over time on a specific topic or experience, after having the time to process important experiences and/or accumulate more relevant or contextual information. Black and white thinking can often mean that reflective prompts limit the scope of my reflection rather than add to it; for example, I would often consider that there was a detail I did not include in my prompt-based reflections because there was no 'category' in which it 'fit', leading to the perception of incomplete reflections. With this in mind, I often engage with written reflection through smaller meta-reflections that zoom both in and out and focus on the event, my

interpretations, and contextual details that I perceive to matter, but do not often limit myself to specific prompts. Learning to reflect in a way that works with rather than against my autism has been extremely interesting, and I look forward to developing my reflective practice as I continue to develop as a practitioner and person.

Core Competency 1: Professional Standards

1. First Potential Client – Do I have the Competency and Capacity?

Date: 15th September, 2018

**Note: any reference to the relevant sport in this reflection has been removed due to this person being a public figure.*

I have recently been contacted about working with an up-and-coming [sport] athlete who has made quite a name for himself in the [sport] community. So far, I have engaged in the initial pre-intake process in the form of a casual meeting at a coffee shop, where we discussed his goals and attempted to determine whether we would be a good fit as consultant and client. From our initial conversations, his goals for psychological support (e.g., become more organised, engage in basic mental skills training) seem simple and realistic, especially as he would like to begin what he termed “proper S&C and meals;” this might indicate an overall motivation to engage in growth as a person and accomplish [sport]-related goals desires to work towards.

However, this person mentioned several times during our initial consultation past bouts with depression, thoughts of suicide, and one suicide attempt. He was quite open about his experiences, which are not necessarily uncommon in his sport [a brief reflection about the interaction between the relevant sport and mental illness is prevalent has been redacted]. While he asserted that these bouts with mental illness are historical, I am currently unsure if this is something I am prepared for as a consultant. I consistently shift between two different mindsets: I should recommend referring this person on to someone who has more experience,

knowledge, and skill in working with athletes with historical mental illness, *or* I have a responsibility to help the person in front of me, since he did mention that he would not be comfortable engaging in psychological support from someone else (since I was recommended through a trusted mutual contact). Obviously, we have a duty to practice within our realms of competence (e.g., BPS, 2021); not only is this responsibility essential in ensuring safe and appropriate practice, but appropriate levels of competence is related to the quality of psychological support provided (e.g., Fairburn & Cooper, 2011). Practicing outside of one's competency can be dangerous for all involved, particularly regarding matters of mental illness. Rather than constantly go back and forth about the situation, I will get in touch with my supervisor (ME) and discuss my ethical responsibilities as a practitioner and where to go from here.

Update: 20th September, 2018

Having spoken to ME, I have come to the conclusion that I can take on this client for a number of reasons. First, if I do not take on this client, there is a large possibility that he will not seek psychological support from any psychologist, which he explicitly stated in our first meeting. While I have a duty to practice within my own competency boundaries, I also feel that the 'responsibility' aspect of the code of conduct means that have a duty to provide support where needed, especially to those who might not seek it elsewhere (e.g., BPS, 2021). Additionally, building a relationship with this person might allow them to build enough trust in me to recommend clinical approaches to psychology if necessary. Finally, this client stated consistently that their struggles with mental illness are historical in nature and that they have not experienced any recurring major depression or thoughts of suicide in the past year. While depression (and resulting symptoms) can recur throughout one's life due to a number of factors (e.g., demographic variables, social support, personality; Burcusa & Iacono, 2007), my hope and aim would be that through psychological support, I can facilitate growth and

well-being that might be a protective factor against mental illness (e.g., Keyes, 2014). Despite some nerves about the situation, because I am a trainee and have the experience of my supervisors to lean on throughout the consultancy process, I am lucky enough to have the experience of multiple consultants influencing my support if and where necessary. As long as I continue to reflect and remain self-aware and aware of the client's contextual and psychological experiences, I can engage in consultancy while leaning on my supervisory team.

References

- British Psychological Society. (2021). Code of Ethics and Conduct. ISBN: 978-185433-804-4.
- Burcusa, S. L., & Iacono, W. G. (2007). Risk for recurrence in depression. *Clinical Psychology Review, 27*(8), 959–985. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2007.02.005>
- Fairburn, C. G., & Cooper, Z. (2011). Therapist competence, therapy quality, and therapist training. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 49*(6–7), 373–378. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2011.03.005>
- Keyes, C. L. M. (2014). Mental health as a Complete State: How the Salutogenic Perspective Completes the Picture. In *Bridging Occupational, Organizational and Public Health: 179 A Transdisciplinary Approach* (pp. 179–192). Springer Science + Business Media Dordrecht. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-5640-3_11

2. Humanistic Psychology and Self-Actualisation

Date: 14th December, 2019

I have spent a great deal of time during the initial stages of the doctorate reading and reflecting on my philosophy of practice. Unfortunately, philosophy of practice was not something that was emphasised during my Sport Psychology MSc, and I have felt behind in developing my practice as a result. I have always gravitated towards humanistic psychology

in its denial of the medical model and behaviourism and focus on a more holistic, democratic model founded on engaging in essential human experiences such as creativity, communication, and personal development (e.g., Rowan & Glouberman, 2018). While I wholeheartedly agree that we must emphasise and develop the whole person, there should be an emphasis on change and development on individual and societal levels (e.g., progress), and the general ideas surrounding abundance motivation, I have always had issues with two aspects of traditional humanistic psychology: the idea that people are fundamentally good, and the idea that we naturally tend towards self-actualisation. I do not believe in the uncritical assertions that every human is either good (e.g., humanistic psychology) or bad and selfish (see Thomas Hobbes), but rather that a number of factors can influence these extremely vague traits (such as genetics, developmental environment, access to basic human needs, etc.). Additionally, if humans are fundamentally ‘good,’ how has the world been developed the way it has (e.g., structural racism, patriarchy, wars, starvation)? In terms of self-actualisation, I have had a more difficult time wrapping my head around why I struggle with that concept; I have only known that it seems naïve to believe that all humans tend towards self-actualisation and personal development. One important motivation for questioning the above concepts is that I do not believe that they fit in with ideas surrounding evolutionary psychology; humans are animals, and have evolved over time, and it seems impossible to integrate evolutionary psychology with concepts such as inherent goodness and self-actualisation tendencies.

Recently, I read a chapter (Feltham, 2018) in a book I recently bought that portrayed my considerations and doubts surrounding humanistic psychology extremely well, and is helping me to better conceptualise my stance as a humanistic practitioner. In the chapter the author outlines - regarding the views on human goodness - that while there is often choice in the matter, humans are “subject to entropic forces, negative evolutionary and genetic inclinations,

and capitalist threats” (p.46). In terms of self-actualisation, Feltham (2008) describes numerous philosophical and scientific mechanisms suggesting that this is not the case (just take a look at world history and current events). My own interpretation of this chapter leads me to believe that what might make more sense in terms of logic and humanity is that while each person might not automatically tend towards self-actualisation, having a purpose and working towards self-actualisation might be what we either *want* or *need*, and that this journey is necessary for ‘peak’ well-being (and resulting functioning). I now believe that if our basic psychological and human (e.g., shelter, food) needs are met, we might be more likely to have the ability to explore who we are as humans; if we have the capacity for self-exploration and be who we are as a whole person and engage in activities that give us enjoyment or purpose (not everything needs an aim!), we *then* might tend towards or work towards (I am still not sure) self-actualisation.

I believe this reconceptualization of my philosophy of practice will impact my applied practice in that what I explore, especially at the beginning of consultancy, will alter. For example, my aim with a client is still to work towards self-actualisation through holistic self-exploration. However, I can prioritise exploring client needs from a different lens (e.g., are their basic psychological needs met, and were they as a child? Rather than an immediate focus on performance goals) and levels of client self-awareness, as I don’t believe we will be able to develop the person towards self-actualisation without these integral aspects of humanity. Overall, the following quote demonstrates my priorities in working as a humanistic practitioner, with self-actualisation being a more long-term aim that I can only facilitate in a particular moment in time:

“Humanistic notions such as the importance of self-development for its own sake, of evolution throughout life, of the wholeness of the individual, of creating democratic groups and communities with open and honest communication, [and]

the idea that authenticity and the real self matter more than success” (Rowan & Glouberman, 2018)

While sport might be an inherently difficult culture to operate this philosophy within (e.g., sport's tendency to reduce humans to performance machines rather than whole people), I believe that most systems in the world have similar difficulties matching the human condition with the requirements of current society. Therefore a human-oriented take on psychology and philosophy might be even more necessary!

References:

- Feltham, C. (2018). The past and future of humanistic psychology. In House, R., Kalisch, D., & Maidman, J. *Humanistic psychology: Current trends and future prospects*. New York: Routledge.
- Rowan, J. and Glouberman, D. (2018) What is humanistic psychology? In *Humanistic psychology: Current trends and future prospects* (eds. D. K. R. House and J. Maidman), 42–62. Humanistic psychology: Routledge.

3. Choosing Clients Based on Fit – what is this, and what does it look like?

Date: 17th July, 2021

Recently, I have been reflecting on how one goes about choosing clients. I have had some difficult experiences with clients that I have struggled as a practitioner on a number of levels to engage with, as well as some clients where the therapeutic relationship builds very naturally early in consultancy. The therapeutic relationship is the primary source of change in psychological consultancy of any philosophy, but even more so in humanistic psychology (e.g., Dallos & Johnstone, 2014; Rowan & Glouberman, 2018). With this in mind, it is important to determine either before or as early in consultancy as possible the potential for a positive therapeutic relationship in an attempt to avoid wasting the time and effort of clients

and consultants and provide an efficacious service. I will detail some examples below in an attempt to make sense of the situation:

While I thought my first client would be a struggle due to my competency regarding historical mental illness (see reflection one for more details), what I encountered fairly early was an extreme lack of fit that negated the possibility of a positive therapeutic relationship. To put it simply, this client was extremely misogynistic; for example, he was convinced that women belonged “in the kitchen,” and that men’s roles were to protect and be out in the world. He emphasised these thoughts each session, and I consistently engaged in an inner battle of attempting to ensure the Rogerian factors necessary for growth were present (e.g., congruence, unconditional positive regard, empathy, client vulnerability), but found this impossible. Despite attempts to offer unconditional positive regard in the face of being told that I do not matter as a human being, I found it impossible to be genuine in any way (e.g., genuinely empathetic or understanding). This lack of congruence interferes with a client’s trust in the psychologist (e.g., Greenberg & Geller, 2001), essentially negating the possibility for engaging in the growth that is foundational for my philosophy of practice. Because his aims for consultancy were relatively surface level (e.g., goal setting, mental skills such as positive self-talk), and due to my inexperience, I attempted to engage in consultancy for four sessions. However, I found these sessions unbearable due to the assaults on women and additional marginalised groups of people, my own inability to be the consultant he needed, and general confusion surrounding why he wanted to engage in sessions with me in the first place if he thought women were incapable of working or having a brain. I was also unsure who to speak to about these problems; I had spoken to a supervisor about the mental health aspect, but who would I speak to about these sexist experiences? Both of my supervisors at the time were men, and I was unsure about how to bring this conversation up in supervisory sessions, not wanting to sound dramatic or incompetent. What do you do when a *client* is

being sexist when you have a duty of care? In the end, we went our separate ways when I referred him to two potential sport psychologist(s) in training who were men; this occurred on a positive note, and he invited me to [sport] matches throughout the following year.

Another difficult consultancy experience occurred while I was working in football. While I am grateful for the experience because it has inspired and motivated much of my work to this point, I would prefer to avoid the experience in the future! I found working at this Category Two club to be extremely difficult; it seemed like I was there to tick a box, and that no one wanted to engage with me or interventions due to the stigma surrounding engaging with women or a sport psychologist in sport. Thankfully, I was able to implement some positive interventions (e.g., an injured athlete programme, teaching and training for support staff), each small thing I did felt like an uphill battle. Mental illness symptoms and disorders were rife in the athletes, but as is common in football (e.g., Champ et al., 2018), no one wanted to engage in preventative measures or even education surrounding the topic. I also experienced a great deal of misogyny at the club. For example, it took four months to convince the staff that I was not the tea lady, despite consistent efforts to get to know staff and actually implementing educational interventions with staff. I had to drive to a local petrol station to use the toilet, and was not invited to staff Christmas parties because they thought I would not enjoy football (despite working in and researching football) or whiskey. When I told them I enjoyed both, they were shocked. My contract was for one season, and I was happy for the development experience, but equally as happy to move forward.

On a positive note, I have had clients who, despite having potentially complicated cases, have been 'easier' in the sense of developing a positive therapeutic relationship and not consistently feeling 'on guard'. They have had a range of mental health and mental illness symptomology, sports, genders, holistic support, and so on. Despite this, these clients have had several things in common, chiefly a desire to engage in self-development in their sport

and potentially (or eventually) as humans and an openness to change. I am sure some of this is down to my improvement as a practitioner - I am aware that becoming a sport and exercise psychology practitioner is a significant developmental undertaking. For example, I can much easier portray my philosophy of practice either before or during intake, and am less 'concerned' about taking on any client or role that comes my way due to the desire to build my portfolio or help everyone who might need it. But how do I determine which clients are the best fit for my consultancy at both an individual and organisational level? There is a decent amount of literature about choosing a sport psychologist (e.g., AASP), but I have struggled to find much guidance on how a practitioner determines which clients to take on.

While this is likely a skill that will continue to develop, I think I have a few checkboxes that will allow me to choose clients more wisely and allow me to deliver consultancy that will facilitate positive change:

- I must feel safe when consulting; I am aware this is advocated by our governing bodies (e.g., BPS, 2021), but this means something different to each person. I should continue to reflect on what this means to me and provide myself relevant guidelines.
- I will be as up-front with clients as possible in our early encounters and better prioritise assessing fit through reflection. While authenticity and congruency are essential to change, I would like to go the 'extra mile' in providing important details that might directly impact consultancy that might not be explicit through authentic relational behaviour. This obviously includes philosophy of practice, but should also include ways of practice, clear expectations from myself and the client, and I'm sure, additional measures that I will continue to develop alongside my consultancy.

- Clients I work with on an individual level cannot be misogynistic, racist, homophobic, etc. I understand that organisations consist of many people whom I cannot choose, but I do have the privilege of choosing individual clients who view myself and others as human beings. Being unable to do so will inherently interfere with the therapeutic relationship, as evidenced by my story above.
- I will not work full-time in organisations that are overtly sexist, racist, homophobic, etc. My time working at the football club contributed significantly to a personal bout with depression, and I cannot ethically allow myself to do so. However, I think it could be beneficial to consult in these organisations to implement positive change.

This list might seem naïve and selfish - it probably is. However, I am doing my best to reflect on how to best, and ethically, support others while also looking after myself. One could argue that being able to relate to clients on some fundamental level is key to building the therapeutic relationship, and it would be a dereliction of duty to engage with clients whom I know I can never engage with authentically. This is something I advocate to others constantly, and I must be a congruent practitioner by doing this myself. I want to enjoy working with the clients I choose (not that I expect the consultancy process to be tidy and smooth sailing).

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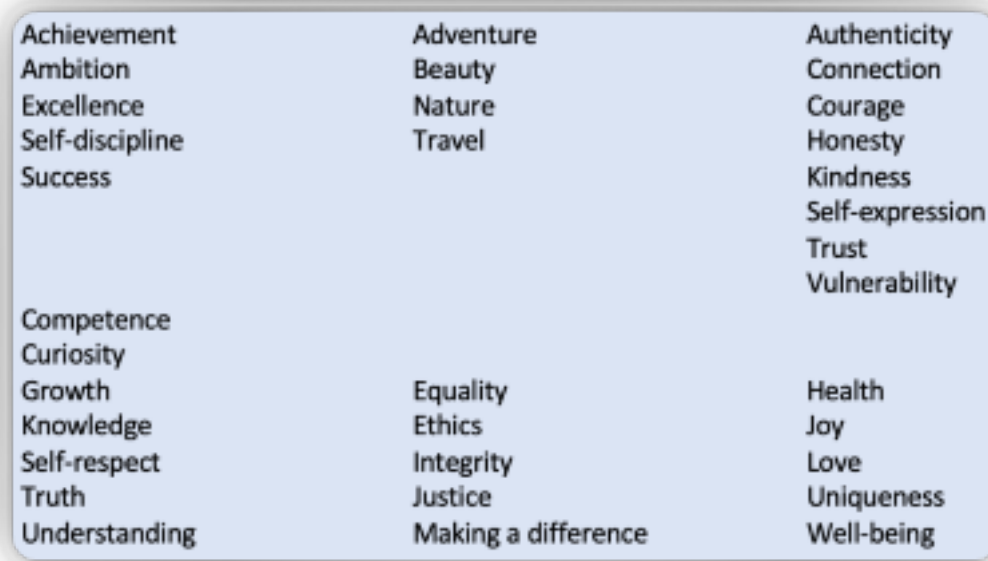
4. Developing and Remaining Congruent Within my Values

Date: 3rd December, 2021

Values, and value congruence, have gained considerable traction in more mainstream spaces with the rise in popularity of work by sociologists such as Brene Brown. While I have always operated within a more general moral compass with ideas of my values, the doctorate programme and some issues practicing in particular environments (e.g., reflection three) have contributed to the belief that it is ethically essential to determine and act in congruency with specific values. Understanding one's values, as well as value congruence between individuals and their organisational culture, has been associated with well-being (e.g., Schwartz & Sortheix, 2018). Additionally, being able to articulate one's values to potential clients (at organisational and individual levels) can offer potential clients insight into the practitioner in front of them, helping them determine whether the practitioner's unique combination of

values, philosophy of practice, and overall first impression might lead towards a positive working relationship.

With this in mind, I have taken a number of values and strengths-based exercises (e.g., ACT values cards, VIA Character Strengths, and Brene Brown’s values list) and made a comprehensive list of values. I have included values even if I do not think they will sit within my own values system for this exercise as well as to potentially inform future work. For this process, I adapted Braun and Clarke’s (2019) system for reflexive thematic analysis by utilising these value-driven words and reflexively ‘coding’ throughout until I developed distinct values (similar to TA themes) with deeper meaning. First, I allowed myself to choose up to 40 words that might reflect myself as a person; following this, I combined the chosen words into categories to code them, beginning to provide more depth:



Achievement	Adventure	Authenticity
Ambition	Beauty	Connection
Excellence	Nature	Courage
Self-discipline	Travel	Honesty
Success		Kindness
		Self-expression
		Trust
		Vulnerability
Competence		
Curiosity		
Growth	Equality	Health
Knowledge	Ethics	Joy
Self-respect	Integrity	Love
Truth	Justice	Uniqueness
Understanding	Making a difference	Well-being

I reflected on what the above categories said about me as a person. While I value performance and success, looking at this distribution of codes made me consider whether important aspects of being human, such as growth, adventure, authenticity and connection, and health are more foundational aspects of what I value as a person, and if ambition and achievement are secondary/results of engaging with the other values. Interestingly, and I

suppose hopefully not surprisingly, this reflects foundational aspects of my philosophy of practice. For example, I believe that while humans do not *naturally* self-actualise, that the capacity to engage in what that person finds important contributes to motivation and/or ability to self-actualise. With this in mind, I determined that my achievement and ambition-related interests might be more related to my desire to improve humanity and make a difference, rather than mere success without meaning. After more reflexive mini-reflections, I managed to sort and combine codes into three distinct categories:

Knowledge	Integrity	Well-Being
Competence	Self-respect	Health
Curiosity	Authenticity	Joy
Truth	Courage	Love
Growth	Honesty	Adventure
Understanding	Vulnerability	Beauty
Achievement	Trust	Nature
Ambition	Equality	Travel
Excellence	Ethics	Uniqueness
	Justice	Connection
	Making a difference	
	Self-discipline	

This provided me with additional depth and understanding, and potential values taking form. I considered the relationships between the three categories. More specifically, I considered the similarities between my “knowledge” and “integrity” categories and determined that the “knowledge” category was a foundational factor in having integrity. For example, to have and act with integrity, one must be competent, and curious enough to engage in the process of becoming competent. With this in mind, I combined the words that integrated most with what I valued, with the additional context that growth and development underlie my entire value system rather than being values in

themselves:

Integrity: Competency, curiosity, truth, understanding, excellence, self-respect, authenticity, courage, vulnerability, knowledge, equality, ethics, justice, making a difference

Well-Being: health, joy, adventure, beauty, love, travel, uniqueness, connection

Finally, I integrated these into sentences that could easily be communicated to others, integrated into consultancy agreements, or presented when needed:

Integrity and Well-Being

*I value the **integrity** of my **work, experiences, and relationships**, and I must be **competent and curious** enough to learn and **authentic** in my actions.*

*I value **physical and mental well-being** because it is the foundation of **joy** and fuels my **ambition** /*

These values have the potential to guide my work as a practitioner, researcher, and whole person; this exercise has developed my self-awareness, which will allow me to continue developing my ability to remain authentic and congruent throughout my efforts. Interestingly, while integrity and well-being are my core values, I do not think that they necessarily reflect who I am at all times. Rather, these values reflect ways of being, who I *want* to be as a person. I believe a number of factors can distract or lead a person away from their values; for example, several current environmental influences might make engaging with behaviours that contribute to my well-being value difficult (e.g., we are coming up to Christmas, and the temptation to not go to the gym is high!). The onus is on me as a person to ensure that this does not become a pattern, and if it does, reflect upon this change and make the necessary changes to realign myself with my values. Additionally, I think it is important to ‘check in’ with one’s values periodically. Because I am determined to continuously grow

(e.g., Rowan & Glouberman, 2018), there is a chance that my values might grow alongside my own development. All in all, this improved knowledge and understanding about myself has the potential to aid in my development as a practitioner, make my interactions with clients clearer and more authentic, and even act as a screening mechanism for determining appropriate clients to work with.

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5. Masking and Authenticity/Values

Date: 18th April, 2023

Over the last eight months or so, I have been considering the potential that I might be autistic. It took me some time to ask my GP for an initial assessment to determine whether I need a referral, as I do not want to take up space that is not meant for me. A few weeks ago, I was told I scored “extremely highly” on the AQ-10, the short-form assessment tool for autism. I have been referred for assessment and am hoping to engage with this process soon; however, while surveys only offer a modicum of detail that should primarily be used as additional detail to holistic context, this feels like an answer after months of only having

context to deliberate on. One factor I have been consistently reflecting on, both in relation to life more generally as well as me as a practitioner, is autistic masking. Autistic people, autistic women in particular, often engage in masking as a ‘survival mechanism’ to come across as ‘normal’ to other people (e.g., Alaghband-rad et al., 2023; Pearson & Rose, 2021; Russo, 2023). I have recognised that I do this consistently in social situations, but have always thought that everyone was rehearsing conversations, needed to focus on intense eye contact, ‘pretended’ to be a social version of themselves and adapted their identity depending on context, and much more; I have also always been mentally and physically exhausted by situations where I engaged in this behaviour, but never knew why. Impacts of masking can significantly impact mental health (e.g., National Autistic Society) due to forcing oneself to constantly push through extreme social and sensory discomfort, suppressing stimming, forcing eye contact, constantly monitoring behaviour, hiding special interests, rehearsing or having scripts, copying body language, and much more. This is done in an attempt to make others feel more comfortable in order to fit in and avoid scrutiny, often at the expense of one’s own authenticity and well-being.

Learning to unmask is extremely important for an individual’s well-being, a core value of mine. This has come up as something to reflect on more recently as an ethical consideration since I might take on a new client this month. As is evidenced in many of my reflections, I have struggled with remaining authentic and congruent as a practitioner on a number of occasions. This has *always* been a great concern of mine, considering I perceive authenticity and congruency as essential aspects of being a good consultant, and view it as unethical to be unable to be inauthentic (for the most part; I’m not saying we should constantly say what we are thinking!). Despite this, I have consistently questioned the concept of authenticity, and why so many people seemed to find it much easier than me; I also wondered whether people were ‘lying’ that it was even possible to be authentic around

others, because of course we all need to change our personality dependant on the situation! I am in the process of ‘learning to unmask’, which is difficult more broadly in social situations, but is extremely nerve-racking when viewing unmasking through the lens of consultancy.

This has prompted a number of questions to emerge, such as:

- How will this impact the clients I can and will take on?
- Can I still be a good consultant?
- Do I need to take a break with consultancy as I work through this life-altering recognition?
- Will everyone just think I’m weird now that I’m trying to be more myself?
- Masking also means that I am not necessarily being authentic with people or clients...so have I been masking with clients all along, or have those consultancies that have ‘gone well’ occurred because I felt comfortable enough not to mask?
- Did I struggle more in certain environments because I was high masking accompanied by additional hurdles (e.g., misogyny)?

Unfortunately, I do not think that I can answer the above questions right now, and I might never have an answer to some of them – however I will continue to reflect on these questions. What I *do* know is that I am extremely nervous for the unmasking process, and that I need to figure out how to do this in a professional manner in my role as a practitioner, educator, etc. For example, my direct style of communication is something I have always attempted to mask and thought that I have been able to do well (though some tell me this is not the case!); is this something that will work for clients? At this point, I think this reflection is generating more questions than answers! However, I do not perceive this as a negative; questions are merely opportunities for further self-exploration.

While some answers will only come with time, at this moment, there are some things I can do to work towards answers while also trying to be an authentic practitioner. First, I can

(and should) continue to work on the unmasking process; however, I *think* that I can do this more explicitly in safe social situations, and take this slowly in consultancy. I am not sure how this will work in reality – I am assuming that there is a chance that once an individual starts to unmask, this impacts their entire life. Second, I am debating whether to add the detail about being autistic in pre-consultancy or intake conversations where I talk about philosophy of practice, values, etc. There are several drawbacks (e.g., Luterman, 2018) to disclosing autism; however, someone’s brain structure and neurotype directly influence their processing and thoughts, emotions, and behaviours, and undoubtedly have a direct influence on who that person is. I think it is important to disclose that I am engaged in the autism assessment process, and what that might mean for the client (e.g., communication style). Additionally, disclosing my own autism can lead to a de-stigmatisation of the concept. Overall, at this point in time, I believe the most important thing for me to do in terms of consultancy is not to make too many changes to how I interact with clients (there is a possibility that I am not masking much in these environments, and this should be explored), but provide as much information as possible at the beginning of consultancy so that they are able to make informed decisions. Alongside that, I will continue to explore unmasking more broadly and await my formal assessment process.

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Core Competency 2: Consultancy

6. Moving to Virtual Consultancy with London Client

Date: 2nd September, 2018

For this reflection, I will use Driscoll's (2007) model of reflection to provide more structure to my reflection in an attempt to reach a tangible solution.

What:

I have been seeing a client from London since earlier in the summer (since June, 2018); this has been a combination of me being in London for work or socially frequently this summer, and some instances of the client paying for my transportation when that was not the case. In our initial consultancy agreement, he agreed to pay for transport by train where necessary as a reasonable expense. This client, who was overall wary of the consultancy process, was recommended by a mutual contact; after our intake session, [client name] said that he was very comfortable with me specifically as a consultant and would rather pay for travel expenses than see someone more local. However, recently, my trips to London for work and social reasons have stopped, train prices have suddenly increased exponentially, the last few months have been consumed by issues with train service resulting in delayed or missed consultancy appointments, and my client has had to start working part-time rather than full time as a result of his [sport] career taking off and needing to dedicate more time to training. He asked what our options were, noting that he wanted to continue with our consultancy, and asked whether virtual sessions might work. Therefore, the dilemma I am now met with is whether I should attempt to refer him to a more local sport psychologist, or whether I should engage in virtual consultancy with this client.

So What?

Three foundational factors to facilitate growth in humanistic psychology are therapist congruence, genuineness, and positive regard (e.g., Rogers, 1980). Importantly, the additional

three conditions include congruence between a client's experience and self-image, the client's perception of unconditional positive regard, and therapist-psychological contact (e.g., Rogers, 1980) – all elements that one might argue require face-to-face contact. This is my primary concern regarding virtual sessions. On one hand, virtual sessions would offer improved confidentiality and the feeling of a safe space to discuss potentially difficult experiences (compared to conducting sessions in cafes), are cheaper for the client, and we would be able to engage in sessions more frequently. However, would I be able to offer all six necessary conditions for growth from a humanistic perspective? Research in neuroscience states that face-to-face communication is better for quality of communication (e.g., Yun, 2013), but research in education has found better learning outcomes from online learning (e.g., Means et al., 2009). There is no research that I have been able to find detailing whether client perception is accurate or positive in terms of psychological support, but I would imagine that the online separation between client and practitioner does contribute to relational separation and client perceptions. Essentially, I must choose between strict adherence to humanistic values, or being flexible based on client needs and requests. While there are several mechanisms by which to engage in psychological support, my philosophy of practice is founded in human interaction; however, the nature of human interaction is changing, and I suspect that my generation and those following might even prefer to meet virtually due to growing up with technology and as a mechanism to balance busy schedules. Interestingly, Drigas et al. (2011) note that “e-psychology” is an important up-and-coming resource for psychology. In regards to this specific case, I think that as long as I can explain my reflections and concerns with [client name] and we can agree to frequent check-ins to determine his perceptions and whether/how the change in support impacts his experience (s), virtual sessions could be a good solution for issues of finance, availability, and scheduling. One primary reason I believe this is that [client name] and I have established a positive

therapeutic relationship over the last several months; while this could have been due to our meeting in person, our candid and authentic interactions result in the belief that he will be able to portray his experiences accurately to me regardless of how we meet, or offer me feedback if that is not the case. Additionally, if I can present [client name] with my thoughts, he has the right and responsibility to make the decision, a fundamental factor in positive change and growth (e.g., McArthur & Cooper, 2018).

Now what?

Based on the above analysis and that this is both a logical solution and what the client wants, I will have a reflective conversation with [client name] and discuss potential benefits and drawbacks. I will agree to trial virtual sessions if this is what he wants, on the basis that we engage in frequent check-ins regarding his experience.

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7. Can Implementing Positive Psychology Account for Some of Humanistic Psychology's Weaknesses?

Date: 20th January, 2020






Recently, I have been questioning how best to apply a humanistic lens to the need to be flexible as a consultant. While I desire to remain congruent in my values as a person and practitioner, not every situation I have encountered or will encounter will allow for a pure humanistic approach. Having reflected on my beliefs surrounding humanistic psychology (e.g., that I do not believe humans are inherently good, and that humans do not *naturally* tend towards self-actualisation; see reflection two), I would like to brainstorm some alternative practices that might be a positive supplement to humanistic practice.

One such practice is positive psychology. Many critiques of this model of practice (e.g., Wong & Roy, 2018) note that its strict adherence to positivism and the medical model of psychology are distinctly non-human. I oppose positivism and the traditional medical model; their assumptions that they are superior due to their (incorrect) beliefs that they lack bias, among other factors, have lead to inherent flaws such as a lack of self-awareness and the development of widely used science that excludes the majority of communities (e.g., Criado-Perez, 2019). Additionally, the overall reductionism of the human experience renders strict adherence to positivism and the traditional medical model impractical. However, every model

(of philosophy, science, and so on) developed by human beings is bound to be flawed. For example, humanistic psychology's lack of recognition of evolutionary psychology and assumption of human goodness is idealistic and problematic when encountering many real-world issues.

One solution for this in practice could be through integrating aligned aspects of other philosophies and models into my own model of practice. I am an extremely values-based person and believe that if I strictly adhere to humanistic values (e.g., regarding an individual as a whole person, integrity, an emphasis on autonomy, and anti-reductionism), which align with my own, I can integrate interventions from different models that align with my need for an evolutionary approach (e.g., reflection two) to human beings; one such model is positive psychology. Positive psychology's aim of helping human beings thrive, related to Keyes' (2014) model of mental health, is in line with humanistic psychology's pursuit of self-actualisation, and positive and humanistic psychology share many similar values (e.g., compassion, life satisfaction). The problem with positive psychology is its foundation in reductionist behaviouralism. One potential facet of positive psychology that I would like to explore is character strengths. One important aspect of a humanistic, person-centred approach is to avoid being problem-focused or problematising a person's experiences. Exploring character strengths might be one method of engaging in discussions, particularly with clients who a) might have a difficult time positively viewing themselves, b) do not enjoy conversations surrounding these topics, and c) enjoy surveys or learning information about themselves in this way (some people just love quizzes!). To trial the experience, I took the VIA Character strengths survey developed by Peterson and Seligman in the early 2000s (e.g., VIA Institute on Character) to see what the experience was like and how might this look for clients. My top strengths can be seen below:

Your Top Strengths

 1 Perspective WISDOM Being able to provide wise counsel to others; having ways of looking at the world that make sense to oneself/others.
 2 Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence TRANSCENDENCE Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in various domains of life, from nature to art to mathematics to science to everyday experience.
 3 Honesty COURAGE Speaking the truth but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way; being without pretense; taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions.
 4 Judgment WISDOM Thinking things through and examining them from all sides; not jumping to conclusions; being able to change one's mind in light of evidence; weighing all evidence fairly.
 5 Kindness HUMANITY Doing favors and good deeds for others; helping them; taking care of them.

One interesting facet of this is that they organise strengths into “top strengths,” “middle strengths,” and “lesser strengths,” rather than conceptualising “lesser strengths” as weaknesses. I enjoyed taking the survey, and do think that interestingly, the strengths align with values that I hold dear. I am still not sure about implementing this with a client as the survey is quite long; if I feel the need to employ a survey with a client, I often like to engage with this in a collaborative, conversational way (compared to just handing them a survey to take). This often leads to deeper conversations which allow for further self-exploration and self-awareness, while on the other hand, taking a survey in a non-collaborative manner ends with a ‘result’ with no in-the-moment reflections about the “why”. Despite these drawbacks, I do think there are situations where this might be warranted, as detailed above.

Overall, I think positive psychology is an interesting avenue to explore for potential support mechanisms that might be more conducive to the fast paced, reactionary nature of sport. There is a book titled *Positive Therapy: Building bridges between positive psychology and person-centred psychotherapy* that I would like to read to further determine suitability, and this is something I would like to take steps in integrating positive psychology into

practice where appropriate. One thing is clear: it is essential to remain congruent in my humanistic values, regardless of whether I implement pieces from other models of psychology.

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8. Facilitating a Client's Transition from Tennis

Date: 21st April, 2020

I have an adolescent client, who plays tennis, who wants to transition out of his sport. He has faced a great deal of difficulty over the last year, inclusive of negative experiences with his coach, high parent expectations, perfectionism, bullying at school, struggling to find time to 'be a kid,' and more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic impacting tennis and school engagement accompanied by accelerating opportunities in tennis. Five weeks ago, he came to the realisation that he wanted to stop playing tennis, but that this was unacceptable due to the time and funds his parents had expended on his "tennis career". His parents have been extremely supportive of his tennis, but this support is perceived by [client name] in such a way that he has no choice about whether to engage in tennis due to their sacrifices, a common experience for child athletes (e.g., Lauer et al., 2010). In order to respect his wishes and

maintain trust and confidentiality, I agreed not to mention this to his parents, and we continued our identity work for the next couple of sessions, which we have been engaging in for the last several sessions to facilitate [client name]'s engagement with identities outside of tennis. In my opinion, much of the 'tennis support' [client name] is receiving from his parents has been counteracting this identity work through sole support of his athletic identity; for example, while this was done from a positive, supportive place, his parents built [client name] a home gym so that he can work on his tennis throughout lockdown, rather than allowing [client name] the rare chance to engage in rest or explore other identities. This is made even more difficult since his parents are not communicative with me, and I rarely have the chance to discuss [client name]'s holistic support needs.

In a virtual session yesterday, [client name] said that he was extremely stressed with the recent acceleration of his tennis schedule and responsibilities and that he was ready to tell his parents about his desire to stop playing tennis. He noted that he would like my support in this, and we agreed to organise a time (and developed a strategy) to speak with his parents, as a group, about his feelings and desires regarding tennis. However, I just received a message from his mom: "How did things go with [client name] yesterday? As far as I get it, he doesn't want to come back n apparently sure about that" followed by a message asking for a phone call over lunch. This makes me extremely nervous, as in a phone call with his mom, I would be unable to do as [client name] asked and provide him the opportunity to discuss the matter as a group, with my support. However, he had asked for a group meeting and my support in telling his parents about wanting to transition from tennis; now that he has told them on his own, what are my responsibilities? I do not want to break his trust by speaking to his parent(s) without his consent and do not wish for [client name] to think I am breaking the confidentiality that he has come to rely on over the last several months. He is in school today, so would not be available for the conversation. On the other hand, I might be able to provide

his parents with context (while maintaining confidentiality) and/or talk through their thoughts and experiences regarding the situation. Because [client name] is a child and I do not have his phone number, I cannot directly ask him. I do also have some responsibility for engaging with his parents, considering they sought me out and pay for consultancy. With the above in mind, I will have a conversation with [client's name] mom over lunch; I will explain that I will not break confidentiality, but that I will provide context where I can and answer her questions about handling the situation. A primary reason I am willing to engage in this conversation, and there for my aim, is to encourage/support [client name]'s mom in offering [client name] the support he desperately needs, and that when he comes back from school, he encounters a supportive rather than challenging environment.

Update:

I have just spoken to [client's name] mom. I can tell she is quite disappointed with his decision to stop playing tennis but said that he brought it up in a very calm but nervous manner, and that she knew he meant it. She did, however, ask if he was serious, and I asked in return what he said regarding that – the answer to which was that yes, he was very serious about this. In order to help her gain a better understanding of his need to step away from tennis, I explained the sheer number of activities and situations [client name] was involved in, accompanied by the issues of bullying and COVID-19. I explained that taking a step away might allow him to 'be a kid' and engage in life more fully, and give him the space he needs to develop and learn more about himself. Additionally, we discussed how allowing him to make this decision is an important aspect of autonomy that is essential to growth as a human being, and how her offering support in this decision could also contribute positively to their relationship. She asked whether this needed to be a break or a full stop of tennis, to which I answered that this is not something I could answer or that anyone could know at this point – only time will tell. She has agreed to take [client's name] lead on this, and to "allow" him to

step away – though I got the impression that she conceptualised this as a covid-induced break rather than stopping tennis altogether.

I know she is disappointed, and it is difficult not to internalise this as directed towards me as a practitioner – they hired me to improve their son’s performance and support his well-being, and in the end, I feel that they might view my support as the reason for [client name] ‘quitting’ tennis, rather than viewing this as an important personal growth from [client name] that will contribute to his development and well-being. I did articulate my person-centred, well-being-supportive philosophy of practice, but I think the real-world impact of this is entirely different to a more general conceptualisation. More importantly, I worry that his parents’ disappointment will be obvious to [client name]. Unfortunately, this is coming at a difficult time – I have ACL surgery in two weeks and am therefore about to take a month’s break from work myself (which all clients know). She agreed to support [client name] in stepping back and encourage him to engage in activities he otherwise could not, and we agreed to touch base when I returned from my surgery break in a month or so. I *really* hope [client name] enjoys this time, and am excited for him to take a much needed break!

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9. Working in an Organisation that Does Not Want You There – A Meta-reflection

Date: 22nd April, 2020

I am aware that I have reflected and written a great deal about working at [football club name], but as I approach the end of my contract as well as my ACL surgery, I am feeling quite reflective. One concern I have been constantly reflecting on over the last several months is how I am supposed to be a good sport psychology practitioner in environments that clearly

do not want my presence. Despite this being something I think about consistently, it always feels like a ‘pity party’ or self-serving when writing the reflections – I am the one choosing to work in sport, and I feel like I am complaining about the culture constantly. However, I always feel either more organised or better emotionally after reflecting, and often am able to strategize, so I will continue to reflect in the hopes that I will eventually find a solution.

At the club, I felt like I was constantly engaged in an uphill battle; when I thought I was getting somewhere with the staff, I was either told they “don’t want to hear” about psychology any more or they confused me with the tea lady – both avenues felt invalidating in that they either did not value or forgot about psychology. Additionally, the barriers (more specifically, football- and club-specific culture) made it almost impossible to access and work with athletes, and I feel as if I have failed these athletes as a result. For example, they did not want me in the gym, or even strolling the pitch; I was given a table in the main food hall to work instead, and told that outside of educational settings (e.g., delivering workshops in the meeting room) that I should stay in that area. While nothing was explicitly said, there were several implications that having a young woman walking around a football academy might be distracting to the athletes. I felt that this hindered my ability to become part of the club, and also completely negated any illusion that I could offer confidentiality to athletes when my ‘office’ was a table in a café. Additionally, I felt that when they were not undervaluing or forgetting about psychology, they were objectifying me as a woman, or assuming that athletes would objectify me – this made things even worse. Now that I am reflecting, I think this adds more nuance to the “tea lady” remarks – for a woman at a men’s football academy could not be anything but a traditionally accepted role. Just to note, the tea lady is amazing, and I am not disrespecting her important role – it is just frustrating to be constantly asked to make people a drink when that is in no way my role.

As mentioned, I have felt that these many barriers have led to a failure on my part – I have not been able to provide much-needed support for the athletes and still have no idea how to overcome these barriers. For example, well-being is a primary concern of mine; I designed organisational and group-based interventions to address this at the club and attempted to implement weekly well-being surveys for the athletes. I cannot express how hard I worked to form positive relationships with stakeholders and athletes and implement small changes to the academy, most of which were ignored or actively worked against. For example, coaches would openly mock the well-being surveys. Much of this is unsurprising when compared to research detailing the hostile attitude football has toward football (e.g., Champ et al., 2018), but experiencing this first-hand has been extremely frustrating. Alongside my lack of efficacy at the club, I experienced numerous humiliating moments (e.g., lack of toilet facilities, and feeling dehumanised every time I stepped foot on club grounds) that made me constantly stressed. My reflections have made me recognise that I simply was not welcome at the club. I put this down to a number of factors, such as not having played football myself, being a psychologist, and in my opinion, a primary factor was being a woman.

The only woman on the grounds was the tea lady, who had a very ‘mothering’ relationship with staff members and athletes alike. However, my personality does not tend toward mothering, and equally, that is not my *job*. Outside of the objectification and feeling like my role was unimportant, I felt in a constant limbo between knowing that staff members were afraid that I would detract from athletes’ ‘mental toughness’ by talking about feelings (a feminine construct, for some reason), but also that if I did act in a more masculine-centric manner, I put people off for one reason or another. This had me constantly questioning how I presented myself and engaged with those around me, severely limiting my capacity for authenticity. For example, they did not have kit for me, so each day of work started with me attempting to determine clothing that was professional and comfortable - but also minimised

my femininity and any factor about myself that could be sexually objectified. I feel as if we have not progressed much since Anderson's (2008) article describing how structural and cultural mechanisms allow sexist and anti-feminine attitudes to persist with men in sport, and it is quite disheartening on a number of levels. First, it is frustrating and upsetting to be treated like an outsider in an environment you want to be in. Second, it seems like factors completely out of my control are barriers to me being an effective practitioner, which seems ridiculous and is not something I had ever considered before this experience. Third, the majority of the people I speak to about this say something along the lines of "that's just football," to the point that I do not bother expressing my experiences anymore, and I even feel guilty for writing this reflection - I am choosing to be in these environments, so it is difficult to even feel sympathetic towards myself. Thankfully, Jack is extremely supportive when I need some emotional coping. Yet, I cannot help but think that the only way to solve the problem of some sport culture and its attitude towards psychologists and women is to talk about it with people in the field, but who can I talk to about this? It feels taboo...thankfully, I might be able to get this across in my research, which somehow feels safer.

The chief takeaway I take from this experience is that I cannot 'over-insert' or force myself into an environment or culture that does not want me there. But if this is the case, does this mean I cannot work in football? Or most sports, even? Trying 'too hard' makes me seem desperate to make a name in the organisation (despite this being attempts to actually get anything done), but I also cannot sit in the corner and wait for stakeholders and athletes to come to me. Do I need to actively search out environments that will allow me to get work done? Equally, one could argue that these environments are in need of more women (and diversity more broadly) to help normalise their presence (even writing this sentence feels ridiculous). In support of this, Anderson (2008) notes that men in mixed-gender sports are less likely to be sexist. With the above in mind, I suppose that this reflection on my overall

experience at [club name] has lead to more reflective homework. I need to consider whether I want to be that person: either I pick and choose my environments based on their conduct towards women and other groups and additional factors (e.g., reflection three), or I decide to be the person who throws myself in the deep-end and actively trudges up that hill in order to create positive change.

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10. Autism and Consultancy

Date: 29th August, 2023

Having been involved in the autism diagnosis process for about a year, and being officially diagnosed/confirmed last month, I have been reflecting (almost constantly) about what this changes, if anything. My assessor said something that really resonated with me at the end of our final session: "nothing has changed, but at the same time, everything has changed". That really reflects my feelings of diagnosis – I am still the same person, but the lens through which I view myself, the world, and my interactions with the world has completely changed. Last week, I had a session with a support counsellor to help transition from the assessment process, explore questions and concerns, and overall just have a good chat. He mentioned that processing this might take a while for a neurotypical person, but might even be even more delayed for me – which I think I am experiencing and that this

describes my overall processing of life. Apparently, I also have alexithymia, which means that I have a difficult time identifying and processing emotions, and that this often comes out elsewhere. One recent example is that my cat passed away three days after my autism diagnosis; I had a difficult time emotionally processing this, but three weeks later, my face swelled for days as if I were in anaphylactic shock – all doctors so far can only explain this through ‘delayed stress’. Overall, adult autism diagnosis is quite the journey, and I am trying to unpack past and present experiences while also attempting to determine who I am and exist in the present.

I feel that the above was a slight tangent, but that it contextualises the amount of processing I am attempting at the moment - I have been reflecting constantly (written and internal) in an attempt to make sense of my experiences. One important reflection is how autism does/has impacted my practice as a sport psychology consultant. I have always questioned (potentially over-questioned) how I relate to people, and while some things have clicked into place with diagnosis, additional questions and mysteries have arisen. One such question surrounds a phenomenon that I have always experienced but never been able to express. A number of factors, primarily in autistic women, mean that an autistic person just ‘knows’ things about people without having to be told them; this is especially common in high masking, late-diagnosed women, and arises from a lifetime of attempting to predict the responses of individuals around you based on environmental, individual, and other cues in order to seem ‘normal’. Interestingly, this concept is well-known through the late-diagnosed autistic community, but largely ignored by researchers – another tangent I will currently avoid! Importantly for my practice, I have struggled with the contrast of this ‘intuition’, often attributed to high pattern recognition, and taking a non-directive approach in one-on-one sessions as a humanistic psychologist.

I suppose from an outsider's perspective, it might seem odd that I gravitate towards a non-directive, person-centred approach to psychology when my mindset might make me more prone to directive, 'psychologist as the expert' approaches such as CBT. However, I am extremely values-driven, and my values and overall beliefs surrounding humanity emphasise autonomy and deep self-exploration (e.g., Rowan & Glouberman, 2018). This is the conundrum – how do I balance a discrepancy between values and...skill? Brain construction? I am unsure of the right terminology. What I do know is that I have always 'seen' the solution several steps ahead, which I know many psychologists do, but this seems different. I have always had to be extremely mindful that just because I 'see' the solution, this is not just pattern recognition – my own bias and experiences impact this, and the most important mechanism in developing solutions is the client's choice. This can be an extremely frustrating back and forth in my head – I feel like I 'know the answer' and would love to help that person reach their goals as soon as possible, *but* even more than this, I value their autonomy and know at a deep level that without them reaching these conclusions on their own, our work together will not be as effective.

Interestingly, I think that over the years, I have managed to overcome this barrier (for the most part), but this has made me wonder how non-directive I really am with clients. I feel (and have received feedback) that I allow clients the space to explore their problems without my own agenda. However, I think that this is something I need to be cognizant of and explore in future sessions with clients. I wish I could give myself an answer as to how to balance or whether I am too directive at this point in time, but I think it will take time to process and explore this (and many other) facets of my interactions with others. Despite the lack of answers, this reflection has provided me the space to illustrate my thoughts on the matter and why they exist. Despite not having a solution – in fact, I feel I've exposed more questions and concepts to explore through this reflection – this reflection has guided me towards what I

need to explore next. Over the next several months, I will explore, through written reflection and reflection in action, how I come to conclusions in client formulations (and potential challenges to processing this), what, if any, problems the potential discrepancy between cognition and values might present, and any other concepts that might arise.

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Core Competency 3: Research

11. Choosing Research Topics: Transitioning from performance- to systems-focus

Date: 12 January, 2020

When entering the sport psychology field, I assumed that a sport psychologist's role was to focus on improving performance, despite a chief driver of my interest in the field being injury recovery and transition. Whether these assumptions were informed by my personal experiences, education, or patriarchal, hyper-masculine views from my upbringing, sport, and society more broadly (or unknown factors; e.g., Saavedra, 2009), I was under the impression that individual and team performance gains were *the* essential role of sport psychology consultants. While I agree that this is true at a foundational level, in that much of the aim of sport is to develop, improve, and succeed at one's goals, the individual, mental-skills focus has never 'meshed well' with me. At first, I linked this to my philosophy of practice. My core beliefs surrounding what drives individuals, self-actualising tendencies, and the role of the practitioner (e.g., e.g., Rowan & Glouberman, 2018) has not aligned with my personal experiences of what clients have asked for in an applied sense (e.g., mental skills training, improving 'mental toughness').

Unsurprisingly, my applied experiences have begun to greatly inform my research interests. For example, I have always 'known' that at a fundamental level, holistic well-being (e.g., social, emotional, psychological; Keyes, 2014) is essential to performance; this understanding has been based on my own experiences as an elite athlete accompanied by my education and development within the field of sport psychology. However, this was never made more evident to me than in my first role in football. At this Category Two club, words such as 'mental health,' 'mental illness,' and 'well-being' were avoided as if merely being within hearing distance of the terms would end one's career. This made doing my job very difficult! I am associated with psychology, which is often seen as suspicious in football

environments (e.g., Nesti, 2010). I also got the impression that me being a woman makes them feel I am incompetent, and therefore incompatible with the environment. Despite these factors, dealing with terminology surrounding well-being at the very least could be considered (and is considered by me) to be an essential part of my job. The focus of this reflection surrounds how evident it was that this avoidance of important terminology was incredibly harmful to the athletes and support staff in the building. While reading about this phenomenon (e.g., Champ et al., 2018) can provide some context and guide some research interest it is quite another thing to experience the impossibility of working within these systems in-person. I have attempted to work at individual, group, and organisational levels to improve individuals' experiences with important factors (e.g., well-being, mental skills training, 'mental toughness'). Additionally, despite following numerous recommendations for applied practice within these environments (e.g., Chandler et al., 2016), I felt like I was consistently engaged in an uphill battle against the institutions that governed the culture of these organisations as well as individuals. Despite the importance of working in a 'culturally competent' manner, this seems impossible to do so when the broader culture, and resulting institutions, prevent the cultures from working with you.

With this in mind, I have begun to broaden and shift my research lens. On one hand, my interest levels have always struggled with more individual, mental skills training focuses; while this might sound 'bad', I feel an inherent disinterest, and while I know these are and can be important tools for athletes and coaches, I feel my interest lies more with the broader contextual aspects of the sporting world and how these factors impact individuals and sport organisations (e.g., Lavoie & Dutove, 2012). While this might be a result of disinterest, I think this has been compounded by being unable to make individual differences due to broader issues within the environment and culture...making me very aware that *everyone* within a sport/performance environment is subject to be influenced by culture, including me. My

understanding that the sport psychologist's role is driven by a performance improvement narrative has changed with my experiences and begun to align more with my interests. I see that it is important to work at organisational/cultural levels to make change and support athletes as *people*, not *performers*. This is something I have struggled with on a philosophy level as well – how are we supposed to support people in a humanistic way if our chief concern is performance? After this learning experience and with this shift, I feel as if I am now more aligned in my approach to both research and practice.

I think that engaging in research surrounding my interest in topic areas that I am motivated to engage in will both improve my research, but also motivate me to engage in the research process. Additionally, I feel that I will make more of a positive impact on individuals when this research filters down. With this in mind, I would like my first empirical study to reflect the lack of well-being support within football academies; however, I would like to take a broader lens and view this not necessarily through an individual level, but to potentially critique the systems that allow this to take place.

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12. Publishing and the Reviewer Process

Date: 3rd May, 2021

After having my first manuscript as the first author rejected for the second time, I feel I need to reflect on the process of peer review and processing reviewer feedback. I have engaged in what I am told is the usual ‘come down’ time from an initial rejection, and now I am more confused than ever. One important factor to note is that despite the emotions that arise from any rejection, I am completely supportive of constructive criticism. As a very competitive person who has always been engaged in personal development, constructive criticism has always been invaluable to my growth as a human being (however, a meta-reflection (reflection 13) has made me recognise that this might be a perfectionist-leaning

coping mechanism). Regardless, I was not necessarily being sensitive to rejection or constructive feedback. What I have struggled with is the inconsistency of reviews, and sometimes, the lack of construction and pure criticism. For example, both times this paper has been rejected, one or two (depending on the number of reviewers) have valued the work and were excited for the topic to be published, and offered valuable insights into how to improve the work. On the other hand, there has been one reviewer in each process who seems to have *hated* the work and has only had condescension and (non-constructive) critique to offer. I am not confused by why some might love and some might dislike work – individuals are allowed their preferences and biases.

If a person does not like my work at a fundamental level, this is fine; where my confusion arises is a) the potentially vitriolic responses given to researchers, and b) the lack of constructive feedback or reasoning behind feedback. I suppose I am primarily confused why in a field where we are supposed to be self-aware and supportive of the development of the field, there are reviewers so out of touch with their own biases that it gets in the way of offering constructive criticism. This is even more confusing considering the awesome people on my research team who contributed to the development of the work directly and indirectly, and are also very surprised by the intense ‘reviewer 2’ responses. I do not want this to come off as a critique of the review process more broadly, or that I cannot or do not want to accept constructive criticism. I genuinely enjoy feedback on my work! I am merely attempting to wrap my head around the process by engaging in some emotion-focused (a bit of a confused rant!) and problem-focused (how do I move forward and work around this?) coping.

I suppose there are a number of things I can engage in moving forward:

- Ensure that I am continuously developing my work (e.g., writing style, conceptualisations of research, analysis, etc.)

- Develop thicker skin, and continue to recognise that some people will just not like my work – I cannot please everyone!
- Ensure that when I begin reviewing papers, or when delivering feedback more broadly (e.g., marking papers), I do not make individuals feel bad about their work, rather I offer *constructive* criticism where necessary and positive feedback where relevant.

Update: 20th February, 2024

As I read through my reflections to determine which ones I will include in my portfolio, the reviewer comment reflection stood out as an interesting moment in my career as a researcher. I have now had almost three years to engage in the above actionables, and several things are clear:

- My skills as a researcher and writer have improved over time through the peer review process, but more so through feedback from my amazing supervisors, who have thoughtfully contributed feedback for my individual research style and identity. My improved writing style alone is evident when reading through my reflections! At this point, I could engage in a reflection on how ‘cringey’ it is to read through one’s past ruminations and/or writing.
- I have been less ‘sensitive’ about paper rejection, but this is more down to recognising a number of reasons why my research and writing style might invite negative responses from people:
 - My topics of choice are not ‘easy’, and tend to protract emotions (e.g., defensiveness, denial, acceptance, sadness), particularly in sport, where equity, mental health, and the overall critique of the sporting system are unwelcome. I have wrapped my head around the fact that I have chosen/am passionate about what might be considered

difficult topics, and that cognitive dissonance often means people are defensive about these topics (e.g., Jasper et al., 2009).

- My writing style and conceptualisations of topics are *extremely* autistic; both anecdotally and in the research, we recognise that different neurotypes conceptualise and write very differently in terms of grammar, sentence and paragraph construction, organisation, vocabulary etc (e.g., Caldwell-Harris et al., 2024), often due to processing and thinking patterns (e.g., Forbes, 2017). I know that people have different preferences for writing style and that how I write might not work for how some people like to read or organise data in their minds.
- Rather than feeling that I need a thicker skin, it has been suggested to me that it is important that I have the mental capacity and social support to engage in the more difficult processes of being an academic when needed, such as reviewer comments.
- Having engaged in the process as a reviewer myself, I still cannot understand the horrible comments some reviewers give, and I do not think I ever will understand this. I love contributing to the development of individuals and the field more broadly, which one cannot do without encouraging others to continue with their work; even in papers I have recommended for rejection, I have done my best to provide motivation for development and thanked writers for their hard work. Maybe I just will never understand why some reviewers engage in the process in a less constructive way, and I suppose that is ok!

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13. An Unexpected Path to Developing Research Identity: A Meta-Reflection

Date: 5th August, 2021

While I find that more reflections occur organically both over time and in the moment, this particular reflection occurred over months, culminating in a much larger reflection that lead me towards ‘finding’ my research identity. In order to better organise my thoughts surrounding this topic, I will employ Driscoll’s (2007) model of reflection to present a more nuanced presentation of my months-long reflection, rather than what might be perceived as “chaotic mini-lessons” that occurred over a longer period of time.

What:

What happened to trigger my initial reflections is probably the most difficult to portray. To put it simply, the years of 2020 and 2021 presented a great deal of challenge after an already challenging five years. While *everyone* experienced hardship accompanied by a strange sense of change and stagnancy as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, my 2020 and 2021 were unique in their intensity. I experienced a great deal of personal difficulty within the span of 13 months: the death of a grandfather, tearing my ACL and resulting surgery, my sister having brain surgery, experiences with misogyny in the sporting context, and

experiencing clinical anxiety and depression for the first time in my life. However, it was the societal chaos that triggered me to not just introspect on these difficulties but think about how my own experiences were compounded by societal culture and structure and further emphasised how much I care about these systems. Some of the societal issues I witnessed included: a) the potential for Trump to be re-elected as president; the propaganda and general language and vitriol that permeated my daily life during this election cycle added to the stress already caused by the pandemic; b) women were looking more and more likely to their rights to bodily autonomy in the USA (as a result of the initial Trump presidency); c) countless protests and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement after brutal, racist attacks (to put it lightly) in the USA, UK, and beyond; d) the murder of a woman by a British police officer and the resulting mishandling of protests and vigils; and e) countless additional societal moments that both brought my attention to issues and/or demonstrated to me that while our research and applied efforts as humans can have individual impacts, the systems in place are what truly need to be fixed. For example, some psychologists have asserted that depression and anxiety might be ‘normal’ responses to experiencing the world today (e.g., Hidaka, 2012; WHO, 2022); what does this mean to the people we are meant to be supporting, or us as psychologists? Do we just continuously pick up the pieces? If that is the case, we will never see progress – or any progress (e.g., improved performance) might be viewed as moments in time rather than great moments that improve upon a person’s life.

So What:

How does this inform my research identity? I can understand why the above might seem random in relation to a sport psychology trainee’s direction and identity in her research. Countless mini-reflections about the situation more broadly lead me to the understanding that this is a problem in sport just as much as everywhere else in the world. In fact, sport is both a reflection of (Mohammed, 2018) and a powerful tool in transforming the world more broadly

(e.g., Kane & Maxwell, 2011), and it is evident that sport suffers from many of the same issues as broader society as well as contributes to them (e.g., the racist abuse during and after the Euro 2020 final). My responsibility as a sport psychology practitioner is to facilitate psychological development and facilitate individuals' development towards self-actualisation (e.g., Rowan & Glouberman, 2018) in those involved in sport; how am I supposed to do this when the systems are not just conducive to change, but actively work against us? This lead me to the understanding that my duty to the psychological growth of individuals can be addressed through research on the systems that impact them. My experiences accompanied by the recent attacks on women in society, and more specifically, sport (e.g., Goldman & Gervis, 2021) mean that something needs to be done. Not only this, but these situations aligned with my general desire for social justice have ignited a specific interest in the topic of women's rights in sport and equity more broadly. I must utilise my knowledge and expertise, accompanied by my privilege, to identify problems and work towards positive change in my research. More specifically, the unique challenges placed on women working in sport (many of which I have experienced) have made it incredibly difficult to make changes within sporting environments (see reflection nine). For example, consistently fighting to be heard on the basics makes doing my job incredibly difficult. These experiences add up to immense challenges being a sport psychologist – so how will I best do my job?

Now What:

With the above in mind, I have been able to work towards – and continue to plan to – mould my research identity in line with my passions and desire for justice. Reports of women experiencing sexism and harassment while both working in sport (e.g., Goldman & Gervis, 2021) and being an athlete (e.g., Kaskan & Ho, 2016) must be countered with *more* research detailing women's experiences, advocating for change, and determine the best course(s) forward. I have also come to the conclusion that no one can address everything at once, and

while I would love to be involved in all aspects of promoting equity, my resources and expertise lie in women's experiences. With this in mind, I want my research identity to reflect women in sport specifically, and promote inclusive equity in sport more broadly. Finally, in answer to my final question in the above section, at this point in time, I hypothesise that my research will be how I make the most broad, positive impact in sport and exercise at this point in time; however, I will work towards ensuring that the research I engage in has a positive impact on my practice, and that I can implement what I learn throughout the research process within institutions and organisations to help individuals.

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14. Research Focus and Autism

Date: 26 October, 2023

Since my autism diagnosis/confirmation in July 2023, the process of which began back in 2022, many puzzle pieces of my life have begun to fit together. One interesting piece that I have recently been considering is my research choice(s) and identity. I remember early on in my doctorate experience having a very difficult time deciding on research interests (both for empirical studies and the systematic review), which made it very difficult to engage with the doctorate programme assignments. This occurred despite the knowledge and acceptance that research has always been fun to me, that I enjoy recognising and interpreting patterns, and that I love writing and editing manuscripts. This caused me stress at the beginning of the doctorate, as I could not wrap my head around why I was skilled and enjoyed something, but still struggled to engage in the process. In an earlier reflection (see reflection 11) I considered this problem and came to the conclusion that I wanted to focus on a broader lens of creating positive change; more specifically, I identified that the cultural and institutional systems in place dictating overall sport culture made it difficult to create change at the individual level (e.g., McGinty-Minister et al., 2023). While I still fundamentally agree with this and it drives my research years later, I think I missed an important clue that hinted

towards my autistic brain structure – the ‘lack of interest’ in certain aspects of sport psychology.

This is a difficult (and awkward) topic to reflect on, and if this were not an important realisation about my identity as a sport psychology researcher, I would absolutely not publish it in my portfolio! For example, I fear that this will come across as judgemental of topics or aspects of sport psychology that I might not be interested in that others are extremely talented or interested in. In fact, that is a major fear of the more personal aspects of the portfolio (e.g., reflections, case studies) being read by future peers and published online. However, I have recognised that a lack of interest for me goes beyond a simple ‘uninterest’; sometimes, uninterest results in avoidance at the very least, and executive dysfunction at worst. For example, earlier in the doctorate programme, I attempted to engage in research on a number of topics (e.g., superstition, performance after returning from injury). This often resulted in executive dysfunction and feelings of guilt surrounding being unable to engage in something I knew I enjoyed and was skilled at.

Since my autism diagnosis, I have been reflecting a great deal on the implications of this self-knowledge. One important factor for me both in the doctorate and as a person has been my research. As mentioned, I had the skills and broader enjoyment of the research process, but when there was a lack of interest, this manifested in feeling ‘unable’ to engage in the task at all; this consistently made me stressed and feel ‘lesser than’ my peers, who were able to engage in numerous different interests and tasks (these feelings applied to many aspects of the doctorate programme; for example, unlike peers of mine, I found it difficult to multitask on separate assignments, leading me to avoid them altogether). Interestingly, a neurotypical person is often able to engage with a topic if they have skill but little to no interest in the topic; on the other hand, autistic individuals often need the interest in a topic to engage, and will engage in a topic of interest regardless of skill level (e.g., Parsons et al.,

2017). Understanding this accomplished multiple things. First, I was able to understand why I was unable to engage in research topics I was not wholly interested in, even for the end goal of finishing the doctorate programme. This led to an acceptance, which made me feel much better and less stressed, further leading me to explore and engage in the research and doctorate process more broadly again. Importantly, this understanding has motivated me to continue in my area of interest (equity in sport). I would often feel like I was “that annoying person” constantly talking about and researching a particular interest. However, learning that autistic people often struggle to engage with ‘uninteresting’ topics (Parsons et al., 2017) to the point of pathological demand avoidance (e.g., National Autistic Society, 2023) made me more motivated to explore what I am truly interested in.

With this in mind, I have fully integrated my research towards equity in sport. Importantly, autistic individuals often have special interests (Laber-Warren, 2021). These interests often shape the lives of autistic people, contribute positively to well-being, and have positive impacts on learning and the brain more broadly (e.g., Laber-Warren, 2021). Autistic people often have an intense desire for justice (e.g., BPS, 2014), which rings true for myself; this desire accompanied by high pattern recognition, skills and enjoyment of the research process, and finding a special interest that facilitates equity means that I can be more thoroughly involved with my research, and has allowed me to engage in topics that I like rather than what I *think* I should like as a sport psychology practitioner. All in all, I hope this lesson and acceptance will continue to lead to positive research engagement and impact throughout my career, and that this will be enjoyable throughout while also promoting equity and justice in sport and exercise psychology.

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15. Systematic Review and Ensuring Intersectionality in a World of White Feminism

Date: 15th February, 2024

While attempting to develop as an intersectional feminist and ensuring that my research and practice are in line with these values has been something I have been attempting to engage in throughout my career, how to accomplish this in a systematic review has become a stress point. I am aware that I possess privilege as a white woman who has always had the necessary opportunities to pursue my dreams; a lack of awareness of this privilege accompanied by tunnel-vision about my own patriarchal oppressive experiences, and not the oppression of others, can result in what is termed White feminism (e.g., Borah et al., 2023). Feminism without the context of intersectional experiences further marginalises those with marginalised intersecting identities. Additionally, I am aware that the “diversity within” construct can act as a mechanism to uphold white, patriarchal supremacy through

mechanisms such as cultural taxation (e.g., Amie, 2021; Christoffersen & Emejulu, 2023). With this in mind, how do I engage in thoughtful intersectional feminist work without making any ignorance or lack of awareness I might have the problem for other individuals who possess different identities?

First, I struggled with my research question – we are in dire need a review about women’s experiences of sexism while working in sport, but is that enough to address? How do we include intersecting identities? After a mini-reflection and engaging in discussion with the research team, we agreed that while additional marginalised identities will impact women’s experiences, it is important to gain a picture of *one* problem. For example, we should work towards understanding how sexism impacts women working in sport before focusing on the interaction between multiple stressors – baby steps!

The next step was attempting data analysis without being too singular in my analysis. I am aware that my own biases and experiences impact my analysis of data, more specifically qualitative data, and agree with Braun and Clarke’s (2002) assertion that one’s experiences are integral to the thematic analysis process. Additionally, essential aspects of feminist methodology (Cook & Fonow, 2018) include employing one’s experiences as a woman to a) avoid ‘pretending’ these experiences can be separate to one’s identity and interpretation of the world, and b) utilise our experiences as women to better inform our interpretation through a unique lens (among others). While I was engaged in this process of stressing about how to produce a piece that would accurately and thoughtfully reflect the women in the studies, I came across some social media content that discussed how many individuals are more concerned with and upset by imperfect feminism than they are that oppression exists in the first place. This concept has been written about before (e.g., Harris, 2016), and a mini reflection lead me to agree. We can only try our best in a society that is constantly changing, and we are learning about how the systems in place impact people every day. As long as I

engage with research (and consultancy) in a thoughtful, open-minded manner, a way of being often instilled in those going through the psychology trainee process and a core value of mine and my philosophy of practice, I can defend my work and hope to make positive change for everyone.

With this in mind, I kept as reflective (Braun and Clarke, 2022) and open mind as possible while thoroughly analysing the data, with room for ‘surprising’ or unknown codes and themes to develop. Additionally, I engaged in the group reflective process advocated in reflective thematic analysis, and attempted to employ as many perspectives as possible throughout data analysis and presentation. Hopefully, our own experiences have informed work that will provide the foundation for increased attention to important facets of women’s experiences while working in.

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Core Competency 4: Dissemination

16. Educating Stakeholders that “don’t want to hear it”

Date: 8th February, 2020

**Note: Current reflections (15 March, 2024) are italicised throughout to provide learning insight*

I have developed and delivered an educational programme for [club name]. It went surprisingly well, in that the stakeholders involved really engaged with the programme while I was running it and changed some of their behaviour (e.g., having more reflective conversations with one another, using more terminology surrounding mental health). However, the programme recently finished, and I have been assessing programme effectiveness through observations and conversations with the stakeholders. I am sensing some ‘fatigue’ with engaging with development and some other facets of the programme. While the programme was running, coaches and physios were very much into it, engaging in discussion both in educational sessions and throughout the day-to-day workday. Now, I am seeing the frequency of these discussions drop significantly. Perhaps even more frustrating is that when I asked the assistant manager whether I could implement monthly reflective catch-ups to try and encourage the stakeholders to remain engaged with their development, he said that the stakeholders were “too busy” to choose to engage (not even offering the chance to let them choose), and implied that him allowing me to deliver the educational programme was a tick-box exercise with a looming audit. I have also had a difficult time initiating conversations surrounding the programme or continued development with coaches (though the physiotherapists have been supportive), with one coach saying “I don’t want to hear it anymore” and walking away. What seems to be happening is now that the required ‘tick box’ exercise has been conceptualised as ‘completed’ by all parties, and the lessons learned are not long-lasting; I suppose this is not necessarily surprising, as the football environment overall is

often antithetical to many of the development and mental health concepts that I proposed and taught (e.g., Champ et al., 2018; Gulliver et al., 2012).

There are (at least) two lenses through which to reflect upon this situation. The first lens, important to my development as a practitioner and educator, is how this reflects upon my own abilities to deliver education and for my delivery to make an impact. My pedagogical approach assumes that learning happens within and not *to* a person (Tomilnson & McTigue, 2006), an understanding that is in line with my humanistic philosophy of practice. How does one deliver information in a (required) short period of time and facilitate the learning within the person? I attempted to facilitate this through a very reflective delivery (e.g., Peterson et al., 2009). I am wondering if I am being too hard on myself - I *know* that internalising knowledge and changing mindsets can take time, especially when there is cognitive dissonance at play. Encouraging retention through consistent engagement is extremely important in this internalising of knowledge, but why am I not allowed to encourage this? What is the point of hiring me? This is making me feel more and more like a 'tick box' for the club. *Upon reflection, I recognise that while I had known theoretically that this type of knowledge integration and self-awareness takes time, I had not necessarily incorporated this into my own interpretations of the situation...in itself demonstrating how long it takes to integrate self-awareness and knowledge, especially if it is not what you 'want' to learn!*

However, I threw a great deal of information at the stakeholders about topics they were likely uncomfortable with – maybe this was too much at once, and I should have implemented a more focused intervention on one or two topics. I viewed this as my chance to encourage development and conversations, and to normalise my presence – maybe I delivered too much. However, based on my needs analysis and general experience, this club was in desperate need of an introduction to these topics, and I think that I would have

struggled with engagement if we engaged too thoroughly with specific topics. Maybe I need to improve my relational skills with club stakeholders: I have offered them the chance for development and proof that they both enjoy it and that will contribute to their development, but in spite of this, they are disinterested in further engagement. Does this say something about my delivery? During the programme, participants were talkative and easily engaged with me in both sessions and the broader football environment – but without the programme, they “don’t want to hear about it”. With this in mind, I will ask the assistant manager for his assistance in sending out a survey to participants for feedback on my delivery of the programme and the programme itself. Hopefully, a short survey will garner some feedback that can help me improve my delivery of information. *Unfortunately, the academy manager did not see the value of accumulating feedback about the educational intervention. He noted that participants were ‘too busy’ to fill out the (five question) survey. Upon reflection, I suspect that he knew that I would not be delivering further content to the club due to lack of interest, and therefore did not want to ‘seem like a pain’ to stakeholders by asking one more thing from them, especially in light of the paperwork they were doing for the upcoming audit. However, it would have aided in my development as an educator and practitioner, and with my experience at the club more broadly, if this simple ask were taken seriously.*

Despite my understanding that I need to consistently improve my delivery, I cannot help but think that one major reason for the lack of continued engagement is the overall culture of football and this organisation. It is incredibly frustrating - I *watched* the coaches and physiotherapists communicate better, coaches become excited about and engage in starting to develop a philosophy of practice, and stakeholders be more understanding of concepts surrounding mental health and mental illness – so I know the interest was there. However, I also see the coaches who did not engage with the programme using banter to make fun of the conversations the programme participants were having about coaching

philosophy. Now, not only are they seen by other academy and some first-team coaches engaging with the (dreaded) psychologist, who is also the only other woman on site aside from the tea lady, they are witnessing them engage in activities that do not ‘fit’ within their hyper-masculine, hyper-competitive culture (e.g., Champ et al., 2018) such as reflection, open communication between departments rather than quipped digs, and ‘babying’ athletes with concerns surrounding mental health. Stakeholders, coaches in particular, might be avoiding what they learned as some form of survival mechanism in this culture. Football can be a cut-throat environment where those not ‘fit’ with the hyper-masculine culture are excluded (e.g., Champ et al., 2018); disengaging with or actively denouncing something incongruent with that culture might help in establishing a stakeholder’s place in the environment, or even help them move upwards in the perceived hierarchy. Additionally, this programme was likely framed as a tick-box to participants by the assistant manager. It is frustrating to spend the time developing and delivering a programme and witnessing its effectiveness throughout, then see it crash and burn when encountering the broader environment.

How does one deliver education that permeates an opposing culture? I suppose this is likely something that educators deal with every day, but I have not found any pedagogical resources addressing this so far. Additionally, how do I improve or alter my teaching delivery to ‘fit’ in cultures that reject me? Should I? This is completely misaligned from my philosophy of practice, which emphasises authenticity as a key facilitator of change. My takeaway from this lesson about education interacting with culture is that the culture *must* be changed...though an important aspect of culture change is education, so this is a frustrating dilemma! *Upon reflection, I recognise that this was a combination of firefighting and a lack of broader readiness on my part for an organisation with that level of interpersonal, organisational, and cultural issues. This presents a broader ethical concern, in my opinion –*

this was an unpaid role, meant to attract entry-level sport psychology trainees that could offer psychological support without monetary compensation. The compensation came in terms of petrol expenses and experience...and in my experience, contributions to mental illness and increased autism masking. While I would not necessarily change this experience due to the lessons I learned about delivering psychology and education, and its contributions to developing my passions in sport psychology, I recognise that the support mechanisms in place at the time were absolutely not adequate for the work I was engaging in. More than anything, this makes me reflect upon the role I would like to take as a supervisor in the future in offering open, reflective conversations with trainees and students where they can share their experiences and be made aware that theoretical, practical, and mental readiness are important when entering these environments.

I will continue to improve my educational delivery through taking opportunities to deliver where I can, and continue to consider how I relate to others. Alongside this, I will continue to develop and deliver information that is important for cultural change.

Importantly, I know that some of the participants in the educational programme enjoyed learning and took it seriously; my hope is that the internal development process, which takes time, continues despite the lack of environmental support and that at least some of the support staff continue to positively develop in one way or another.

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17. Learning to Lecture

Date: 13th March, 2022

**Note: Current reflections (15 March, 2024) are italicised throughout to provide learning insight*

I have been gaining experience lecturing over the last year or so and have been doing more and more recently. Excitedly, I have been both improving in my lecture design and delivery skills and really enjoy the process! I feel like I am able to better design lectures that fit respective topics and audiences. For example, I have learned that delivering content on sexism in sport is entirely different for a strength and conditioning undergraduate module than an MSc module (e.g., sport and exercise psychology). While this is something I suppose I recognised at a logical level, I had not realised how these changes would affect lecture design effectiveness in reality. One important aspect of student development, from my perspective, is engagement with the material in a reflective way; in order to better facilitate

this, I have been tweaking lecture design to better prompt interaction. For example, for MSc level students, I design activities with the appropriate space and time for more conversation and debate to allow for their additional knowledge, and potentially, confidence in engaging with university-level material. However, when teaching first year undergraduates, I had struggled with engagement in using such a direct tactic, especially with a more difficult topic like sexism. Now, I tend to use anonymous in-lecture feedback (using Menti) to inform subsequent conversations. I feel that this takes some of the pressure off of students, but still encourages them to reflect and contribute in some way. In terms of delivery, I feel that I have become more of myself and generally confident through practice. I leave more space for ‘conversation’ rather than ‘lecturing at’ students, and am much less concerned with being perfect. I have found that, like in other aspects of practice, being more myself removes some of the over-thinking aspects of delivering material. *I find this extremely interesting to read and reflect upon, almost exactly two years later. Most of my reflections about engagement and delivery throughout my doctorate experience are incredibly focused on what I now know is masking or unmasking, depending on the circumstance. The above reflection regarding delivery, is yet another example of how important understanding context and the ‘why’ behind important aspects of life (e.g., that I am autistic, there is not something wrong with me). Rather than constantly over-thinking my delivery in the moment, which took up significant cognitive space/ability, I am now more confident and able to be myself, allowing for significantly more room for in-the-moment reflection, engagement with those around me, and improved critical thinking. This is a good example of the interaction between unmasking/becoming more authentic (delivery) and improving my practice as a teacher (design and delivery).*

With the above in mind, I thought I’d engage in a reflection about my experiences in the hopes that I can understand why I enjoy and look forward to the experience so much so I

can lean on these more and improve in my delivery. I have asked myself a series of questions regarding my experiences:

- What have you liked about lecturing?

As someone who is incredibly passionate about the topics that I engage in, being able to share this information with others is amazing; the potential to introduce important and interesting topics to a group that might not have encountered them before is exciting, and if they have heard of the topic, I enjoy developing their understanding. Oddly enough, I do not feel uncomfortable speaking in front of groups of people, I quite enjoy it. Additionally, I really enjoy when students engage, particularly when they ask challenging questions; while in my initial lectures I felt the need to have an answer to everything, I have learned to be comfortable with saying “I don’t know, I’ll look into that” when I do not know the answer to a question. Additionally, I like the organised nature of lectures, in the sense that you have learning outcomes and provide relevant information, but that this information can lead to interesting explorations and discoveries. I suppose I really enjoy seeing that moment in time when people are beginning to recognise and develop their interests, and I welcome the opportunity to support this self-exploration. Additionally, I feel comfortable in academic environments rather than like an ‘outsider’, which I often feel when working within sporting organisations. Overall, lectures offer the ability to speak about what I like or love, teach others, learn from others, and do so in an authentic and comfortable way.

- What has made you uncomfortable?

Not *too* much has made me uncomfortable while lecturing so far. There have been a few moments where I have lost my train of thought, and while I felt embarrassed the first couple of times; if this happens to me now, I simply admit that I have lost

my train of thought, laugh about it, and move on. One thing that does make me uncomfortable is that sometimes, I struggle to determine whether certain people are interested in what I am saying, making faces at what I am delivering or me as a person, and so on. I try to ignore this, but it is difficult when you are trying to make eye contact/engage the class in your topic. The most awkward part of a lecture for me has been figuring out the technology and setting up the slides in the beginning, which sounds ridiculous, but I should improve this.

- Is there anything you can improve on, and if so, how?

One thing I would like to engage in is feedback on my delivery; while many students have contributed to lectures, had questions, and come to speak to me after class, it would be good to know how my delivery is being perceived and whether students are absorbing the information. Without that information, I do not have many specifics regarding what I need to improve on. However, there are some things I should improve regardless of others' experiences. First, I think my overall delivery can continue to improve; I have felt that with each lecture I better deliver information to students and feel less awkward doing so. I also think that I should attempt to speak a little more informally or be able to recognise when I am using terminology that might not be accessible to the level of student I am working with (e.g., first year undergraduates vs MSc students). I might do this by being more conscious of my speech, though I do wonder if consistently analysing *how* I am speaking might interfere with actual delivery. I will see how this goes!

All in all, I am really enjoying lecturing, and am excited to see how I develop as an educator; additionally, I hope that I have the chance to help students engage in their own passions and development in the future.

18. WiSEAN Conference

Date: 30th June, 2023

I recently attended the Women in Sport and Exercise Academic Network Conference, and it was amazing! I was able to learn a lot about women in sport and exercise, and met many motivated, awesome women who are contributing a great deal to the field. I was able to present our sexism work as a poster on the second day; while I have presented posters before and never get nervous, for some reason, I was quite nervous to present this work. Maybe it was because of how passionate I am about this work, and I do always concern myself with whether we present data in a way that people can identify with and do justice to the data provided by participants. I was also nervous about the three-minute presentation – I have never had a time limit on my poster presentations before! Determining how to present the data also took a great deal of consideration; obviously, being biased towards wanting to present as much data as possible, it was difficult to pick and choose which details would make the most ‘impact’ within the short timeframe and on the limited poster space. LS and I reflectively deliberated about which information to include, and we were relatively confident that we had balanced which information to share. I hoped that some people might have questions that would generate further conversations and allow me to share additional information, but did not know if that would happen.

It turns out there was no reason at all to be nervous! The research resonated with the women who came to view the poster, so much so that we had a decent sized crowd around the poster. Regarding the presentation, I found this to be quite easy, I think as a result of knowing the data so well and having a whole life’s worth of experiences with presenting. After delivering the three-minute presentation, I was able to engage in many conversations about the topic. Women were interested, related to the content, and frustrated to see how broad their experiences were. An interesting conversation that evolved was the worry that we were in an echo chamber – as a mechanism of attending the conference, we were obviously

all interested in or passionate about women in sport and exercise...but where are the people this content really should be delivered to? We know that we experience hurdles as women in sport, whether as an athlete, academic, or stakeholder, and these hurdles range from sexism to the leaky pipeline of academia (Cowley et al., 2021), to women athletes being treated like small men for anything from shoe development to training periodisation (e.g., van Lennep, 2018). It is well and good (and still important) to disseminate this information in a conference such as this –but there were maybe *three* men attending the conference who were not presenting. Having spoken to one of the men there, I know he felt extremely uncomfortable throughout the conference, as if he were always on guard. I illustrated to him that this is likely how most women feel attending *most* conferences in the sport and exercise sciences and industry more broadly. While I understand that many men might be uncomfortable attending a conference reflecting women in sport and exercise sciences, I do not believe that uncomfortability and cognitive dissonance should be reasons for not engaging in work that reflects half of the athlete population, a growing portion of scientists and stakeholders, and a group that needs the support of men to gain traction and equity within our culture.

While I began this reflection on the conference to write about feeling motivated, happy, and excited, I am suddenly met with the dilemma (again) of how to deliver information to people who either might not want to hear it or do not have access to it, or how to encourage people to engage with potentially difficult or upsetting information that might make them feel uncomfortable. This also makes me a little annoyed that my passions/special interests are not easier topics! While I cannot control people's interpretation and retention of the information I provide, there must be a way to deliver information effectively so they might be more likely to absorb the information and combat cognitive dissonance, beyond the usual teaching and delivery methods...but then I think, is that my problem/something that I need to solve? The problem in the case of WiSEAN was that men either were not interested

in attending or did not realise they could attend, pointing to (yet another) systemic issue that must be fixed. Similar to other marginalised communities, women are often presented with the burden of creating change, rather than the men who often have more authority and capacity to facilitate change in these environments (e.g., Beard, 2017). While there is absolutely a conversation that needs to be had surrounding delivery and overcoming cognitive dissonance to improve equity in sport, perhaps we should prioritise considerations surrounding how to engage more allies and change the systems in place.

All in all, this was an extremely positive experience disseminating the findings of our study, and I learned a great deal from the other presentations and people at the conference. This was a successful experience of designing and presenting the poster (which won best poster presentation!), and I will take what I learned from that process forward for future conference or educational delivery. However, this reflection has led me to consider an important but difficult conundrum that keeps coming up in my work – how to effectively deliver information (in my case, mental health, sexism, questioning/challenging systems) in a system that would like to fight back on that knowledge. While I (and others) work to figure that out, I will keep researching, keep delivering, keep listening, and do my best to facilitate learning and change where possible.

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19. Inner Changes/Conceptualisations that Impact my Delivery

Date: 7th November, 2023

Recently, AW brought me on to deliver a coaching mentorship programme at a Women's Super League team. The aim of the programme is to educate (seven) coaches on how to be mentors for up and coming coaches, and to facilitate this learning throughout the season through periodical educational and reflective sessions. We had our first two sessions and have our third tomorrow, so I think a reflection is important about my experiences so far since this group has been a) different to what I have experienced in the past, and b) alerted me to some 'interesting' facets of myself that have always been there, but I have only just begun to recognise. In session one, we delivered on topics such as an introduction to reflection, being a self-aware mentor/person, authenticity, values, and an introduction to think aloud. In session two, we reflected on think aloud and values, and introduced the mentors to psychological safety, intake, and needs analysis. The sessions went very well, and the coaches expressed really enjoying the session. We have our third session tomorrow.

The first matter that has been on my mind since the sessions is the large diversity of personalities possessed by the coaches, how collaborative and talkative they were, and how this impacted my internal experience! While everyone has their own personalities, this group was much more open throughout compared to other groups I have presented content to in both sport and business organisations. These were very collaborative sessions that encouraged reflective conversations throughout, we were able to get to know each of the coaches relatively well; additionally, the majority of them knew one another quite well, so were comfortable being themselves. Perhaps the all-women group facilitated an innate psychological safety as well, which would not surprise me, considering the difficult and hypermasculine environments that still permeate women's football; for example, one of the women noted that this was one of the first all-women meetings she had had in quite some

time. These factors, along with some I am sure I am unaware of, lead to a very conversational day. On one hand, it was exciting to work with coaches that were genuinely interested in learning and implementing this into practice and wanted to ask questions and share their stories throughout. However, I did find this lack of control to be difficult at times; for example, there were a couple of coaches that once they had the floor, would spend a great deal of time on tangents; due to the psychologically safe nature of the session, we encouraged and wanted people to share, but I did have a hard time when this had the potential to limit what AW and I could deliver within the time constraints. I was worried that if we did not get to covering everything, that we were not doing the coaches justice – despite knowing that we have months to engage in developing these coaches.

Additionally, the experience has made me reflect on how I ask questions. I have always wondered if I do not ask questions effectively – I will carefully phrase a question in order to get an answer that specifically answers the question, but oftentimes, people go completely off track. For example, I can ask “what behaviour might you use that is aligned with x value?”, and an answer could be “one time, I saw so and so doing x, which was the opposite of x” rather than something along the lines of “for my value of x, I might engage in x, y, z”. This has *always* confused me. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, it turns out that this is common with autistic people! What prompted this aspect of reflection was an article that came out today that describes my experience perfectly (Autlaw, 2023). I have always thought that people become frustrated with how I answer questions (I answer the literal question), and I now recognise that this literalness is frustrating because people often expect additional or varying information, not the specific detail(s) I am asked about. On the other hand, when delivering education, I have been internally frustrated when I ask a specific question but the answer is nowhere near an actual answer, and leads us on an unnecessary tangent. For some reason, I do not generally have a difficult time with this in one-on-one

sport psychology sessions – I welcome tangents as a way of getting to know the person.

However, in an educational setting where we have session aims and time limits, I have found this (and other) differences in communication frustrating. However, now that I reflect on this and know *why* these different responses might occur (e.g., different neurotypes), I find the whole experience quite funny and interesting to engage with, rather than assuming that people just are not listening to me. This makes it easier for me to be more flexible and explore people's answers, regardless of whether they actually answered my question.

Rather than change how I ask questions or attempt to control sessions, this reflection (and I'm sure, future development) has helped me change my conceptualisation of this and past experiences. Everyone communicates differently, and not getting the intended responses is not a direct attack on me as a person. We know that autistic individuals can struggle with rejection and rejection sensitivity due to experiencing significantly more rejection and 'bullying' as a result of differences in communication, interest, etc. (e.g., Bercovici, 2023); I now know that some behaviours from others can trigger my own issues surrounding this, despite that not being their intention. For example, the lack of someone answering my question could trigger feelings of frustration or nerves that I had done something wrong, but now I can be much more accepting and fluid about this. The more I learn about underlying mechanisms for people's behaviours, the more self- and other-aware I can be (there is actually a link between undiagnosed autistics choosing psychological or sociological fields for this reason). Finally, while I decided months ago that it would be important to disclose that I am autistic to potential and current clients, it would be beneficial to share this information, along with what that might mean in terms of communication or processing, with people in an educational setting as well.

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20. The Contradictory Nature of Delivering Sexism Lectures

7th February, 2024

Having delivered lectures about our sexism research for a year and a half now, a recent lecture has made me consider the contradictory nature of delivering these lectures. On one hand, I am always excited to share and discuss this content with university students; I genuinely enjoy lecturing as a whole, and being able to present a topic I am passionate about makes the experience even better. I also get excited that we can share this information to those earlier in their sporting careers, increasing awareness so that hopefully the women are not learning on the job about sexism through difficult and confusing experiences, and that the men are aware enough to be allies when they begin working. On the other hand, this is balanced by the difficulty in some of these situations. For example, in the last lecture, the composition of seating arrangements was completely arranged by gender; you can just see the immediate defensiveness of many men in the room accompanied by some wariness but also interest from the women's side. This this is often understandable and is a difficult and vulnerable topic to consider for any gender for various reasons; my conundrum entails how to deliver this material in a way that facilitates reflective learning.

This contradiction can be difficult to manage in delivery. For example, do I focus on making half of the group comfortable enough that they are more likely to engage with the information, or do I have a responsibility to not tame the facts so that everyone there, particularly the women, are better prepared – and do not witness yet another person altering

their delivery of information to make men more comfortable? I am aware that the discomfort brought upon an individual through cognitive dissonance can inhibit learning (e.g., Adcock, 2012), and a primary reason for conducting and sharing this research is to promote learning and facilitate positive change. With this in mind, where do my responsibilities lie?

Importantly, I need to accept that the long-term learning and development outcomes of each individual I come across is not my responsibility. I am not much of a “pick your battles” type of person for a number of reasons (e.g., more rigid and literal thinking, not wanting disinformation to spread), which has made it difficult to navigate the ‘politics’ of sport and academia. From my view, the best, and potentially only, thing I can do is to continue to positively develop, learn about myself, have integrity in my research and interactions, and apply this to the situations I am in.

With this in mind, I will continue to deliver education in an authentic manner (while informing those involved of certain characteristics that might impact this; see reflection 19) while improving the content delivered and my skills in delivering. While I had an initial fear of over-focusing on one group within the room and delivering harsh information that might inhibit learning, there might be a way to prepare students to engage in uncomfortable conversations. For example, in these sexism lectures, I would like to have a broader conversation about cognitive dissonance, and the importance of being uncomfortable (example slide below). A better explanation of why individuals might experience cognitive dissonance, that it is normal and acceptable, and ideas about how to combat this might give some individuals ‘permission’ to be uncomfortable without withholding important content or conversations from those who need or are interested in them. My aim here would be to improve student focus and reflection surrounding the bigger purpose of raising women’s stories to be heard by individuals who might not otherwise have access to this information. Overall, I can only provide (and continue to improve upon) my authentic delivery and as

competent an education as I can; it is the responsibility of each individual to develop, and I have no control over this!

Bias and Cognitive Dissonance

- ▶ **Consensus bias:** a pervasive cognitive bias that causes people to assume that their personal qualities, characteristics, beliefs, and experience are common amongst others
- ▶ **Cognitive Dissonance:** the discomfort/tension felt when information you are taking on does not necessarily match/challenges your experiences, beliefs, or values
 - ▶ This can make it difficult to take new information on board
- ▶ How to overcome:
 - ▶ Learn and acknowledge your biases
 - ▶ Get past emotion and use critical thinking
 - ▶ Avoid confirmation bias
 - ▶ Engage with information you might disagree with



Update: 14th February, 2014

Yesterday, I delivered the sexism lecture to MSc sport and exercise students with LS. We spoke about how while much of the upcoming lecture would be uncomfortable, that this is ok. We emphasised to the group that to facilitate reflective learning, the lecture would have a foundation of psychological safety and space to acknowledge bias and talk through difficult topics. Interestingly, the lecture was much more conversational than expected, considering I initially entered the classroom with the men and women sitting on separate sides of the room, and the men looking uncomfortable; after my added portion about cognitive dissonance and psychological safety, some students looked nervous, but engaged much more than expected with the lecture.

One interesting and difficult experience happened when two of the students who were men were quite outspoken in their views throughout, and this was perceived by some of the class to be antithetical to women's experiences and equity for women. Some of the women, and one man, reprimanded the two men for what they perceived as them not listening to the

material, followed by portraying their own views based on their experiences and common knowledge, and asking challenging questions. It was difficult, because while it seemed like one man was merely acting in a defensive way that was not facilitative to learning, I could tell that the other was attempting to wrap his head around the situation through voicing his opinions and observations; this was just not obvious to the those who were defending their experiences, as I think they were becoming frustrated, and he was not clearly explaining his points (since this seemed to be more of a reflection in action). This situation brought up my 'fears' outlined in the above reflection, as I wanted to give the student the chance and safe space to reflect in action, but also wanted to ensure I was backing the women in the room and not taking that safe space away from them.

In order to diffuse the situation, I endeavoured to rephrase what the man who was verbally reflecting was attempting to say, which resulted in a much calmer experience and a discussion about individual perspectives based on life experience. While this was a relatively awkward experience in the moment, I do believe that it is important for students to be able to express their views in a respectful manner. Not only does it illustrate the breadth of views that exist throughout humanity, but it allows students to engage in respectful conversations, and sometimes debate, about their opinions and experiences; additionally, these conversations present the opportunity to encourage students to have a foundational theory for their arguments and avoid using opinion-only arguments.

As I reflect on this, I think it is important to develop this lecture further by more explicitly detailing 'rules' to allow for a more positive and psychologically safe environment for students. I have employed similar tactics when running focus groups on environmental culture, where everyone has an opinion. In creating an environment more open to debate and vulnerability, I have a responsibility to establish conduct guidelines to aide in the management of difficult conversations. This is quite a recent experience (this happened

yesterday) so I am going to take some time to process this, then begin developing an opening to the sexism lectures that better explains psychological safety and establishes the importance of maintaining this throughout, and guidelines on how to do so.

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Consultancy Case Study One

Barriers to holistic approaches: Providing youth client support without access to parents or the client's broader environment

Abstract

This study outlines sport psychology work with a youth elite tennis player who initially engaged in consultancy due to perceived 'anger issues'. I employ Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and positive psychology elements throughout to meet client needs; however, consultancy is founded in humanistic values, particularly in the importance of client autonomy and development. Importantly, the client's parents' lack of willingness to engage with the consultancy process or allow access to their performance environment impacted each step of consultancy, making it difficult to apply a holistic approach to client development. This acted as a significant barrier to learning about the client, and therefore, ongoing needs analysis and formulation. This case reflects decision-making processes throughout in relation to 'who is the client', being unable to engage in a holistic approach to consultancy, facilitating client autonomy despite their developmental stage making this difficult, and balancing these factors. Finally, this case demonstrates my first real experience exploring perceived issues (e.g., anger) but learning that these are a manifestation of a broader issue (e.g., narrow identity; desires to transition from sport), and attempting to navigate this process in an ethical and professional manner.

Introduction

Working alongside elite junior athletes is often complex due to the countless influences which impact their development (Rice & Dolgin, 2002; Wylleman & Reints, 2010; Vealy, 2007). As adolescents learn to manage their emerging identities and cognitive capabilities, the pressure of elite sport can lead to the development of maladaptive coping mechanisms, perfectionism, and fear of failure (Flett & Hewitt, 2005; Laure et al., 2010; Ommundsen et al., 2006; Rice & Dolgin, 2002; Wylleman & Reints, 2010). Further, elite adolescent athletes can occupy multiple systems which inform their self-perceptions, including their home life (Flett & Hewitt, 2005; Rice & Dolgin, 2002), school (Eden, 1995), and sport (Wylleman & Reints, 2010). Accordingly, it is important that sport psychology practitioners have access to as much contextual information as possible in order to effectively work alongside junior clients. Practitioners working outside of a sport organisation system, such as an academy setting which often provides cultural information and access to important people in athletes' lives, must find a way to access this information while maintaining congruency and confidentiality, but also remaining pragmatic. Consequently, practitioners must remain reflexive and reflective throughout consultancy and reformulate based on emerging information while staying grounded in their values.

Context

The Practitioner

At the outset of consultancy, I (the first author) was 29 years of age; I am a white, American, heterosexual female who has lived in England since 2012. I was two years into my British Psychological Society (BPS) Stage Two training through a professional doctorate programme to become a qualified sport and exercise psychologist. My philosophy of practice prioritises the holistic development of athletes inside and out of sport, understanding that performance, context, and mental health (and mental ill-health) are inextricably linked (e.g.,

Friesen & Orlick, 2010; Keyes, 2002). At the centre of my philosophy of practice is humanistic psychology, comprising values such as congruency, Rogerian facilitative psychological attitudes (e.g., unconditional positive regard, empathy, and congruence), an opposition to medicalisation and behaviourism, and humans' self-actualization tendency (see Rogers, 1980). I do not believe that rigid adherence to the traditional person-centred approach is applicable to each client and ascribe to Cain's (2010) model in which it is important to collaborate with clients and prioritise, above all else, what realistically works for each client. A person-centred approach can choose to employ or be influenced by other theories provided the practitioner remains grounded in the value framework of humanistic psychology (Cooper et al., 2013; House et al., 2017).

The Client

The client (Jake) is an 11-year-old male elite tennis player competing at national and international levels, ranking in the top twenty in his country. His parents contacted an external psychology service for support, however they were referred onto me through a mutual contact due to being over-booked. In our first phone call, Jake's father explained that Jake had developed "anger issues" which had become gradually worse, and they were impacting his ability to compete: he was being chastised by referees, yelling at parents, and storming off court. Jake's parents were concerned about this impacting Jake's ranking, and decided it was time to seek support. We organised a face-to-face meeting the following week in a mutually beneficial location.

Initial Reflections

While I was confident in working with boys of a similar age through my work in a football academy, I was conscious (and apprehensive) of my limited contextual knowledge of tennis. Additionally, early adolescence is a critical period of development (Rice & Dolgin, 2002; Wylleman & Reints, 2010; Vealy, 2007), and the pressure to succeed alongside

developing psycho-social and cognitive abilities (e.g. developing identity and growing abilities for introspection, to absorb others' opinions, and to identify one's own faults) often make this a difficult period for junior elite athletes (Flett & Hewitt, 2005; Laure et al., 2010; Ommundsen et al., 2006; Rice & Dolgin, 2002; Wylleman & Reints, 2010). I contemplated how my own experiences as an elite junior athlete might impact my practice; both positive and adverse experiences from my sporting days significantly impacted my own adolescent development and my development as a trainee sport psychologist. I determined to remain vigilant in my reflexivity and reflectiveness and consider emerging negative responses or perceived countertransference, but that I might use my own experiences as a resource rather than a drawback (Winstone & Gervis, 2006).

Finally, I reflected upon how Jake's parents sought a psychologist because they had a 'problem' to 'fix'. Currently, much of sport psychology support is engaged to correct a 'problem' or for 'crisis management' (e.g. Birrer et al., 2012; Swettenham et al., 2021), and I have often wrestled with this central tenet to sport psychology which stands in stark contrast to my philosophy of practice. Humanistic values encourage the development of human potential, and behaviour (such as anger) is often an expression of this growth, particularly in adolescence (Behr et al., 2013). Cognisant that throughout the early adolescent stage of development children are prone to anger or moodiness as they experience novel thoughts and emotions, I made the decision to view consultancy through the lens of constructively accompanying Jake through his development rather than "fixing" a behaviour problem (Behr et al., 2013; Rice & Dolgin, 2002; Wylleman & Reints, 2010).

The Case

Intake and Initial Needs Analysis

Before proceeding with consultancy, I met Jake and his parents at a café (with a more private area which can be reserved). Jake's parents spoke most of the time, with Jake

exhibiting shy behaviours such as avoiding eye contact and focusing heavily on eating his snack - it felt like he was ashamed or thought he might be in trouble. I began to worry that his parents would attempt to control the consultancy process - parents of elite adolescent athletes are frequently found to be controlling (Lauer et al., 2010; Sagar & Lavallee, 2010; Wadsworth, 2019), often due to the high stakes and investment associated with elite sport.

After the appropriate conversations surrounding sport psychology and confidentiality (e.g., the terms of my confidentiality agreement, which establishes sessions as confidential spaces (barring safety concerns) and encourage each client, regardless of age, to take responsibility for their capacity for growth (Behr et al., 2013), we discussed consultancy logistics. Jake's parents had extremely busy schedules, both working full-time and transporting Jake and his sister (who is also an athlete) throughout the country for training and competition. Due to their busy schedules, they did not want to be involved in the consultancy process.

Following this conversation, I asked Jake's parents to return to the main café to allow Jake and myself to have a one-on-one conversation. We engaged in small talk, and I asked what his thoughts were about consultancy. He explained that he does not like how he "gets too angry," and that it "freaks [him] out" that he struggles to control his emotions; he wanted to eliminate his feelings of anger and was enthusiastic about engaging in consultancy. I presented him with his contract, which we explored line by line, and asked him to take it home to reflect on. It was important that Jake feel he has autonomy in this situation, and actively chooses to engage with psychology (Joseph & Patterson. 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2018). Further, I viewed Jake as my client (rather than his parents), and it would be important for Jake to have a 'safe space' to discuss potentially difficult topics away from any perceived influence from his parents. After finalising the parents' contract details, we organised a formal intake session the following week.

When arriving at our first session, Jake seemed excited. After taking some time to consider the contract, he agreed that he would like to participate. I began with a simple open question which would allow Jake to take the lead: “tell me about yourself”. He began by detailing how his anger was impacting his tennis and relationships with family members; for example, he explained how referees would admonish him for bad behaviour, and how he reacts “meanly” to his parents and sister “just because,” then feels guilty afterward. We explored this briefly, with Jake becoming uncomfortable recollecting these events in too much detail. Conscious that I wanted to establish a relationship based outside of purely discussing difficulties or sport, I attempted to guide the conversation toward topics which would allow me to learn more about the person in front of me: “what do you like to do for fun?”, “tell me about yourself outside of tennis”, and “what do you think of school?”. When asked why he wanted to engage with sport psychology sessions, he gave three reasons: 1) Learning to stay calm, 2) Winning Wimbledon, and 3) Wanting to avoid disappointing people. When asked who he thinks he might disappoint, he answered “my mom, dad, friends...everyone in the world”.

Jake guided the conversation back to his anger ‘issues,’ expressing that they began one year ago, and that they became worse around people he knows. He spoke about how the social hierarchy at his school was ever-changing, and that he felt as if he was “popular”. He was often competitive with his “main” friend Matthew, who played football, and described what might be considered a typical adolescent male friendship filled with friendly competition, playing video games, and joking around at school. Jake was an accomplished student, making top marks in school and taking great pride in doing so. It was important for Jake that others have an awareness of his athletic and scholastic achievements, and he became annoyed when his peers were recognised for excellence when he felt they did not “deserve” it. Finally, Jake revealed that he often experienced intrusive thoughts during

competition such as “what happens if I don’t play well?”, “what happens if there’s someone better than me?”, and “what do I do if the racket strings break?” These often caused an emotional response (e.g. anger or sadness), but he was still enthusiastic about tennis.

Reflections and First Formulation

While many children desire to impress their parents and peers (Espelage, 2002), I worried that Jake framed his world in *not* disappointing people. Our discussions indicated a fear of failure and perfectionism, both of which are often developed over time due to internal and external sources such as perceptions, parental expectations, and environment (Flett & Hewitt, 2005; Laure et al., 2010; Sagar & Lavalley, 2010). While I recognised it was important to engage in work surrounding perfectionism and fear of failure, addressing client concerns is a priority (Cain, 2010). Further, I believed Jake would need time to build trust in the therapeutic relationship before undertaking broader development. In this case, Jake’s “anger” was both a priority and a phenomenon he was willing to discuss, and therefore an ideal starting place. Taking the flexibility afforded to practitioners in employing compatible theories and techniques while being grounded in humanistic values into consideration, I decided to integrate Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) into our sessions. ACT combines cognitive strategies and mindfulness to improve psychological flexibility, a lack of which has been linked to psychological distress (Chang & Hwang, 2017; Greco & Hayes, 2008; Hayes, & Storsahl, 2004). Often used with children, ACT had the potential to encourage Jake learn more about his emotions, provide tools for improved self-awareness, and allow him to focus on and learn about himself in the present rather than fixate on the future. The integration of a person-centred approach to ACT could aid in Jake’s development of a person, a core facet of humanistic psychology (e.g., Rowan & Glouberman, 2018).

Throughout our conversations, Jake had expressed being value-led; accordingly, we began by more clearly establishing his values. He chose five values from a set of cards:

education and learning, being thankful, happiness, social understanding (he rephrased as “caring for others”), and positivity. Through our conversations surrounding his values, we began to get to know one another, and I began to recognise all three expressions of perfectionism (see Flett & Hewitt, 2005). Jake was extremely focused on constantly bettering himself to the point where he demanded absolute perfection from himself (self-oriented perfectionism). He held others to the same standard of perfectionism (other-oriented perfectionism), to the point that if others did not reflect his values to a perfect standard, this was unacceptable to him. Finally, his perception that others demand perfection from him, and that he is somehow worth less if he fails to be perfect (socially prescribed perfectionism), seemed to be the most associated with his distress. Given parental influence is often an important factor in cases of perfectionism (Flett & Hewitt, 2005), I enquired as to whether they would allow me to be more involved outside of just sessions with Jake (e.g. more communication, parent sessions). Unfortunately, they did not want to pay for me to attend training sessions or conduct parent sessions and were not open to more frequent communication. While the client’s experience is the decisive factor (see Cooper et al., 2013), environmental factors heavily influence athletes’ development (Henriksen et al., 2010; Mills et al., 2012). Early adolescents often have trouble recalling and integrating events (Murty et al., 2016), and there was a likelihood that Jake’s socially prescribed perfectionism might alter how he explained events to me (Flett & Hewitt, 2005). I reflected on the importance of Rogerian facilitative attitudes in consultancy, and aimed to provide the empathy necessary to facilitate the growth of our therapeutic relationship. However, the lack of contextual information from Jake’s parents (about his home life or their relationship with Jake) or from his tennis environment made me uneasy.

After establishing Jake’s values and understanding the importance of letting values guide his life, we engaged with further ACT work. This included normalising emotions

(Sedley, 2015), practicing being present in sessions through observing his thoughts and experiences without employing judgemental language, and developing mindfulness tools to employ when stressors arose outside of sessions (e.g. taking a trip to his towel between points for a mindful breathing exercise). As Jake enjoyed schoolwork, I designed worksheets informed by Gordon & Borushok's (2019) guide for ACT work with children and teenagers. Jake's favourite worksheet, "Know your Hooks," (Appendix 1) allowed us to examine how certain "hooks" (stressors) impacted his thoughts, emotions, and behaviour. His hooks included a "family hook" (e.g. "my sister is being a moody teenager") and "red chimp" (e.g. "I start getting angry with the ref"). Identifying and naming these stressors aided in Jake's understanding of how and why different experiences impacted his thoughts and behaviour, which helped him recognise this in-the-moment and observe his emotions, accept that these emotions were normal and not representative of him as a person, and actively and choose his behaviour moving forward (toward his values). Upon reviewing our progress after six sessions (exclusive of intake), Jake and his parents reported less intense and frequent "outbursts", and Jake was beginning to feel confident that he could control his anger in mild-to moderately-stressful situations.

Despite this, while the presenting "issue" was anger, Jake's perfectionism was still pervasive and had the potential to inhibit his development. Further, I started to recognise signs of burnout, which has been associated with training loads (Cresswell & Eklind, 2006), perfectionism (Flett & Hewitt, 2005; Hill et al., 2010), and high achievement expectations from parents (Sorkkila et al., 2016), though the lack of contextual information made it extremely difficult to gain a full picture of what this might look like.

Ongoing Needs Analysis and Formulation Two

The consultancy process involves continual assessment and re-assessment, and it is the practitioner's responsibility to determine what 'works' at varying points in consultancy

(Cain, 2010; Poczwardowski & Sherman, 2011). While ACT can be extremely useful in normalising thoughts and feelings (Sedley, 2015), I began to suspect that Jake was learning to control his emotions rather than to accept them. For example, Jake explained feeling guilty when he latched onto a particular thought or feeling, noting that it was his job to control his reactions rather than accept emotions as a normal aspect of life that do not carry implications about him as a person. Further, I was beginning to understand that his identity was grounded in universal success and being the “perfect child” (rather than being tied purely to being an athlete) and that he lacked opportunities to explore failure or roles that involved no goal. I considered that it might be important to offer Jake a safe space to explore his identity, burnout, and perfectionism through a more traditional person-centred approach.

Subsequently, we began to further explore Jake’s relationship with tennis. Jake enjoyed tennis because it was exciting, it improved his health and fitness, and he loved winning. Yet despite this love of winning, Jake expressed that tennis caused him distress due to the many pressures which accompany competing at an elite level. First, he was not winning at the same rate he was used to, and he was feeling the emotional, social, and familial pressures of this drop in performance. Second, Jake was afraid of situations within tennis which made him angry (e.g. making mistakes), and conveyed that this was because his parents became disappointed when he expressed anger. Further, tennis prevented Jake from socialising or playing video games, and he “miss[ed] laughing” with friends. Jake blamed tennis for his lack of social relationships, which is consistent with literature on elite junior athletes, who are often at risk of identity foreclosure due to little time to explore other roles (Aquilina, 2013; Brewer et al., 1999).

The following week, Jake’s mother contacted me with news that Jake had been bullied in school for the entirety of the school year (we were now in March, 2020). We used our next session to explore the situation and his perceptions, thoughts, and feelings.

Surprisingly, Jake was open about his experiences, as if the fact that adults knew suddenly made it safe to speak about everything he was thinking and feeling. While he had spoken of his “friend”, Matthew, as a fellow “popular kid” who he was often competitive with, he revealed how this had become hostile over the last several months. Jake disclosed that Matthew had “turned my classmates against me,” utilising his social power (Eden, 1995) to manipulate many of their classmates to bully Jake.

Before engaging in any kind of synthesis of information, I reflected. My first ‘reflection’ can be described more as a rant about my sadness, frustration, and anger that Jake went through such an awful experience, and my failings as a practitioner for not recognising that this was happening. Rogers’ (1959) assertion that every theory (in this case my formulation) contains unknowns and error did little to aid in my acceptance of missing such an important aspect of Jake’s life. After this, I reflected upon the responsibility of being the psychologist of a bullied child; Jake was forming important and long-lasting views of himself, the world, and his place in the world (Rice & Dolgin, 2002; Sansone & Sansone, 2008), and I did not want to contribute negatively to this. Subsequently, I synthesised the last four months, the new information I had learned, and theory regarding bullying (e.g. Espelage, 2002; Sansone & Sansone, 2008). Jake was empathetic, kind, and introspective - essentially, he was the “shy awkward kid” who did not express traits often associated with social status in adolescent boys, such as toughness and aggressiveness (Eden, 1995). Jake had internalised that he was not ‘enough,’ which is often associated with bullied children and those displaying perfectionist tendencies (Flett & Hewitt, 2005; Sansone & Sansone, 2008). Being bullied can damage one’s ability to see oneself as desirable, capable, or effective, as the victim has learned that they are too weak or helpless to persevere (Sansone & Sansone, 2008). Through the bullying, limited opportunities for identity exploration, his perfectionist tendencies, and what I suspected as an emotionally closed-off home environment where emotional support is

often reserved for accomplishments, Jake had learned that he is only ‘good enough’ when he is perfect. Any mistake had the potential to diminish respect or love from important others or made him deserving of negative treatment. This invoked feelings of distress, which were often expressed or viewed as anger. Often, upon his reaction, his parents would express their disappointment in Jake’s ‘negative’ reaction rather than exploring his feelings; this reinforced his anxieties and insecurities, leading to the development of an emotion-focused coping style which often resulted in rumination and self-blame (Flett & Hewitt, 2005).

After discussing this with my supervisor, I continued to explore Jake’s identity in a person-centred manner and drew on Seligman’s (2011) character strengths-based approach to help Jake understand his strengths, learn to validate himself for what he does well outside of performing, and broaden his identity. Lockdown due to COVID-19 provided Jake his first break from tennis in years, respite from bullying at school, and allowed us to focus on his strengths while exploring his identity away from his typical responsibilities. While Jake had found it easy to establish his values, he struggled to conceptualise his strengths.

Consequently, we utilised the VIA Character Strengths (VIA 2020) framework to identify Jake’s character strengths. As I reflected on whether a character strengths survey might be congruent with my philosophy, I remembered a passage regarding a case in Seligman (2011), in which a practitioner describes the VIA survey as a “launch pad and foundation upon which to build clear reflection” (p. 37). In other words, this survey was not diagnosing or identifying an issue, but holding up a mirror to a client who was, at this point in time, only able to see himself in a negative light, and unable to take on positive feedback from others. For example, when speaking about positive feedback he received from parents, teachers, or coaches (which were based in logic and observable), Jake would respond that they “have to say that”. I concluded that a survey that Jake could perceived as unbiased might aid in his self-awareness and positive development (Behr et al., 2013). According to the survey, Jake’s strengths were

kindness, humility, teamwork, gratitude, and fairness (Appendix 2). I made a poster explaining his strengths, and how he might apply them to real life so that they were not merely theoretical. We used our sessions to explore this while also supporting his strengths and continued identity exploration.

The impact of Jake's bullying prompted his parents to become more involved with consultancy, and to allow me to speak with Jake's coach via Zoom. My hope that their involvement might allow me to better formulate with more contextual information, and work alongside Jake's parents on their high expectations and ability to compassionately listen to Jake, which I suspected had been impacting Jake's coping styles and perfectionism. Children and adolescents learn the majority of their behaviour and coping skills from parental influences, and this development can often become bi-directional, with parents being impacted by children's emotional regulation (Denham, 2007; Kiel & Kalmomiris, 2015). Jake had been learning from his parents' own coping skills to not be open about emotions, and from their reactions about his 'outbursts' that loved ones might be 'disappointed' when he expresses an emotion he might not fully understand. In my first (of two) parent sessions, we explored how modelling vulnerability can help Jake learn to express his emotions, and why this is important; further, I emphasised that when he does express his emotions (even when they are not the emotions they want to see), that they should talk about them in a compassionate and understanding manner rather than taking his reaction personally (Denham, 2007).

Soon after our first parent session, we organised a Zoom meeting with myself, Jake's coach, and Jake's parents, where I presented them with "Jake's Decoder Report" (Appendix 3), a document designed with Jake with the purpose of describing (to his parents and coach) his strengths and values, insights into Jake, sources of confidence and stress, and recommendations on how to approach certain situations. I emphasised the importance of

avoiding outcome-based activities or goals in order to limit opportunities for him to compare himself to outcomes, and I explained that Jake was reconstructing his view of himself to understand that he does not need to accomplish something in order to be capable or loved. As I interacted with the coach over Zoom in the following weeks, I learned that he was impulsive, passive-aggressive towards Jake's parents, and still frequently employed outcome-based goals – despite his agreement to do otherwise. For example, Jake was offered a sponsorship for a well-known tennis brand and needed written approval from this coach to confirm the sponsorship. According to Jake, his coach demanded he “prove [he] deserves this sponsorship,” and refused to sign the paperwork for several days. Having learned more about Jake's life outside of his own perceptions and self-narrative, I recognised that between his coach and home, he was experiencing all three potential origins of a fear of failure in athletes: punitive behaviour (coach), high expectations (parents, coach), and controlling behaviour (parents, coach) (Sagar & Lavalley, 2010).

In our second parent session, I learned that Jake's parents had begun to grow tired of the coach's behaviour and had been seeking alternative options. Along with Jake, they decided to move to an elite tennis academy that he had recently been invited to join. At the same time, Jake was becoming more confident in himself, particularly in his self-advocating skills, and he was looking forward to high school. Further, Jake was thriving with no tennis due to COVID-19 restrictions. He frequently conveyed enjoying time outside of tennis, and we discussed the idea of taking an official break from tennis (e.g. without Zoom training sessions or not returning immediately if in-person sessions resumed). His response, “seven years of tennis would be a waste [for my parents] if I took a break,” reflected research indicating children are often aware of the time, effort, and money parents invest in their children's athletic development, and that this recognition creates pressure to continue with the sport despite any hesitancy from the athlete (Lauer et al., 2010). This work coincided with

influential opportunities such as being funded by the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), his brand sponsorship, and acceptance to the elite tennis academy, all of which were sought-after opportunities which had the potential to fast-track Jake's advancement. It is my opinion that these factors undermined our identity exploration, particularly because COVID-19 restrictions began to lift, meaning outdoor tennis could resume. Additionally, parents of elite adolescent athletes often unintentionally pressure their children to succeed, but are unaware of how their behaviours, which they view as supportive, might be perceived by their children (Lauer et al., 2010). This was reflected in many aspects of Jake's life, such as his father building Jake a gym and tennis court over lockdown, the only time he has had a break from tennis in years. Jake was uncomfortable with me having a conversation with his parents regarding his potential over-involvement in tennis; therefore, I decided to continue our work exploring Jake's identity while developing relationships with his parents and new coaches in order to create a more psychologically informed environment to positively impact Jake's development.

Evaluating Effectiveness and Reflections

In line with my philosophy of practice, my priority was for *Jake* to feel satisfied with the effectiveness of consultancy (as opposed to his parents). However, establishing whether I was effective had the potential to pose some difficulty – I was wary that Jake might alter his feedback due to his socially prescribed perfectionism (Flett & Hewitt, 2005). Further, particularly because consultancy was still occurring, I considered that our positive relationship might pose as a barrier to honest feedback: Jake might worry that his “safe space” is at risk should he bring up negative feedback. To remedy this, I designed a session to examine my effectiveness while also practicing his advocacy skills. I emphasised that similar to how confidentiality means that sessions are a safe, non-judgemental space to explore his thoughts and feelings, they are also a safe space where any feedback given to myself will not

be taken in a judgemental or reactive way and will not negatively impact our relationship. This session fell during a time where we spoke often about advocating for himself with his parents, and I detailed how this could be a safe place to practice having tough conversations. The beginning of the session was awkward, with Jake being quite shy, however after about ten minutes he became confident in his new 'role'. Jake detailed that I had helped him to better understand his emotions, and that he felt more accepting of scary thoughts or emotions that emerged. He said he most enjoyed having a safe space to discuss matters which might "stress out" his parents or coaches, or even get him in trouble. Jake's one criticism was that I needed to work on was my "kid small-talk"...apparently, Fortnite is no longer a "cool" video game! Correspondingly, Jake's parents found consultancy to be effective and described Jake as "better at controlling his emotions than his teenage sister". While it was encouraging to hear that they saw an improvement, this comment reflected the importance they put on Jake's responsibility to regulate his emotions and reminded me that I was fighting an uphill battle should his parents still refuse to engage with support. The inability to address one of the most influential aspects of Jake's life in any substantial way limited my effectiveness as a practitioner.

Importantly, I am disappointed in my failure to recognise that Jake was being bullied. Having reflected upon this matter thoroughly, I think that a broader needs analysis or checking in with various contexts is important, particularly with younger clients. This is something I have gone back and forth on, as a core tenet of humanistic psychology is that the client's experience is the most important factor in formulation; however, this experience has taught me that philosophy must be balanced with practicality, especially with younger clients, who might be at higher risk or unable to disclose matters relating to their safety. Therefore, despite 'both' clients rating my effectiveness as high, I am aware of aspects of my

consultancy that must be improved upon, such as learning how to encourage parental involvement and to better explore the environments of young clients.

Despite this, I am encouraged by Jake's development, and can see how the last seven months of work have opened up the possibility for his future development. Further, upon reflection, I recognise that I successfully remained reflective and reflexive throughout consultancy, managing to apply tools which worked for my client while remaining grounded in humanistic values (House et al., 2018); this consistency, alongside the ability to apply relevant tools allowed Jake a safe space to explore his experiences and identity while also identifying and tackling any concerns he might have. Therefore, despite significant challenges limiting my ability to practice holistically, in one-on-one sessions I was able to practice in a manner congruent with my values, and Jake and his parents were positive about our work.

Summary

Client perception of experience is an integral factor to any humanistic approach to psychology. However, some clients, particularly adolescents, might struggle to relay their thoughts, emotions, and experiences in a manner that is reflective of their experience. Exploring client context (e.g., home, school, sport-specific environment) is important in designing and implementing effective consultancy, and consultants should emphasise this early on in the consultancy process to ensure the practitioner has the necessary information.

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Consultancy Case Study Two

Stereotype threat and golf performance: A holistic and reflective approach

Abstract

This case outlines my experience with an elite golfer who initially engaged in consultancy due to a 'lack of self-confidence'. It became quickly clear that the client was overtraining in an attempt to make up for his dip in confidence, which contributed to psychological and physical stress that exacerbated his experience. Consultancy was founded in a humanistic approach, with an emphasis on client autonomy and development; in line with this, formulation was co-constructed based on the client's needs. Initially, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy- (CBT) informed challenging of the client's overtraining experiences allowed me and the client to develop our therapeutic relationship and encourage buy-in to the psychology process. With the addition of a reflective practice intervention to improve self-awareness, we learned that stereotype threat and broader social and developmental factors influenced his guilt in not consistently performing to a perfect standard. While targeted interventions (e.g., challenging cycles, reflective practice) were employed, the majority of consultancy work occurred through reflective conversations in-sessions throughout consultancy. Throughout this case, I continue to learn how to address client needs through humanistic values of self-determination and personal progress.

Introduction

Golf presents a unique set of challenges (e.g., cognitive, performance, and social) to athletes intent on ‘mastering’ the game. Numerous cognitive demands associated with golf include cognitive load and maintaining focus despite consistent interruptions in play (e.g., Zienius et al., 2015). Importantly, golf presents unique social challenges; for example, golfers must be prepared for teammates (e.g., the caddy), competitors, and observers to influence their game in either positive or negative ways (e.g., Cuttrell, 1968). In a sporting culture rooted in classism and a number of additional methods of exclusion (e.g., Piggott et al., 2011), golf remains a sport engrained in self-comparison. With this in mind, professional golfers must step onto the golf course with a certain level of self-confidence to support their performance. Despite this, many golfers are unprepared for those aspects of golf often not considered whilst amateur players (e.g., how social demands impact performance), which might result in distress and negative coping mechanisms. Consequently, practitioners must be prepared to aid professional golfers in developing these skills while also maintaining and developing performance, and developing the athlete more broadly as a person.

Context

The Practitioner

At the outset of consultancy, I (the first author) was 31 years of age; I am a white, American, heterosexual female who has lived in England since 2012. I was four years into my British Psychological Society (BPS) Stage Two training through a professional doctorate programme to become a qualified sport and exercise psychologist. My philosophy of practice prioritises the holistic development of athletes inside and out of sport, understanding that performance, context, and mental health (and mental ill-health) are inextricably linked (e.g., Friesen & Orlick, 2010; Keyes, 2002). At the centre of my philosophy of practice is humanistic psychology, comprising values such as congruency, Rogerian facilitative

psychological attitudes, opposition to medicalisation and strict behaviourism, and that striving towards self-actualisation is an important aspect of the human experience that can facilitate well-being (Feltham, 2018; Rogers, 1980). While I do incorporate person-centred features such as unconditional positive regard, empathetic understanding, and congruence due to their alignment with humanistic values and the importance of these characteristics in self-determined human growth (e.g., Cooper et al., 2013), I do not operate in a strictly person-centred manner. From my point of view from a self-determined, humanistic perspective, it is imperative to collaborate with clients and prioritise, above all else, what realistically works for each client. In other words, humanistic psychology guides my values and interactions with clients, while client goals and practical needs guide the approach taken with each client, with each integrated approach being founded in humanistic principles.

The Client

Ethan, a 23-year-old male professional golfer recently promoted to a professional tour, contacted me through a mutual physiotherapist contact; he wanted to work on improving his 'self-belief'. Ethan, his parents, and myself met virtually via Teams to discuss consultancy and Ethan's needs. When discussing confidentiality, Ethan's parents disclosed that they were only involved in the meeting because they were his managers, and that they wanted no involvement in the consultancy process. Ethan noted that his chief concern was that despite working hard throughout COVID-19 lockdowns, now that he had begun competing again, his confidence dropped when stepping on the golf course. This had made him "extremely uptight" and "messed with" his golf, especially when competing. I explained my philosophy of practice, and we agreed to begin sessions the following week.

Reflections

Although excited to work one-on-one with a golfer, a sport with which I had a relatively strong background, I approached Ethan's parents' involvement in our initial meeting

with a degree of caution. During our consultation, Ethan's mother dominated the conversation, often interjecting on behalf of her son and not allowing him the opportunity to respond directly to my questions; rather than cause a rift, especially since virtual conversations might be tough for some (Oeppen et al., 2020), I attempted to allow for a natural flow of conversation and determined it would be best to get to know Ethan one-on-one during our sessions. As a result, I was conscious that the information provided might not paint an accurate picture of the presenting issues or the person I would be consulting with; I was also aware that this behaviour might be consistent and contribute to Ethan's case in some way. My previous experiences working with adolescents and in academy settings had taught me that intervening with athletes who have highly involved parents can pose challenges for several reasons, such as more individuals involved complicating the process and potential controlling behaviours of parents (e.g., Coles et al., 2020). I had never worked in a situation involving both an adult client and parents who were financially responsible for their psychology support. Only a thorough needs analysis and development of the therapeutic relationship could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the person, athlete, and their surrounding system.

Additionally, I considered the emphasis that Ethan and his parents placed on his strenuous efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in his promotion to the professional golf league. My own research (e.g., Whitcomb-Khan et al., 2021) and consultancy had taught me that although many athletes did the same, some experienced burnout and other negative repercussions (e.g., compromised well-being) as a consequence. I remained mindful of this possibility throughout intake and needs analysis.

Consultancy

Intake and Needs Analysis

During the first session, we began by discussing my philosophy; primarily, I explained my humanistic values-based approach, emphasising the importance of Ethan's agency in the consultancy process and for his growth as a person. I also explained that I operated within the Keyes (2014) model of mental health, detailing that I practice on the positive (mental health) continuum with a focus on social, psychological, and emotional well-being. I explained how this might inform our interactions; more specifically, I highlighted that our sessions would be collaborative and that we would co-create formulations drawn from relevant approaches depending on his needs and preferences. After discussing this, we discussed the contract and confidentiality; I had emailed Ethan the contract after our first meeting so that he had time to read through it and ask for outside opinions and/or come to our session with questions. He had no questions and was happy with the contract, primarily the confidentiality piece, and signed the contract.

As we progressed through the session, I learned that Ethan came from a well-off family who strived for perfection. He noted that he lives with his parents and dog, has a ("high achiever of a") sister, and sees his girlfriend two to three times a week. Ethan began playing rugby as a child and throughout his teenage years, took up golf "late" at 16 years old, and "progressed very quickly" in the game. Ethan described how his life revolved around golf and that gaining a "mental toolbox" would help his self-confidence. Ethan had recently returned from a week-long holiday, which he described as "tough" due to being unable to "even pick up a club" and "being forced to relax". This revelation prompted me to probe further into his relationship with golf, particularly since he and his parents had highlighted his unwavering "commitment" to the sport during the COVID-19 lockdown period. Ethan had been training for 12 hours a day (8am-8pm) and felt immense guilt when he was not able or did not want to train. Through further exploration, we collaboratively deduced that Ethan was stuck in two distinct but interrelated cycles: Overtraining and Guilt. Ethan's overtraining

cycle (Figure 1) appeared as his ‘default’ coping mechanism for stress; primarily, Ethan would engage in over-training, which would detract from his rest and recovery, leading to intrusive thoughts (e.g., “you’re not good enough”). When Ethan did recognise his physical and mental fatigue and attempt to make positive changes, he found himself in a ‘guilt’ cycle (Figure 2). We discovered that not engaging in over-training initiated feelings of guilt linked to feeling an intrinsic need to prove himself to others. For example, if he did not ‘over’ train, he felt so guilty that it interrupted his sleep. This impacted his abilities and focus the following day, leading to the same intrusive thoughts experienced in his overtraining cycle. Through a conversation drawing on Keyes’ (2014) model of mental health, I explained that while professional sport does require immense commitment, situations that detract from physical and/or mental health are important to address.

Reflections and First Formulation

Following the session, I was pleased that we had already begun to collaborate on exploring Ethan’s experiences so early. However, while Ethan was forthcoming about his experiences in a logical sense, he seemed to lack self-awareness of the full spectrum of his experiences (e.g., thoughts and emotions); for example, he was able to describe in great detail how events played out but was not able to articulate his thoughts or emotions in those scenarios. I hypothesised that he might have difficulty accessing his emotions, although this was not explicitly explored in our session. Despite only one cycle being named for ‘guilt’, I began to speculate that both cycles could be driven by guilt: Ethan’s over-training cycle was a guilt-avoidance tactic, while his guilt cycle involved feeling the guilt and experiencing reactions based on that experience. Importantly, personal narratives surrounding guilt can play an important role in peoples’ behaviours (Baumeister et al., 2011). More specifically, people who associate guilt with certain behaviours (e.g., training or not training) are more likely to attempt to control these behaviours, and their narratives often serve as ‘templates’ to

guide future behaviour; this experience is especially influential in situations with conflicting needs and desires (e.g., needing rest vs. needing to perform), since they provide an ‘easy’ mechanism for resolving internal conflict (Baumeister et al., 2011). It is unsurprising that Ethan had relied on these two ‘templates’ to guide his behaviour. Given that he was nearing the end of his season, I was mindful of avoiding disruption to his performance; however, due to the harmful nature of his cycles, it was important to prioritise addressing these as well as create a safe space for him to learn how to discuss his experiences, thoughts, and emotions. Additionally, because his cycles were potentially founded in guilt, I was aware that the foundation of these coping mechanisms would need further exploration throughout the upcoming off-season.

First Intervention: Break the Cycle

Exploring Negative Automatic Thoughts

While this assumption would take further investigation, there was mounting evidence that Ethan was experiencing Negative Automatic Thoughts (NATs) as a result of dysfunctional assumptions founded in core beliefs about himself and the world around him (e.g., Westbrook et al., 2011), and that guilt appeared to be a foundational element of his difficulties. While my philosophy of practice tends towards addressing core beliefs, it was important to avoid immediately engaging with these for multiple reasons. First, Ethan’s cycles were causing him immediate, visible distress (e.g., lack of sleep, over-training induced muscle strains, stress), and interrupting these cycles could be an easy way to both help him as well as encourage buy-in to the psychology process. Secondly, core beliefs often take much longer to access and explore due to the difficulty surrounding accessing and understanding them; while some CBT texts say that the psychologist should ‘infer’ core beliefs to help the client (e.g., Westbrook et al., 2011), this is not in line with my philosophy of practice. Considering a chief aim and benefit of humanistic psychology is empowering the individual

(e.g., Dryden, 2013), a central component of this process-oriented work is for clients to work towards this through the therapeutic relationship, self-determination, and self-exploration over time (e.g., House et al., 2018). While I had suspicions that his cycles were heavily related to core beliefs surrounding guilt, potentially related to his childhood and family dynamics, it was important from a philosophical and self-determination perspective for him to discover these factors (e.g., House et al., 2018; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Finally, Ethan was in the final weeks of his season, and even if he managed to discover his core beliefs quickly, his primary goal was to improve his standing by the end of the season; therefore, addressing his cycle would provide more accessible, specific, easier changes (e.g., Westbrook et al., 2011) that could directly impact his performance and well-being while also allowing us the opportunity to build the trust and the therapeutic relationship.

Implementing Gratitude Practice

In our second session, I introduced Ethan to gratitude practice; this intervention is situated within positive psychology, which has humanistic roots and highlights the importance of humans' need for growth and well-being. While 'gratitude' has many definitions, the conceptualisation I use in my work is "a life orientation toward noticing and appreciating the positive in the world" (Chen, 2018, p. 130). Additional definitions focus on the interpersonal nature of gratitude, and are useful to incorporate in terms of well-being (e.g., McCullough et al., 2002). Gratitude practice, which takes many forms, can have significant positive effects on physical (e.g., sleep quality, heart rate variability; Boggiss et al., 2022) and mental (e.g., emotions, coping strategies, well-being; Chen, 2018; Emmons & Stern, 2013) health outcomes. Gratitude can improve an individual's awareness of positive input and improve emotional regulation, and is often an effective complimentary intervention (Emmons & Stern, 2013). With this in mind, I introduced Ethan to a daily gratitude journal. He agreed that he would write three things at the end of each day that he was grateful for,

ranging from basic (e.g., nice weather) to something meaningful, depending on his experiences on the given day.

Intervention of Training Plan

Since Ethan expressed that the overtraining cycle was causing him the most distress, we decided to address this first. We determined that implementing specific training hours and one day of rest per week might be the most effective approach. Ethan thought this had the potential to trigger his guilt cycle, but that being given ‘permission’ to rest helped him overcome this. Subsequently, Ethan found it relatively easy to work through his overtraining cycle, and through further investigation, we continued to collect evidence that guilt was the true foundation of both cycles. More specifically, our in-session discussions challenging NATs repeatedly lead to conversations exploring Ethan’s beliefs surrounding an inability to prove himself and “letting people down”. We discussed the potential meaning behind his fear of letting people down. He was never able to articulate who the “people” he was afraid of letting down were; he never had intrusive thoughts about letting himself down. This further indicated that Ethan’s NATs were founded in guilt, as guilt is an other-oriented construct evolved to maintain social bonds (e.g., Julle-Daniere et al., 2020). It was important to collect continuous evidence that directly challenged the overtraining cycle (e.g., resting can lead to better performance). Alongside this, Ethan was collecting evidence that challenged his guilt cycle as well: resting his body and mind had not resulted in decreased scores, so he had no ‘reason’ to feel guilty for resting; we also frequently challenged the assumption that not overtraining diminished his self-worth.

During these discussions, Ethan disclosed that he encountered intrusive negative thoughts and overtrained during his rugby endeavours, signifying that this cycle was more closely linked to his sense of self as a person, rather than a golf-specific phenomenon. I started to link this to his observations about needing to prove himself to those around him.

While individual athletes often have more self-esteem than athletes who play team sports (e.g., Sagat et al., 2021), one might theorise that because Ethan was preoccupied with others' opinions, moving from a life of team sports (linked to lower self-esteem) to an individual sport where he was being watched as an individual instead of a unit, accompanied by being surrounded by other athletes who are potentially higher in self-confidence after a life spent playing golf, that this experience would interact with whatever core beliefs he was experiencing and lead to compromised self-confidence.

Introducing Reflection

While focusing on his cycles, it was important to introduce exercises and education surrounding self-awareness without overwhelming Ethan in order to lay the foundation for future development. Self-awareness is a key factor in learning and considering how one's own experiences and values impact their emotions, thoughts, and behaviours, and for me, had become an integral addition to the consultancy process (e.g., Peel et al., 2013; Knowles et al., 2005; Stover et al., 2011). Reflective practice also has benefits such as improved self-confidence (Faull & Cropley, 2009) and self-awareness (e.g., Huntley, 2023). Because Ethan already used an unstructured journal at the end of each day, we agreed that more structured reflective practice (answering questions based on Gibbs, 1988) might produce meaningful reflection. He brought reflections he wanted to share to our sessions, which we further explored. One important reflection related to his views on playing partners. He realised that he was constantly comparing himself to others, and that he always 'judges' other players' vernacular, looks, clothing, and how they carry themselves in an attempt to measure himself against them. He noted that he always talks himself into thinking they are better than him, saying "you're going to be a slug". Similarly, Ethan determined that he "grows when someone turns up a shambles". After further discussion, we discovered that Ethan always related his performance to others, significantly influencing his level of play as a result of how

‘good’ he perceives others to be. We linked this to his self-belief, and discussed how golf has many social challenges (Cuttrell, 1968) on top of the performance, cognitive, and behavioural challenges (e.g., Singer, 1988). Ethan was experiencing stereotype threat by making assumptions based on his own stereotypes about those around him. Stereotype threats can create an increased cognitive load as well as take away from the task at hand, and can therefore have a negative effect on performance (Croizet et al., 2012). Cognitive resources are limited and can be overwhelmed by too much information or too many competing demands (Wagstaff & Gilmore, 2018). We engaged in education and conversation surrounding cognitive load using the panic zone model often used in sport settings (Figure 3) in an attempt to help Ethan better understand why he started panicking when he was around others he perceived to be better golfers, when he started feeling a negative emotion, and when he started to feel mentally fatigued. This helped him better understand, and subsequently accept, that his feelings were ‘normal’ for the stress and development he was engaged with.

Ethan's self-awareness developed progressively with each passing week as he gradually collected more evidence against his cycles and gave himself permission to break them. Despite making strides, Ethan was apprehensive about being his authentic, competitive self, still finding himself comparing his performance to others. He determined to ‘practice’ not caring about the opinions of others. In his last tournament of the season, Ethan described turning a “B minus game into a B plus” as a result of intentionally focusing on himself and his game rather than his partners, constantly reminding himself “who knows if they’re any good?”.

When reflecting on this first stage of formulation, I thought about how I frequently contemplated how to strike the balance between motivating but not ‘over’-validating Ethan. As an athlete, he was one of the most willing people I had consulted with when it came to learning about himself, becoming self-aware, and improving. However, I was worried that

this came from a place of low self-belief, and he needed to learn how to self-affirm rather than look to others for self-confidence or affirmations that he is good. Ethan needed to learn how to trust himself, and I needed to walk a fine line to ensure that I encouraged rather than became a barrier to this. I acknowledged the difficult balance between supporting Ethan's basic psychological needs and being a crutch and determined that a focus on my philosophy, namely unconditional positive regard and an emphasis on collaboration, was critical to encourage Ethan's self-exploration.

Ongoing Re-Formulation and Intervention: Learn Yourself

Before the holiday break, Ethan and I engaged in dialogue about utilising the off-season as an opportune time for self-reflection and introspection, to gain deeper self-awareness and to identify long-term underlying patterns and challenges that perpetuate his current cycles. In our first session following the holidays, Ethan approached our session preoccupied with concepts such as "external judgement," "belonging," and "family expectations". He was troubled that he felt (and always had) that his family was difficult to engage with; we discussed how speaking about one's parents and family does not mean you do not love them, and that everyone, including parents, bring their own past experiences and bias to parenting and are often trying to do the best they can. Ethan considered this, and was subsequently happy to exploring his experiences within his family. He discussed that his mother and sister frequently "talked over" him and his ideas and frequently sought to prove him wrong or make fun of him. This pattern had been prevalent since Ethan's childhood, leaving him with the impression that his thoughts, ideas, and beliefs were always subject to scrutiny and needed to be without flaw to be voiced in the first place. Alongside this, Ethan's father often exemplified a constant pursuit of perfection, thereby fostering an impossible search for the elusive concept of perfection. Ethan expressed what he described as a "core memory" where his father was building a spice rack in their kitchen and muttered "it needs to

be perfect, son”, followed with “I’ll just ‘know’ if it’s not perfect”. This upbringing, characterized by constant questioning and an unrealistic search for some vague version of perfection, created a void of self-confidence within Ethan, leading him to seek external validation for his actions and decisions. Once he became aware of these experiences, he was unable to ignore them and noticed them more frequently, which was extremely validating to his feelings.

I recognised that Ethan’s fear of judgement might have arisen from parents who psychologically managed their children and presented a vague narrative of perfection to uphold, therefore impeding upon their children’s needs for autonomy and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Soerens & Vansteenkiste, 2010). More specifically, Ethan’s development surrounding autonomy was consistently obstructed by his mother and sister’s constant interference and interruption, his parents’ inability to take his perspective(s) or encourage Ethan to discover and use his unique voice, and consistent use of controlling language (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2017). Additionally, relatedness was a concept he had never experienced in a family who struggled to show warmth and concern at an interpersonal level; rather, they attempted to demonstrate these important characteristics through investing resources in their children (e.g., time, money), treating them as commodities rather than people. While this was likely not their goal, Ethan’s parents’ inability to provide basic psychological needs had an impact on how he viewed himself. More specifically, he viewed himself primarily in relation to other people or a goal and struggled to develop self-esteem and engage with his authentic self (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Importantly, similar environments have been linked to guilt when the child inevitably cannot meet parental expectations (Soerens & Vansteenkiste, 2010).

We recognized the importance of Ethan cultivating a deeper sense of self-awareness and becoming more comfortable in his own skin, including building trust in himself, reducing his preoccupation with others, and adopting a more intentional approach to his behaviour.

Self-determination is an integral factor in self-actualisation (e.g., House et al., 2018), and key to developing the self-confidence, self-efficacy, and authenticity that Ethan desired (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2017). In this regard, we developed activities to support this process. Firstly, given that Ethan had already been engaging in gratitude journaling and had expressed comfort with and enjoyed this practice, we explored the feasibility of Ethan practicing gratitude with someone he trusts; this had the potential to improve social support (e.g., Emmons & Stern, 2013) as well as address Ethan's psychological need for support. We agreed that he could initiate a conversation with his father by expressing appreciation for one thing he was grateful for; Ethan was surprised when his father happily (but "awkwardly") engaged in this exercise, and they continued to do this regularly. Secondly, we devised an activity that would allow Ethan to practice "backing himself" in a non-golf-related activity where he could experience this with no pressure. After considering several options, we ultimately settled on goal kicks, either individually or with friends, as an ideal platform to develop this skill, again allowing him low-risk opportunities to repair his sense of self-belief (e.g., Johnson, 2012). This would enable him to integrate and apply the insights he had gained from sessions into his daily life, thereby fostering sustained personal growth and development. While these small interventions were positive steps towards Ethan gaining confidence in himself, the 'real' work was done through our conversations in sessions; Ethan was learning through a safe space to discover and articulate his opinions, reflect upon them, and grow, and often expressed that he enjoyed doing so. Humanistic psychology emphasises that a positive therapeutic relationship that prioritises self-exploration and self-determination is crucial in client empowerment and self-actualisation (e.g., House et al., 2018).

After six weeks of 'getting to know himself' and practicing trusting himself, Ethan competed in a small tournament abroad. This was a good time to test whether his trust in himself, which he maintained had improved greatly, would transfer to golf. In his session

after the tournament, Ethan expressed that he was more comfortable on the course sooner and “backed” himself much more. He did encounter validation seeking when being assigned to a “slow group” and found himself rushing his shots so that others would not think he was slow. Despite this, Ethan expressed that he experienced significantly more self-belief, even thinking “I can beat everyone here” rather than “shit, he looks really good”. However, his focus on self-belief lead him to “forget the technical bit”, and Ethan found himself struggling to keep his swing consistent. He was initially upset over this; however, we reflected on his improved self-belief and engaged in a conversation about non-linear development. Ethan was interested in and comforted by the idea that when developing parts of himself, others might struggle as his cognitive load is challenged, but how this would improve over time with atomisation (e.g., Wei et al., 2013). We decided to continue his journey towards getting to know and trust his own thoughts and instincts while entering smaller tournaments.

Reflections and Evaluating Effectiveness

When considering how to monitor my effectiveness throughout consultancy, I contemplated how this might be perceived by Ethan. Consistent monitoring and feedback has the potential to interfere with an individual’s autonomy and agency, which are essential in authentic engagement with consultancy (e.g., Tudor, 2018). Additionally, I considered how Ethan consistently providing feedback might interfere with the development of our therapeutic relationship; while my performance is important, a perceived focus on this would be incongruent with my humanistic focus on the person and not the performer; this perceived incongruence would likely interfere with our therapeutic relationship. Ethan and I engaged in a brief conversation in our second session about how he would like to provide feedback. I described how I wanted to ensure I was providing the services he needed, that his experiences as a client were my priority, and that continued development is essential to ensuring this. I described how there were many ways we could engage with feedback if he were comfortable

(e.g., surveys, frequent casual check-ins, more formal interviews, etc.), and asked what his thoughts were; providing the client the autonomy to determine if and/or how they provide feedback can aid, rather than inhibit, intervention.

Ethan considered this and determined that while he was not comfortable expressing feedback throughout consultancy, that he would like to engage in an ‘end of year’ session before the holidays to examine our time together if this was done in a casual manner. He also agreed that if he were uncomfortable or unhappy with the direction of consultancy, he would ‘speak up’ either in session or inform me via WhatsApp message if it were something he remembered after the session. Additionally, we agreed that we would agree a time for our next feedback session in our ‘end of year’ session. In this session, I asked Ethan a series of questions. When asked whether he felt like I created an environment that felt both confidential and safe, Ethan relayed that he felt he was able to open up very quickly with me and that he was surprised with this. He appreciated me drawing firm contractual boundaries with his parents and prioritising him as the client, and he never considered that confidentiality might be breached. Additionally, he again noted his surprise at how quickly he became comfortable with talking about his experiences; this provoked an interesting realisation from Ethan that he did not have many safe people to engage with in conversations, and a goal that he would try to have deeper conversations with his girlfriend over the holidays. When asked whether he felt he was positively working toward accomplishing his goal of improving his ‘self-belief,’ Ethan articulated that despite having very few tournaments left in the season when we began working together, he believed his golf-related self-belief had started to improve. Additionally, he said his self-belief had begun to grow more broadly, a key factor in humanistic growth. When asked if there was anything else he would like to share about consultancy, he just thanked me for the last several months.

Overall, I am pleased with the progression of Ethan's case so far, and am excited to see his continued development as a person and performer. Ethan continued to demonstrate personal and performance growth, and I felt as if we had engaged in a collaborative therapeutic relationship that allowed him the space to learn and grow. Ethan consistently spoke about his "excitement" surrounding improving, as well as his interest in the "new world" he observed as his self-awareness grew.

Additionally, I consistently acted within the principles of my philosophy of practice, engaged with relevant literature to support the decisions made throughout consultancy, and did my best to provide a collaborative and trusting relationship where Ethan was empowered to develop his self-worth, self-awareness, and learn to 'back himself'. We are due for our next feedback session in about a month after engaging with pre-season tournaments, where we will both have a reflective conversation surrounding his consultancy experience and discuss our plans for development over the upcoming season.

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Figures

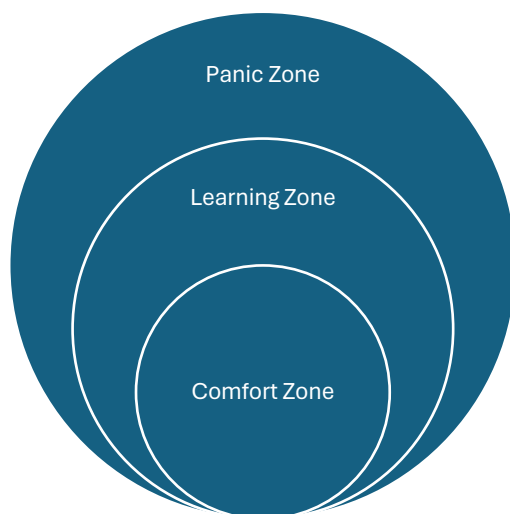
Figure 1: Ethan’s Overtraining Cycle



Figure 2: Ethan's Guilt Cycle



Figure 3: Comfort Zone Model



Consultancy Case Study Three

A self-compassion intervention to improve netball performance

Abstract

The present case outlines consultancy with an elite netball player who engaged with consultancy due recent struggles with her shooting performance and a resulting lack of on-court confidence. Importantly, this was my first experience engaging in consultancy knowing that it would be time limited. In order to ensure efficient and appropriate service, after intake and initial reflections, I employed self-compassion and perfectionism psychometrics to better inform needs analysis, formulation, and intervention. Based on this and discussions with the client, we engaged in a version of Mosewich et al's (2013) self-compassion intervention altered to fit my own philosophy of practice and client needs. I engage in a handover session with the client's new, university-based sport and exercise psychologist at the end of consultancy. I critically discuss and reflect upon this consultancy experience with a focus on applying humanistic values to time-based consultancy.

Introduction

The concept of self-compassion, or extending a non-judgmental and kind attitude towards oneself instead of being self-critical (Neff, 2003a), is seemingly at odds with the hyper-competitive, outcome-reliant nature of elite sport where athletes often assume that meeting competitive demands requires considerable self-criticism *instead of* self-compassion (Ferguson et al., 2015). Despite this, self-criticism is frequently reported as having a negative impact on factors such as performance and well-being (e.g., Ferguson et al., 2015), while self-compassion often can contribute to well-being and adaptive responses related to performance (e.g., perseverance, positive emotions, and increased mastery goal orientation; e.g., Frenzt et al., 2019; Neff et al., 2007; Neff & McGehee, 2010). Self-criticism can often be accompanied by self-critical rumination (e.g., Fearn et al., 2022), which contributes to stress and decreased performance (e.g., Mosewich et al., 2013). Women tend to experience lower self-compassion than men (e.g., Neff, 2003a) and higher rumination (e.g., Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 1999), which can be exacerbated with performance or life stress (e.g., Frenzt et al., 2020). Sport psychology practitioners should be prepared to foster self-compassion in their athletes, particularly those who are more prone to self-critical rumination, experiencing stressful events, require effective mechanisms to manage emotional coping, or to aide in performance more broadly.

Context

The Practitioner

At the outset of consultancy, I (the first author) was 33 years of age; I am a white, American, heterosexual female who has lived in England since 2012. I was four years into my British Psychological Society (BPS) Stage Two training through a professional doctorate programme to become a qualified sport and exercise psychologist. My philosophy of practice prioritises the holistic development of athletes inside and out of sport, understanding that

performance, context, and mental health (and mental ill-health) are inextricably linked (e.g., Friesen & Orlick, 2010; Keyes, 2002). At the centre of my philosophy of practice is humanistic psychology, comprising values such as congruency, Rogerian facilitative psychological attitudes, opposition to medicalisation and strict behaviourism, and that striving towards self-actualisation is an important aspect of the human experience that can facilitate well-being (Feltham, 2018; Rogers, 1980). While I do incorporate person-centred features such as unconditional positive regard, empathetic understanding, and congruence due to their alignment with humanistic values and the importance of these characteristics in self-determined human growth (e.g., House et al., 2018), I do not operate in a strictly person-centred manner. From my point of view from a self-determined, humanistic perspective, it is imperative to collaborate with clients and prioritise, above all else, what realistically works for each client. In other words, humanistic psychology guides my values and interactions with clients, while client goals and practical needs guide the approach taken with each client, with each integrated approach being founded in humanistic principles.

The Client

In April 2023, I was contacted by the mother of Lucy, an 18-year-old netball player (goal shooter) who played for the England National Team and a professional U21 team in the Northwest of England. Lucy was experiencing “issues” with her shooting performance, and her mother noted that the stress resulting from her drop in performance was impacting her both on and off the court. Lucy’s mother did not provide much context, nor attempt to provide immediate theories or solutions; interestingly, she advocated for Lucy’s autonomy, noting that Lucy was independent and trustworthy, and readily agreed that the decision whether to engage and continue with sessions would rest upon Lucy. Context provided by Lucy’s mother included that she had worked on “similar issues” with a “mental coach” when

she was 14 years old, and that while this improved her performance for the initial tournament she needed to perform well in, these improvements were short-term. Additionally, Lucy's mother stated that for numerous reasons (e.g., finances, timing before university), we would be limited to between six and eight sessions.

Reflections

Two primary reflections arose from my conversation with Lucy's mother. First, while I always ask the question before and/or during intake about timing and number of sessions and attempt to facilitate positive change as efficiently as possible, I have never initiated consultancy knowing I was time-limited with sessions. Time limits can constrain person-centred approaches to psychology (e.g., House, 1997). For example, time-limited consultancy often requires the consultant to take a more directive approach, which can undermine the client's autonomy, choice, and responsibility that are integral to the broader aims of humanistic psychology of self-awareness and self-actualisation (e.g., De Geest & Meganck, 2019; Tudor, 2018). Similarly, time-limited consultancies are thought to have more 'superficial' impacts (e.g., De Geest & Meganck, 2019) rather than the deep self-exploration essential for self-actualisation.

I found this difficult to wrap my head around from a philosophical perspective; my own views on how individuals live and change as whole people mean that I often design holistic interventions that explore the person, rather than a specific problem that might be isolated or 'taken outside' of the person. I do not believe that one can isolate the problem from the person, and the goal of humanistic approaches is to develop the whole self rather the self in relation to environmental or social mastery (e.g., Rowan & Glouberman, 2018). On the other hand, time-limited therapies often require more problem- than human-focused interventions (e.g., House, 1997). Six or seven sessions might not be enough time to develop the trust necessary to explore one's inner self – in fact, it is likely only enough to 'draw

attention' to what the client perceives as important and begin to facilitate change (House, 1997). Accordingly, I drew upon House's (1997) assertions that in time-limited counselling with a humanistic foundation, despite constraints to deeper self-exploration, clients can gain a great deal of value from insights gained from the "humanistic educative function;" these insights can aide in their development as human beings even after sessions have finished (p. 258). I aimed to develop the therapeutic relationship as much as feasible through empathy, authenticity, openness, honesty, and a non-judgemental approach to facilitate self-exploration that might continue when consultancy comes to an end (Association of Humanistic Psychology Practitioners, 2009).

Lucy's mother seemingly providing her autonomy and trust, a rare occurrence in my own experience working with adolescent athletes, and a reflection on what I sensed might be many external pressures as a result of Lucy's stage in life (e.g., exams, university). While the information from Lucy's mother was useful in providing context, I wanted to ensure our intake session touched on these topics without being over-directive and allow Lucy to take control and co-determine the course of our work together (e.g., Tudor, 2018).

The Case

Intake and Needs Analysis

During our intake session, Lucy portrayed herself as confident and able to articulate her feelings and experiences well. She was the middle child of three siblings and characterised her relationships with her parents and siblings as positive and supportive. It became clear that Lucy spent a great deal of time ruminating (e.g., maladaptive, repetitive, continuous negative thinking; Fearn et al., 2022; Neff et al., 2005), rather than reflecting (e.g., purposeful questioning of the whole self that translates to learning and making sense of ourselves and the world; Knowles et al., 2014), on what she considered "issues". She articulated constantly "overthinking" both on the court and after training and games, often about "mistakes"; these

intensely self-critical ruminations were disproportionate to her perceived mistakes. For example, over-thinking before taking shots in games (despite performing well in training) lead to Lucy consistently avoiding shooting by passing the ball to teammates instead; this frequently lead to post-game ruminations involving intense criticisms of her 'mistakes' accompanied by worries that coaches and scouts had begun to believe she could or would not shoot. Alongside this, Lucy described consistently playing ahead of her own age group, which she felt resulted in additional pressure to succeed and perceptions that she under-performs. When asked if she would describe herself as a perfectionist, Lucy noted that she criticised herself if she did not view her performance as "up to [her] standards". She did not describe these thoughts as intrusive, rather she described the experience as actively "thinking about what went wrong, constantly," with the answer always being herself. I asked if she ever thought about what went right, and she said "no, never".

Further, Lucy was considering switching professional teams due to potential relocation for university, and experienced numerous additional sport- and school-related stressors to which she applied her self-critical rumination. Despite sharing several aspects of life that she was "stressed" about, Lucy was consistently hard on herself in the session for not performing at 100% in each sphere of her life, 100% of the time. To provide her (and myself) context of the many "stressful" events co-occurring in her life, and in an attempt to normalise the stress surrounding this life stage, I asked Lucy, to list the stress-points weighing upon her. Her list consisted of: 1) "looming" exams, 2) exam scores and how this will impact her life, 3) choosing a university based on these scores, 4) choosing a club based on university acceptance/choice as well as which club(s) would accept her 5) contract guesswork for choosing a club, 6) shooting performance, 7) self-confidence, 8) self-imposed pressure, 9) not enough time for school and training, and 10) the "England situation" (the desire to make the squad).

Through discussion, it became clear to both of us that there were many factors influencing her stress levels, but that she did not realise just how many: “perhaps I haven’t noticed that it’s all of this...it’s been floating through my head though”. Lucy explained that she was aware that she is hard on herself, though she had determined that she “should be still be able to deal with the pressure!”, indicating that despite evidence of numerous stressful elements in her life alongside self-knowledge that she is hard on herself, she was unable to offer herself compassion. This self-criticism was consistent throughout our conversations regardless of topic. Additionally, Lucy continuously returned to the topic of “fixing” her over-thinking. After a discussion about Lucy’s goals and priorities for consultancy, it became obvious that while on one hand she was there for her shooting performance, her true motivation and needs for engaging in consultancy centred around her self-critical rumination.

Reflections and Needs Analysis Summary

Clearly, Lucy’s tendency towards self-criticism, and potentially low self-compassion, were causing wide-ranging stress within her life; yet despite knowing she was hard on herself, she framed the experience this as a necessary aspect of being an elite performer rather than a lack of compassion towards herself, a common experience for athletes (e.g., Ferguson et al., 2015). Self-compassion is a multi-faceted construct that entails multiple characteristics: “being kind and understanding toward oneself in instances of pain or failure rather than being harshly self-critical; perceiving one’s experiences as part of the larger human experience rather than seeing them as isolating; and holding painful thoughts and feelings in mindful awareness rather than over-identifying with them” (Neff, 2003a, p. 224). Lack of self-compassion has been negatively linked to fear of failure, shame proneness, and fear of negative evaluation in girls aged 13 through 18 years old, and self-compassion interventions

have been helpful in improving issues surrounding impaired self-evaluative thoughts and behaviours (Mosewich et al., 2011; Mosewich et al., 2013).

Moreover, Lucy's self-critical rumination appeared to be linked to perfectionism: if she did not perform and/or present as performing perfectly, her ruminations heavily focused on this perceived failure. Not only was Lucy consistently criticising herself, she also held herself to an impossible standard. Low levels of self-compassion have been significantly associated with high levels of self-oriented perfectionism as well as perfectionistic automatic thoughts and self-presentation (Flett et al., 2023), meaning that low self-compassion can impact both thoughts surrounding perfectionism, the need to present as perfect to others, and over-thinking surrounding these factors. These factors were compounded by the fact that Lucy had been comparing herself to athletes who were older and ahead in psychological, social, physical, and skill development, which can be a struggle for younger athletes if they are not met with appropriate levels of support for their age, stage, and situation (e.g., social integration, constructive feedback from coaches; Goldman et al., 2022). Importantly, Lucy described how "chaotic over-thinking" was a primary source of overwhelm and stress; Lucy described herself as a logical person who thrives with order. Our conversations lead me to believe that the "chaotic" nature of Lucy's rumination, rather than purely the self-critical nature accompanied by low self-compassion, could be an important facet of her issue. As mentioned, self-compassion can be a positive countermeasure for women experiencing self-criticism (Neff, 2003b); additionally, self-compassion is negatively related to rumination (Neff et al., 2007). Interestingly, self-critical rumination has been found to be the mediator between perfectionism and low self-esteem, which has been linked consistently to self-compassion (e.g., Fearn et al., 2022; Neff, 2011).

When reflecting on this, I had a difficult time working through that I would likely not have the time to delve into the "why" behind of Lucy's experiences; six to eight sessions

spread unevenly throughout the next several months would likely not be conducive to the type of self-exploration that is the cornerstone of my philosophy of practice (e.g., House, 1997). Additionally, exploring underlying mechanisms often drives clients towards the self-awareness and self-acceptance that allow them to conceptualise their experiences and aides in the co-construction of solutions rather than clients being directed by a psychologist (e.g., Rowan & Glouberman, 2018). From my perspective, focusing on Lucy's self-critical rumination and improving her self-compassion would improve her self-awareness, a fundamental aspect of humanistic psychology that would endure past our consultancy (e.g., Rowan & Glouberman, 2018). Additionally, a more balanced, compassionate self-understanding could aid Lucy in becoming more self-compassionate rather than self-critical (e.g., Frenzt et al., 2020), with the potential to improve her shooting performance by minimising self-critical rumination during and after play (e.g., Parker et al., 2024). I shared these reflections with Lucy, and we discussed her earlier conceptualisations that her self-critical rumination was causing her the most stress and was the "issue" she most wanted to "solve". She asserted that she would like to prioritise this in our sessions together, removing the potential need to balance a directive approach with my humanistic philosophy.

Designing and Implementing the Intervention

Lucy was experiencing low self-compassion accompanied by high levels of self-critical rumination and high perfectionism, though the exact relationship between these was unknown. Despite the unknown relationship in this specific situation, rumination is often the intermediary between perfectionism and self-compassion (Fearn et al., 2022;), and self-critical rumination, perfectionism, and concern over mistakes can be addressed through self-compassion interventions (Mosewich et al., 2013). With this in mind, I adapted Mosewich et al's (2013) self-compassion intervention to fit my style as a consultant, philosophy of practice, and the time-limited nature of consultancy. Mosewich and colleagues (2013)

followed a writing intervention outlined by Leary et al., (2007): a) common humanity (*listing ways in which people experienced similar events*), b) self-kindness (*writing in ways expressing kindness, understanding, and concern to the self, as if they were speaking with a good friend*), and c) mindfulness (*describing events in logical and unemotional ways*). While Mosewich et al.'s (2013) intervention was successful, implementing an immersive psychoeducation and writing intervention would only contribute to Lucy's long 'to-do' list. Additionally, despite the time-limited nature of our sessions, the development of the therapeutic relationship is integral to generating positive change in my philosophy of practice and should be a focus of any intervention (e.g., Tudor, 2018).

Importantly, it should be noted that this intervention evolved throughout the seven sessions we had together, and while I had an idea of formulation beginning with session two, the present intervention evolved over time. I have attempted to present consultancy in a logical manner, but note that the application of what is outlined was not linear. With initial needs analysis and formulation in mind, I employed the principles of Mosewich et al.'s (2013) intervention with altered application: a) humanity (*integral to teaching Lucy that coaches and others in power are human, and that others are concerned with their own lives and struggles; involved in-session discussions surrounding the humanity of others and challenging Lucy to engage with coaches on a 'human' level*), b) self-kindness and mindfulness (*teach Lucy to be aware of positive experiences, direct kindness towards herself, and apply a non-judgemental lens; this involved implementing compassionate writing in her reflections*), and c) organised reflections (*providing Lucy with a structure for her thoughts; replacing rumination with reflective practice*). These will be explored further below; as mentioned, interventions took place both simultaneously and at varying times throughout consultancy, with the therapeutic relationship being an integral component informing each smaller intervention.

In order to explore Lucy's perfectionist tendencies in a short time period, and similar to Mosewich et al.'s (2013) study, we employed the Sport Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale 2 (Sport-MPS-2; Gotwals & Dunn, 2009), a measure designed to explore numerous aspects of perfection, and the short form of the Self-Compassion Scale (S-CS-SF; Raes et al., 2011; Appendix 4) to explore Lucy's self-compassion. To remain congruent with my philosophy of practice, I attempted to work through these surveys in a person-centred manner. Alongside informing Lucy that her experiences can never be brought down to a simple number on a scale, that results will inform rather than dictate future discussions and actions, and asking whether Lucy was comfortable with this method of self-exploration, I attempted to ensure surveys were taken in as person-centred manner as possible (as outlined below).

Lucy's scores for the Sport-MPS-2 indicated high perfectionism in different spheres of her life. Importantly, she scored highest for *personal standards* (29/35), *concern over mistakes* (32/40), and *perceived coach pressure* (23/30). *Perceived parental pressure* (18/45) and *organisational pressure* (13/30) scored low. Due to the long nature of the survey, we engaged in a discussion surrounding her experience with the survey and interpretation of the results directly after Lucy completed the survey. Lucy was unsurprised to learn that *personal standards* and *concern over mistakes* scored highly, though she *was* surprised to learn that while these scores are understandable with the pressure she was experiencing, this level of preoccupation with mistakes and perfectionist personal standards was not a universal experience. She came to a realisation that experiencing stress as a result of this was normal. Additionally, this questionnaire allowed us to have a conversation surrounding her thoughts over perceived coach pressure, a stressor she had not known to articulate; while Lucy knew she cared about what coaches thought, she did not think about how she might care more about coaches than other people or how this might impact her self-perceptions. Coaches can

have an important impact on transforming self-critical athletes to self-compassionate athletes through a number of factors (e.g., open and clear communication, social support; Frentz et al., 2020).

Our conversation revealed that Lucy thought of coaches as all powerful, “not human” beings who had control over whether athletes were given special attention for development, chosen for squads, or recommended to national scouts. Lucy discussed the need to self-present as perfect to her teammates and coaches because of her relatively young age (as is common in those with low self-compassion; Flett et al., 2023). In line with this, coaches can often be unintentional sources of perfectionist tendencies in athletes (e.g., Dunn et al., 2022), particularly when athletes struggle to humanise others more broadly as a result of their self-criticism (e.g., Mosewich et al., 2013). Lucy’s disclosure that that she did not know how to engage with her coaches on a human level lead to a discussion attempting to humanise coaches. For example, we explored what the lives of coaches might look like outside of their roles, potential stressors they might experience in and out of sport, and so on. Lucy articulated that this was something she had never considered, and through exploring this, concluded that (unlike what she had always thought), other people did not think about her as much as she thought about herself – they had their own lives and struggles to consider. In order to further humanise and overcome this fear of speaking to coaches, we discussed whether there were any coaches on her professional team who she felt safe approaching. One assistant coach stood out, and Lucy approached her to discuss a topic of her choice the following session. Importantly, common humanity (identifying with or accepting support from others) has been identified as a key strategy in coping with setbacks and applying self-compassion to perceived weaknesses (Mosewich et al., 2013). Lucy raised her anxieties surrounding taking shots in games, and the coach reacted in an empathetic manner. They concluded that Lucy had been “on a different page” than the coaches; in other words, their

expectations of Lucy were misaligned: Lucy “thought I needed to go on and change the game,” while the coaching staff were excited about contributing to Lucy’s development as a netball player. Lucy and the assistant coach realigned their expectations and continued with a positive coach-athlete relationship until Lucy transitioned from the team in the summer. Lucy conveyed that after initiating deeper contact with this assistant coach, the coach provided important aspects that often aide in positive experiences for athletes playing for older age groups such as constructive strategic feedback and opportunities for Lucy to demonstrate her skills (e.g., Goldman et al., 2022).

Lucy scored very low on the self-compassion survey (29/60). Because of the short nature of the survey (12 items), we accompanied the quantitative scoring with qualitative discussions around each question. For example, when asked “When I fail at something important to me, I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy,” Lucy scored 3 and articulated that she becomes consumed and preoccupied by these thoughts, which leads to avoidant coping. While Lucy was aware that she was prone to what she described as “overthinking,” she was unaware that she did not offer herself compassion; this made her “a little sad,” and lead to her saying “I would never think about someone else about the way I think about myself”. Our discussions lead Lucy to realise that her rumination made her even less likely to engage in self-compassion, because this “chaotic overthinking” never lead to tangible solutions. We linked this to her perfectionism, more specifically her high personal standards and concern over mistakes, and Lucy began to understand that she was holding herself to impossible (mental, physical, and emotional) standards and consistently chastised herself for this. Her understanding and acceptance of this impossibility of perfection grew with each session. Her experiences are in line with research stating that self-critical rumination is often the mediator between self-compassion and perfectionism (e.g., Fearn et al., 2022).

While Mosewich and colleagues (2013) employed a specific “mindfulness” intervention where athletes attempted to reflect on matters in a more logical, unbiased way, Lucy was convinced that she was doing exactly that. Instead, we aimed to provide a more balanced, compassionate, and organised lens to her reflections in order to limit the chaotic, self-critical nature of her rumination. Reflective journals have been found to be effective in improving self-compassion (Beck & Verticchio, 2018). In an attempt to provide Lucy with structure for her thinking, we discussed different methods of reflection, and settled on a loose Gibbs-style (1988) method of reflection that Lucy could write in a ‘counselling journal’ (e.g., Neff, 2013). This was introduced in-session, where Lucy engaged in a structured reflection; we then reflected together on the lens of Lucy’s reflection. When asked “do you think this reflects compassionate writing? Would you write a similar reflection about a friend?” Lucy answered “mostly, yes, but some of it is a bit harsh”. After this, we discussed reflecting in a compassionate manner, which included adding three components advocated by Neff (2013) to address the varying facets of self-compassion: a) lens of mindfulness of emotions that arose during the reflection and applying a non-judgemental lens to these, b) common humanity (as discussed above), and c) self-kindness, or applying what we had learned in sessions about applying kindness to oneself (e.g., Moffitt et al., 2023; Neff, 2013). Over time, Lucy enjoyed the order these reflective pieces brought to her thoughts and noted that her overthinking improved drastically now that she had a mechanism by which to organise her thoughts. In one important conversation (session five), Lucy revealed that she recently accepted and “understands now” that her ruminations made her feel worse about herself, activating her lack of self-compassion. Alongside this, while Lucy did not have many chances to compete at the time, she perceived that she was shooting much better in training and when she did have the chance to compete.

After four sessions, Lucy had crossed many of the stressors off her list, and she had implemented several changes that aided in her interpretations of current and future stressors. Her exams were finished, she had two clubs available to her dependant on where she went to university, and this negated the contract guesswork. Alongside this, Lucy felt that her shooting performance, self-confidence, and “self-imposed pressure” were consistently improving. She was waiting for her scores to determine university choice, but this was not something under her control, so she did not think of it as “looming”. As these pressures abated over time, Lucy was due for a celebratory holiday with friends. When Lucy returned, while she was stressed about the upcoming tournament that would have England scouts, this stress was “more organised” and did not result in self-critical rumination.

Knowing we likely only had one or two more sessions, we determined that it would be advantageous to follow through on this positive note and what Lucy described as “excited motivation” and focus on skills she liked about herself, as interestingly, she noted how she was more aware that she had positive skills. Now that Lucy had the capacity to be aware of and acknowledge her strengths, and in order to end consultancy in a positive and motivating manner, we agreed to shift to a strengths-based and goal-focused approach (while Lucy continued with her compassionate reflections). Acknowledging and reflecting upon strengths has been demonstrated to aid in shifting athletes’ self-criticism to self-compassion; in line with this, our sessions consisted of acknowledging and reflecting upon Lucy’s netball strengths (Fentz et al., 2020). These strengths consisted of 1) being collaborative, 2) performing well under pressure, 3) being strategic, 4) being competent, 5) adapting well in-game, 6) raising the spirits of others, and 7) being selfless with the ball. These were the skills and traits she wanted to focus on in an upcoming tournament, where national scouts would be observing. Additionally, Lucy noticed a marked shift in her focus, noting that she thoroughly enjoys her compassionate reflections, and while she still struggles with overthinking and self-

criticism at times, she has seen an improvement and is able to focus on positives as well as perceived negatives. Lucy had minor difficulties in her tournament but engaged in a thoughtful reflection the evening before the final game. Her reflection ended with actionables surrounding “how might I positively respond to mistakes next time?”, to which she wrote that she would “a) forget or accept them as I can’t do anything about them, b) focus on the next action instead of the previous, c) remember times I have done well, d) remember the positives of the situation, e) be kind to myself, f) remember I’m not the only one making mistakes, and g) remember no one is as focused on me as I am”. Lucy was ecstatic that she played very well in the final and felt she was able to prove herself to the national scout that was watching the game.

In our final session, Lucy discussed the desire to perform well because of her scholarship status when transitioning to her university team. We engaged in goal setting, where she prioritised getting to know her coaches and on-court development, with improved court time a secondary rather than primary goal. She was comfortable enough with her position on the team to set herself two challenges: seeking feedback from her coach and playing varying positions for development. At this point in time, Lucy notified me that her university had a sport psychologist and asked if I would facilitate handover. I happily agreed and recognised this psychologist as someone I was familiar with, and who I perceived as trustworthy and competent. After gaining consent from Lucy to discuss all matters of her case, I met over Microsoft Teams with the university’s sport psychologist. Likely because Lucy and I knew we were time-limited with sessions, and as a result of Lucy being the person to initiate the transfer of psychology consultants, we did not encounter any negative reactions to her transition from client or psychologist (e.g., rejection, defensiveness; e.g., Williams & Winter, 2009); Lucy has contacted me a number of times to relay her positive experience(s) with her netball team and sport psychologist.

Reflections and Evaluating Effectiveness

In line with Ntoumanis and colleagues' (2018) assertion that excessive monitoring denies the agency and autonomy necessary for motivation to appropriately engage in consultancy (e.g., Rowan & Glouberman, 2018; Tudor, 2018), Lucy asserted that consistently providing feedback throughout consultancy might place additional demands upon her. With this and the time-limited nature of consultancy in mind, Lucy and I did not engage in formal continuous monitoring throughout consultancy, though I did consistently 'check-in' in an informal basis to explore the progress she felt she was making (as briefly discussed throughout). Instead, we agreed that Lucy would provide feedback when our sessions finished; in our last session, Lucy stated that she was most comfortable delivering quantitative and qualitative feedback via online survey, which would also allow her to do so at a time convenient to herself. Lucy completed Partington and Orlick's (1987) sport psychologist consultation form, which addresses the psychologist's qualities as a practitioner (rating from zero, "not at all," to ten, "yes, definitely") that aide in client development. While surveys can interfere with the deeper exploration desired in humanistic psychology, it is important to remain flexible according to client needs and practicality (e.g., House et al., 2018). Additionally, this survey allows us to address important factors surrounding my philosophy of practice, where the psychologist's skills and relationship with the client are primary mechanisms for change (e.g., House et al., 2018). I informed Lucy that I would be the only person to view her answers, and that the results would be used to improve my own practice, and that honest, critical assessment would aide in my improvement and not be viewed as negative criticism.

Lucy provided feedback, giving myself a ten out of ten on each of the measures. In particular, I was pleased to have scored a ten on the question "I felt I was able to build a trusting relationship with Kristin," as this was a factor I had been concerned with in relation

to time-limited consultancy hindering Lucy's self-exploration. Lucy provided no suggestions for improving the support I provided. When asked if there was anything she would like to add about her consultancy experience, Lucy thanked me for the experience and noted that she was more confident engaging with others, experienced "much less criticism of myself and overthinking," and was excited for the future. She noted that she "would have liked to have started sessions earlier in the year when [she] was playing more and before the exam stress picked up". While this was out of my control, it does illustrate the importance of consultancy timing. Lucy might have preferred to learn coping strategies before her stress hit its peak point; however, one might consider that the lack of netball competition and its resulting stressors allowed her the space to engage in the self-exploration necessary to improve her self-compassion and overall self-perception. With the above factors, I would rate my consultancy as effective, particularly since Lucy articulated that she would continue to engage in fundamental aspects of humanistic psychology through self-exploration and development (House, 1997; Rowan & Glouberman, 2018).

When reflecting upon the experience more broadly, I recognised that this might have been one of the more unambiguous consultancy cases I have experienced. However, it is difficult to delineate whether this is a result of the time-limited and 'humanistic education' (House, 1997) consultancy, that Lucy was able to articulate her experiences (of self-critical rumination) and consultancy goals early on, or some combination of these and other factors. I wonder whether our time-limited consultancy would have been as effective if Lucy had been less aware of her struggles, and how much introspective and environmental investigations we would have had to engage with before co-constructing solutions. Additionally, Lucy was readily willing to engage with consultancy, and our relationship was positive and effortless from the start, potentially due to a number of factors (e.g., being or having been elite athletes, being women, having a similar sense of humour). This emphasises the importance of client

motivation and the therapeutic relationship in any approach to consultancy (e.g., Dallos et al., 2014; Nash, 2018).

Finally, I reflected on my earlier considerations surrounding my lack of comfortability being unable to explore the ‘why’ behind Lucy’s struggles. While I have hypotheses, I still do not know how or why Lucy developed intense self-critical ruminations and low self-compassion. On one hand, I worry that being unable to identify and explore the underlying mechanisms of Lucy’s experiences might hinder her self-exploration and growth in the future, further leading her to focus on problems rather than explore her life and self more broadly. However, we did engage in thoughtful, holistic reflections, and Lucy was provided with an introduction to compassionate self-exploration that lead to development and has the potential to inform her self-actualising potential (e.g., House, 1997). I wonder whether it is always the psychologist’s prerogative to facilitate clients’ understanding of ‘why’, particularly when agency and taking personal responsibility for self-exploration are integral factors in humanistic growth (e.g., Rowan & Glouberman, 2018). Lucy has learned tools to solve her current problems as well as engaged in a broader ‘humanistic education’ that might encourage future compassionate introspection, allowing her to develop as a whole person and not just a performer (e.g., House, 1997).

Overall, I am pleased with the outcome of Lucy’s case, and satisfied with my own performance as a practitioner. While no consultancy is perfect, I perceive that Lucy benefited from consultancy, accomplished her consultancy goals, and wishes to continue to grow in the future. Additionally, the relative ease of this case allowed me to reflect on the role of the humanistic practitioner more broadly, which has contributed to my professional development.

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Consultancy Contract and Report

Sport Psychology Consultancy Contract

Parties

1. Kristin Lauren Minister, KMSP

Primrose Hill Farm
Mobberley Road, Ashley, WA14 3QB

2. Client Information Redacted

The contract is made on the 14th of October, 2022, between Kristin McGinty-Minister, Trainee Sport and Exercise Psychologist for KM Sport Psychology, hereafter known as **KMSP**, and [client name], hereafter known as the **Client**.

KMSP will provide the Client psychology support in a manner aligned with the British Psychological Society's (BPS) ethical principles and code of conduct. As KMSP is a trainee, she is supervised by BPS and Health Care Professional Council (HCPC) accredited psychologists. Supervisor contact details, along with details surrounding KMSP's professional indemnity insurance, can be found at the bottom of the Agreement.

1. Services

1. KMSP shall provide the Client with psychological support at a frequency to be determined on a month-by-month basis.
2. The psychological support shall include face-to-face or virtual meetings.
3. If KMSP is unable to provide the Services due to illness, injury or other unforeseen circumstances then she will use reasonable endeavors to find a suitable replacement for such period of time.

2. Fees and expenses

1. The standard rate of KMSP is £[redacted] for 50-minute one-on-one sessions, and £[redacted] per hour for group sessions unless otherwise agreed.
2. The Client shall reimburse the Sport and Exercise in training's reasonable expenses incurred in providing the Services unless otherwise agreed.

3. Confidentiality

1. KMSP shall not use or disclose to any person either during or at any time after such engagement by the Client any information about the business or affairs of the Client or about any other matters which may arise.

2. Consultancy reports and additional information will be stored on a password-protected computer, in a password-protected file.
3. The restriction in clause 3.1 does not apply to:
 - a. Informed consent given by the Client to disclose information to a 3rd party
 - b. KMSP feels that the Client may be under threat or harm to themselves or others.

4. Termination

Either party may at any time terminate this Agreement with immediate effect with no liability to make any further payment (other than in respect of any accrued fees or expenses at the date of termination).

5. Variation and third-party rights

1. This agreement may only be varied by a document signed by both the Client and KMSP.

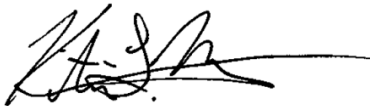
6. Governing law and jurisdiction

1. This agreement and any dispute or claim arising out of or in connection with it shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the law of England and Wales.
2. The courts of England and Wales shall have exclusive jurisdiction to settle any dispute or claim arising out of this agreement.

THIS AGREEMENT has been signed on behalf of the Sport and Exercise Psychologist and the Client on the date set out at the beginning.

SIGNED

Kristin Lauren Minister, KMSP



[Client Name and Signature, Redacted]

Supervisor Contact Information: [Information Redacted]

KMSP Professional Indemnity Insurance: [Information Redacted]

Session Report

Session 9 (Final Session)

17th February, 2023

We began the session aware that this would be our last session; you will be abroad competing for the rest of the winter, and the time difference accompanied by your busy schedule will make it difficult to keep in touch. Additionally, you feel that you have improved in your reactions to stressful events, and feel that you have gained a broader understanding of how your experiences have impacted your interpretations of your current experiences, and therefore, reactions to certain situations. We engaged in this final session as a bit of a ‘debrief’, to talk about any questions or concerns you have moving forward, touch base about your reflective diary, review your consultancy aims, and gain your feedback about your experience with consultancy. We recorded the feedback portion of the session so I can transcribe your answers, but the recording will be deleted as soon as I’ve had the chance to do so.

First, I would like to thank you for being so candid and open in our sessions, and for your openness to exploring your experiences. You entered consultancy with two objectives: a) improve your confidence, which had dipped in the last year or so, and b) handle your emotional reactions better. What began as a ‘simple’ exploration of how you coped with everyday experiences lead to you disclosing your previous experiences with racism, lack of support, and the recognition that these experiences inform how you engage with [sport governing body], coaches, teammates, etc. Your candid exploration of these experiences also lead to a recognition that there was a great deal of sexism from [coach name] and general favouritism/nepotism by [coaches]. Through discussions and your self-exploration outside of sessions (your reflective log), you learned that your struggles with confidence and emotional reactions began around the same time as those awful experiences; understanding that the reason for these changes was a problem with your environment, and not you as a person, has been important in allowing yourself the space to explore your relationship with yourself, others, and [sport name]. You articulated feeling more confident and happier.

You mentioned during the session that you would like to keep up with your reflective log, as this has allowed you to identify when you are “people pleasing” or if the environment is causing you stress. As mentioned, I think this is a great idea, especially since you will be in a completely new environment, and some aspect of consistency/stability is always helpful! From my perspective, it has been great to see the positive impact the work you have put into your development and healing from past experiences has had; you seem excited for the rest of the season, a fact that you emphasised throughout the session.

Overall, I have really enjoyed working with you, and am very grateful for the trust you gave me when sharing and exploring your experiences. Please feel free to get in touch should you have any questions regarding the reflective log. Additionally, as we discussed, if you’d ever like to re-engage in consultancy for any reason, please do not hesitate to get in touch!

Client Feedback

The below is taken from the feedback portion of the session as articulated above. The client was asked questions about their experience, interpretation of me as a consultant, and their thoughts surrounding whether we accomplished their consultancy aims.

Did you feel that I created an environment that was confidential where you felt safe and comfortable describing and exploring your experiences?

Oh, my gosh, I mean, I think you know the answer to that [laughs]. I obviously asked about sessions after doing that interview with you, so from the first time I met you I felt as if I could talk about the difficult things. I always felt comfortable, and like, validated in a way. I've known for ages that the shitty [describes experience; redacted to maintain confidentiality/anonymity] last season upset me, but I never actually wanted to talk through them because I didn't know how or to who. I think your calm and welcoming personality made me feel safe to tell you about it, and when you asked me questions instead of making me feel worse about it, it all just started spilling out. Sorry I'm rambling! But long story short, yes, I totally felt comfortable with you.

When you first came in for consultancy, you wanted to improve your confidence and your "emotional" reactivity. Do you feel like this is something we have accomplished?

Yea! At first I was wondering how we'd do this because I feel like I've spent a year trying and nothing...my main goal as you say was probably to find a safe space to talk about what I experienced after our interview, but I didn't tell you that I don't think. Maybe I didn't even know that. But it's been interesting to connect the spiderweb on how they're all related. I felt like the crazy guy on that meme with all the sticky notes [laughs]! [laughs] ***Can you tell me more about your thoughts about your confidence and reaction goals?*** Yea, I think that once I started to realise that my over-reactions had a cause, it was easier to pinpoint them in the moment. And I could not interact with that person and give them the satisfaction. And I think

that lead to me being more confident overall, like maybe me feeling like a different person over the last year and having no idea why impacted my confidence. So yea, I'd say we accomplished my two main goals and the secret goal that I didn't even know about!

Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience with consultancy?

Including any challenges you faced or improvements I can make as a consultant?

It was actually such a great experience, I don't think I have any recommendations. And you know I'd tell you [laughs]! Honestly, Kristin, I've been holding this all in and not talking about it for a year. So thank you. The only thing I might look at is what you talked about last year about how you can't necessarily identify with some of my experiences because they were racism. I felt really safe talking about it with you, please don't get me wrong, but if I do end up doing long-term therapy I might try to find a Black therapist to see if that makes even more of a difference. I don't know for sure, but it stuck in my head after you said it. Sorry!

Honestly [client name], this is completely valid and an important aspect to explore! I'd be happy to help you with that process when it comes to it. There's no need to apologise at all.

Is anything else popping up that you'd like to share about your experience? No, I don't think so. I just feel like I've grown, and don't have any recommendations that I can think of right now.

Teaching Case Study

Delivering education in a contradictory environment: Teaching in football

Abstract

This teaching case study was conducted at a professional football academy and details a stakeholder education programme. In order to ascertain the needs of academy stakeholders, the trainee sport psychologist conducted interviews with self-selecting stakeholders ($n = 7$) and employed observation for four weeks. Following needs analysis, it was determined that stakeholders had low levels of self-awareness and mental health literacy (MHL), little understanding of the role of a psychologist within football, and a general suspicion of the role of a psychologist operating within the club. In light of this, the educational programme was designed to improve stakeholders' understanding of psychology in football, their MHL, and self-awareness by providing an introductory course. The programme included six weekly one-hour sessions grounded in a reflective learning style. Stakeholder engagement and development throughout and following the programme was observed to assess programme effectiveness. Findings indicated that stakeholders utilised new skills throughout the programme and in the initial weeks following the programme; however, application of these behaviours dropped significantly after several weeks, potentially due to stakeholders being situated in a wider mental health illiterate environment. Despite this, many stakeholders demonstrated improved MHL by continuing to interact with the psychologist and utilise much of the vernacular introduced throughout the course.

Context

The Club

The present educational workshop programme was conducted at an English Football League (Category Two) football academy based in the Northwest of England, the primary aim of which was to develop top-flight players to sell to higher level teams. I was hired after

their previous sport psychology consultant moved on after two years with the club. Immediately prior to my entry to the club, historical safeguarding crimes within this club (and others) came to light; as a result, there was intense media and safeguarding scrutiny, particularly at academy level. This engendered feelings of uncertainty and unease among stakeholders, despite these crimes having been committed decades ago. Additionally, there was consistent staff turnover as many stakeholders often moved on to higher profile clubs after one or two seasons. The club had been unwilling or unable to provide resources for consistent psychological support for their first team or academy, meaning the majority of the staff had never encountered formal sport psychology support within this club-specific context (if ever). Further, as is common in football (e.g., O’Gorman et al., 2021), many stakeholders found the Elite Player Performance Plan (EPPP) as more of a box-ticking exercise that took away from rather than added to their practice.

The Practitioner

At the time of this educational programme, I (the first author) was 29 years of age; I am a white, American, heterosexual female who has lived in England since 2012. I was three years into my British Psychological Society (BPS) Stage Two training through a professional doctorate programme to become a qualified sport and exercise psychologist. My philosophy of practice prioritises the holistic development of performers inside and out of sport, understanding that performance, context, and mental health (and mental illness) are inextricably linked (e.g., Friesen & Orlick, 2010; Keyes, 2002). At the centre of my philosophy of practice is humanistic psychology, comprising values such as congruency, Rogerian facilitative psychological attitudes, an opposition to medicalisation and behaviourism, and humans’ self-actualization tendency (see Rogers, 1980). A person-centred approach, through its “focus on the positive self-determined growth potential of human beings,” is integral to my consultancy (Cooper et al., 2013, p. 2). However, I do not believe

that rigid adherence to the traditional person-centred approach is applicable to each client and ascribe to Cain's (2010) model in which it is important to collaborate with clients and prioritise, above all else, what realistically works for each person.

The Clients

The clients were stakeholders within the academy setting including the academy manager, eleven coaches, two physiotherapists, and a safeguarding officer. Participants' attendance at sessions was highly dependent on scheduling demands, meaning the number of participants in each session would differ slightly throughout the programme.

Needs Analysis

Needs analysis for the education programme stemmed from my initial needs analysis for the club. This involved observation of the academy setting and initial, informal discussions with stakeholders to ascertain a sense of club culture, the club's needs, and stakeholders' experiences with sport psychology and mental health literacy (MHL; e.g., Gorczyński et al., 2021). After ascertaining a lack of understanding surrounding psychological support and pervasive suspicion surrounding my role, I determined that an educational intervention for stakeholders could be integral to any future interventions with athletes or stakeholders. To prepare for this, I interviewed as many stakeholders as were willing ($n = 7$) to determine their level of knowledge and understanding surrounding several key topics within an academy setting (e.g., role of psychologist, mental health and mental illness, their roles within the academy, stakeholder development). It is important to note that stakeholders self-selected for these conversations and were therefore already willing to engage with myself, potentially painting an inaccurate picture of club needs.

Conversations indicated that physios ($n = 2$) had a modest understanding of what psychology support might offer an athlete, but not how this might translate more broadly at an organisational level. Physiotherapists were frustrated with the treatment of their injured

players, particularly that coaches tended to ignore injured athletes throughout the duration of their injury then demand they return to play before the physiotherapist deemed them fit. This placed immense pressure on both athletes and physiotherapists and contributed to tension between departments. The safeguarding officer was unaware of what psychological support entailed other than “being there to support athletes,” and primarily emphasised the importance of presenting a united front as a club (alluding to the historical safeguarding issues and resulting media attention). Coaches ($n = 3$) offered the widest range of dialogue; viewpoints ranged from “aren’t you supposed to help the kids with the mental problems?” to “our players are lacking mental toughness” and are “soft”. The academy manager (who had recently been promoted from coaching staff), while less direct in his delivery, reflected similar opinions.

Overall, there was a universal lack of understanding surrounding the role of psychology in football; more specifically, stakeholders were unaware what a psychologist might offer athletes, stakeholders, and the wider club outside of providing one-on-one support for athletes experiencing “issues”. This was accompanied by mistrust of myself and my role as psychologist and the only woman on club staff, which was compounded by the pressure stakeholders were already experiencing due to the safeguarding issues. There was an inferred assumption that I was hired as a reaction to the historical abuse in order for the club to ‘cover all bases’. As a result, I felt that at the very least, stakeholders did not value my role, and at the worst, I was perceived as an outsider and a burden. One considerable hurdle was that most stakeholders (primarily coaches) maintained hypermasculine, stigmatised views of mental illness and its implications for performance in football. This common occurrence (e.g., Champ et al., 2018), linked to low levels of MHL (Castaldelli-Maia, 2019), contributes to stigma towards conversations surrounding mental health and mental illness and limits athletes’ engagement with appropriate support (Castaldelli-Maia, 2019; McDougall et

al., 2015; Champ et al., 2018; Gulliver et al., 2012; Nesti, 2010). Further, while I had begun workshops and one-on-one sessions with athletes, stakeholders had no knowledge or understanding of what occurred during these workshops. This likely perpetuated their suspicion, and aside from this, much of their behaviour was likely to undermine these interventions (often without their knowledge). I determined that educational workshops might be one point of entry to build relationships with stakeholders as well as introduce key aspects psychology in football.

Programme Development

The primary aims of this educational programme were to provide a ‘taster’ of psychology in football, afford insight into my work with athletes to minimise suspicion (and therefore lack of engagement; e.g., Nesti, 2010), introduce key aspects of stakeholder development (e.g., reflection) to improve their learning outcomes (e.g., Toll, 2006), and develop knowledge and understanding around key aspects of MHL, culminating in a more holistic understanding of psychology in football. One major issue was the lack of time that often accompanies work in football (O’Gorman et al., 2020): stakeholders were constantly on the move, and I was only contracted at the club one day per week. Further, stakeholders voiced disinterest in additional workshops after being “talked at by teachers” about safeguarding for the last several months. To ensure stakeholders would attend, the academy manager made the workshops mandatory for those who were not travelling to matches on that day. In line with my philosophy of practice and pedagogical underpinning, to balance the lack of agency afforded to stakeholders and ensure I was not ‘talking at’ stakeholders, my primary goal was to design the programme to promote engagement, a key factor in learning (e.g., Boekaerts et al., 2016). In order to encourage positive engagement, workshops would take place in an open and non-judgemental space (Toll, 2006). In accordance with the above, I designed the educational programme to include the following (in linear order): a) sport

psychology and academy athletes, b) reflective practice for stakeholders, c) stakeholder philosophy, d) mental illness, e) mental health, and f) holistic approach to mental health and performance in football. The aims of this educational workshop series were to: 1) introduce the staff to potential mechanisms by which they might engage in with a new psychologist, and 2) allow stakeholders the opportunity to become more reflective about and aware of broader factors that can impact those operating in an academy setting.

Programme Delivery

Programme delivery included six weekly one-hour workshops over a six-week period. While I had wanted to retain that ‘time slot’ with stakeholders indefinitely, I was unable to negotiate more than six weeks from the academy manager, who thought stakeholders would lose interest. While his beliefs may have been legitimate, this conveyed the unimportance of my endeavours at the leadership level of the club.

Pedogeological Underpinning

In line with my philosophy of practice, my pedogeological approach assumes that learning happens *within* someone and not *to* them (Tomilnson & McTigue, 2006). I employ a highly reflective teaching style, understanding that my role is to foster reflection about important topics, knowledge (prior and newly introduced), and experiences in order to promote more complex understandings so that learners can acknowledge the realities of applied practice and make good decisions (Dewey, 1933; Stover et al., 2011). People are likely to embrace ongoing reflective practice and learning when engaging in a non-evaluative support system (Toll, 2006). In line with this, and due to the hyper-competitive environment in which football is situated, it was important to immediately establish a learning environment that provided the opportunity for safe collaboration where participants’ voices heard and valued (Toll, 2006). This was especially important due to the mixed group of learners, as I often observed physiotherapists being undervalued when compared to coaches

in other club settings. Overall, my aim was to expand stakeholders' understanding of how they and athletes learn by facilitating reflection, which can generate behaviour change; this can lead to improved achievement in academy athletes, in line with stakeholder and club goals (Peterson et al., 2009).

Workshop Delivery

The programme was designed to introduce knowledge and tools stakeholders might apply throughout their practice. Because stakeholders had been involved in workshops with “boring” PowerPoints for months, and in line with my pedagogical approach, much of the focus of these workshops was informal. I began by introducing new concepts, then moved toward conversation and reflection to link the introduced information to previous knowledge and reflect upon its application. I avoided conversations too heavily based in theory not only because this was merely an introductory course, but because engaging this teaching style was likely to alienate myself further (e.g., Champ et al., 2018). The six modules included:

Sport Psychology and Academy Athletes

This module, along with detailing the purpose of the programme, introduced stakeholders to my role. We began with a conversation about stakeholders' experiences with sport psychology, in which many either struggled to or did not want to participate. Next, I explained the educational training athletes received based on age group as detailed in Littlewood et al., (2018) (Table 1). This was an opportunity for stakeholders to learn why I meet with their athletes for workshops when they could be training, in the gym, or rehabilitating injuries. Each of these topics (e.g., reflection, imagery, coping skills) was open for discussion, and at this point several participants began to contribute to the conversation. I then detailed the counselling side of sport psychology, where athletes were welcome to engage in sessions to either help solve a problem or improve upon certain skills (e.g., psychological skills training). While stakeholders were initially relatively quiet, most became

more relaxed and talkative as the workshop continued, with many offering opinions or questions about the different aspects of my work with athletes by the end of the session.

Reflective Practice for Stakeholders

Needs analysis revealed a general lack of self-awareness in stakeholders, none of whom engaged in reflective practice. In line with my pedagogical underpinning, learners must develop reflective skills in order to effectively incorporate and apply it to their practice. Further, it is imperative that stakeholders engage in reflective practice to encourage improved self-awareness and considerations about how their values and philosophies might impact their thoughts and behaviours, and reflection is a key feature of coach development (e.g., Peel et al., 2013; Knowles et al., 2005). After briefly introducing the topic in the first session, this lesson explained in further detail the importance of reflective practice, when one might engage in reflective practice, and how (e.g., as an individual or group, in-action or written). We engaged in a written reflective practice exercise that is often introduced to ‘new reflectors’; the Gibbs (1998) model allows the person to “‘know’ what it means to reflect” by providing a step-by-step process to follow (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 1718). After this exercise, we discussed participants’ experiences of reflecting, how they might implement reflection into their practice, and their reflections on the session. I relayed that growth surrounding reflective practice is a long-term process and introduced the concept of additional workshops or one-on-one meetings to develop their reflective skills. This session lasted longer than the prescribed hour, with most stakeholders (mostly coaches) remaining to discuss how they might implement this into their practice, and several enquiring about a future reflective practice intervention.

Stakeholder Philosophy

The focus of this workshop was to introduce coaches to the broader topic of a philosophy of practice due to a general lack of knowledge surrounding the topic; my needs

analysis revealed that most coaches only participated in mandated professional development required by the FA, and did not engage with their own individual development as coaches. Because stakeholders are often extremely busy and become engrossed in applied practice, many do not take the time to reflect upon the many elements that impact their practice such as experience, education, beliefs, and values (e.g., Cushion & Partington, 2016). This means there is often little inquiry into the thought processes, values, and philosophies underpinning their actions. Stakeholders instead often utilise accepted behaviours and practices, and this team's parallels with commonly accepted football practice and culture (e.g., Champ et al., 2018) as discussed (e.g., make the players tough at all costs, single-minded commitment to football) are in line with Cushion and Partington's (2016) assertion that there is a lack of clarity or understanding of individual or club-wide philosophies. This lack of clarity was also evident in the discrepancies between some of the values stakeholders claimed to have (e.g., developing the person rather than the player) and those they implemented in their practice (e.g., McCallister et al., 2013). The primary focus of this session was to problematise accepted beliefs as detailed in Cushion and Partington (2016), such as: a) an over-emphasis personal agency and reflexivity, b) downplaying the importance of social structure and environment, and c) the acceptance that applied practice is entirely conscious. Overall, the aim was to make stakeholders more reflective about the beliefs, values, and cultural norms that impact their practice. Further, a primary aim of providing a basic understanding of reflection and philosophy of practice was that stakeholders would more readily take on subsequent lessons and be able to integrate their novel understandings in a more holistic manner. Towards the end of the session, we took twenty minutes to reflect as a group about how stakeholders might construct their philosophies of practice, which culminated in a better understanding of not just their own beliefs, but how others' values might differ and impact their practice.

Mental Illness

Mental illness is a common occurrence in elite sport, made worse by the lack of MHL often found in elite sport settings (e.g., Henrikson et al., 2020). While one session on mental illness will never significantly improve MHL, the general lack of understanding and avoidance of discussing mental illness warranted an introductory session to the concept. We began with a Wordcloud activity asking stakeholders what came to their mind when they heard the term “mental illness”, the purpose of which was to ground the workshop in stakeholders’ understanding of the concept, normalise language surrounding mental illness, and prepare for a similar exercise in the following session. The most common terms were “mental problems,” “depression,” and “anxiety”. Following this exercise, I detailed mental illness incidence rates (FiFPRO, 2020) and we discussed how, when, and why mental illness might impact athletes’ performance and development (e.g., Shinke. 2018), and the importance of situating mental illness outside of performance both practically and ethically (e.g., Henrikson et al., 2020). I illustrated the stigma surrounding mental illness in elite sport, particularly in football, and tied this to a lack of help-seeking in athletes and what stakeholders might do to overcome this barrier (e.g., Gulliver et al., 2012). I then detailed potential methods of recognising mental illness in athletes and peers, and what they might do if this should occur. Emphasis was placed on stakeholders’ agency and skill in this situation, specifically stakeholders’ holistic knowledge of their athletes and that they were most likely to notice small changes in their countenance. We engaged in a group reflection about how they might apply this knowledge to their own practice. The physiotherapists detailed how athletes often disclosed mental illness symptomology and how they might use these tools to better support their athletes, and many of the coaches were surprised by how frequently athletes spoke to physiotherapists about their struggles. Towards the end of the session, coaches voiced concerns about how to act with players but still improve upon their mental

toughness, which led to a conversation surrounding the difference between mental illness and setbacks that might increase mental toughness (e.g., Gucciardi et al., 2017). This conversation lead well into our following session, which made many of the coaches voice their eagerness to learn about facilitating mental toughness the following week.

Mental Health

An important counterpart to mental illness is mental health, a concept that is under-researched and under-practiced in football. We again began with a Wordcloud activity after asking stakeholders what they thought when they heard the term “mental health”. Common terms were “anxiety”, “depression,” and “important”. The intention of this exercise was to provide a contrast to mental illness and promote a discussion about how mental health and mental illness terminology are often easily confused. I then introduced them to Keyes’ (2002) Dual Continua model of mental health, which distinguishes between mental health and mental illness as related but distinct concepts. Stakeholders voiced their approval this model as it provided a clear visual to aid in their understanding. We then engaged in education and discussion surrounding mental health overall and in sport, its links to performance, and where mental health might be gained from in an academy setting (e.g., encouragement and positive attitudes, normalisation of language, access to appropriate support; Gulliver et al., 2012). This was also an opportunity to tie the importance of mental health to mental toughness, and how mental health likely represents possessing mental toughness and has the potential to facilitate its attainment (Gucciardi et al., 2017). We finished with an activity where participants had three scraps of paper to anonymously write “small” ways they might facilitate mental health in themselves, other stakeholders, and athletes, after which these were read aloud and reflected upon as a group.

Holistic Approach to Mental Health and Performance in Football

The final workshop intended to integrate the previous five weeks into viewing support for those at the academy in a holistic manner. The primary goal of this session was to teach stakeholders how they might carry the knowledge from previous weeks into their practice in a more holistic way with an emphasis on communication between stakeholders. More specifically, I introduced the holistic ecological model of talent development (e.g., Larsen et al., 2013). I introduced stakeholders to more formal multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) as the academy did not have one, and we discussed how we might utilise these moments to discuss athletes' progression through our various lenses. I emphasised the value of each person's perspective and role in the development of academy athletes, and we discussed the importance of each department working together, and how to do so effectively (Raya-Castellano & Uriiondo, 2015). We engaged in a group reflective exercise about the unique ways each role might influence the performance, development, or mental health of those around them (e.g., other stakeholders, athletes). To compliment this reflection, I asked participants to place sticky notes indicating where they or others might influence different aspects of performance, development, and mental health on the club-specific ecological model I had introduced on the whiteboard.

Evaluating Programme Effectiveness

Assessing programme effectiveness with surveys was likely to counteract much of the repour I had built with stakeholders over the last six weeks. Further, any specific evaluation of learning objectives in this context would be antithetical to the philosophies which guided this work (Toll, 2006). Instead, I qualitatively assessed (e.g., Franklin & Jordan, 1995) programme effectiveness in line with my philosophical and pedogeological underpinning and programme aims through observing: a) stakeholder engagement throughout the programme, b) stakeholder development throughout the programme, and c) stakeholder engagement and development in the weeks following the programme.

Stakeholder engagement, or the level at which each stakeholder engaged with the workshops throughout the programme, was much better than expected. The hesitancy (and displeasure) towards further CPD was likely to compound the fact that I was an ‘outsider’ – female, American, academic, and not an ex-footballer (e.g., Champ et al., 2018). Additionally, I was worried that the required nature of the programme would limit engagement due to stakeholders’ lack of autonomy. However, stakeholders almost immediately engaged upon the realisation that the majority of the programme would require interaction rather than “staring at PowerPoints,” and that the workshops were designed to work alongside their own expertise and interests. I was surprised that stakeholders engaged in reflective conversations while in sessions and noted that these discussions began to integrate knowledge and understanding from previous sessions as well as more contextual information that they brought from their day-to-day experiences at the club.

Stakeholder development, or the levels at which individuals took on the information delivered in workshops and applied it to their practice during the six-week period of educational workshops, varied by participant. However, most stakeholders were perceived to have learned from the programme and integrated this into some of their practice. For example, I observed stakeholders engaging with reflective conversations both inside and outside of workshops, and often took me aside to discuss methods of reflecting or ideas which they had reflected upon in their own time (e.g., player development, ideas to implement in the physiotherapy department). It was evident through their conversations that stakeholders became increasingly comfortable with terminology surrounding their own development and mental health, though many still struggled with terminology surrounding mental illness; this was a considerable accomplishment as an indicator of improved MHL (e.g., Gorczynski et al., 2021). However, it must be noted that I was only at the academy once

per week, and these behaviours might not have taken place had I not been there or had we not had a workshop on that day.

Finally, I assessed the levels of stakeholder engagement with myself and application of the programme in the weeks following our final session. Potentially due to a number of factors, such as the introductory nature of the programme, the culture of football (Champ et al., 2018), lack of time and resources (O’Gorman et al., 2020), or the overall effectiveness of the programme, many of the lessons did not withstand the test of time in the academy. For example, I observed improved interdepartmental communication in the initial two weeks post-programme, after which this began to drop significantly, with strife between coaches and physiotherapists increasing again after weeks of ‘peace’. Coaches did not engage further with the reflective or philosophical development they had initially expressed interest in, and I observed their conversations surrounding these topics decreasing steadily over time (though not as quickly as interdepartmental communication). However, most stakeholders retained their use of terminology they learned within the programme, indicating that some levels of MHL remained. Yet despite stakeholders’ suspicions surrounding my presence decreasing (e.g., they did not stop talking when I entered a room, and some recommended to their athletes that they speak with me), it was obvious that my broader intervention would not stand the test of culture and time. Without the required nature of the engagement, some coaches (especially those from the first time) began to “make fun” of academy coaches’ reflective conversations; I observed a subsequent and significant drop in engaging with mental health literacy and coach development. This was incredibly frustrating having witnessed their engagement with the programme while it continued; requests to implement monthly reflective meetings were denied by the academy manager due to “lack of time”. Despite this frustrating result with coaches, the physiotherapists continued to engage in reflective conversations between themselves and me, and even athletes, the remainder of my

time at the club. As a whole, while I accomplished the programme objectives of introducing potential pathways to engage with psychology and allowing stakeholders the opportunity to become more reflective and aware of the elements that impact themselves and the wider club, I was disappointed in the long-term impact of the programme.

Conclusion

As a whole, it is unsurprising that the long-term pervasiveness of the programme was smaller than desired. Despite this, some programme objectives were accomplished. First, stakeholders received an introduction to my role and sport psychology, and as a result engaged with myself and the topic significantly more than before the educational workshops. While stakeholders appeared to acquire information quickly, their engagement with related behaviours decreased once removed from the educational setting; this might be remedied with more targeted, long-term interventions for specific topics (e.g., coaching philosophy). Importantly, engagement with these behaviours decreased as interaction with first-team staff increased following the programme. This brings into question how psychologists might improve MHL in environments that lack the resources (or desire) to allow stakeholders the time to learn and apply new skills, particularly in cultures which are often contradictory to the skills which are acquired (e.g., Champ et al., 2018). This inability for stakeholders to apply their improved understanding is in line with research detailing how MHL interventions can improve *attitudes* and *intentions* relating to MHL, but might not impact behaviour (Bu et al., 2020), again calling into question the effects of environment and culture on MHL.

Despite this, stakeholders engaged with the programme and applied its messages while taking part in workshops. Many stakeholders were unaware of much of what their athletes were learning about or experiencing, or what they might do to improve their own practice. Initially, these new levels of awareness drove them to action, likely due to the fact that these workshops were isolated to the academy and not open to the wider club setting.

This is reassuring and potentially indicative that even stakeholders historically situated in hypermasculine cultures that stigmatise psychology can improve in their practice in a culture supportive of engagement with psychology or practitioner development. We must work toward developing environments which cultivate this kind of development to improve MHL throughout football, which can only have a positive impact on stakeholder and athlete performance and development.

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Tables

Table 1: Academy athlete educational training

Topics	Academy Age Groups									
	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15/16	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year
Reflection	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Goal Setting	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Communication		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Imagery			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Self-Talk				X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Coping Skills					X	X	X	X	X	X
Reflection (Advanced)						X	X	X	X	X
Concentration						X	X	X	X	X
Lifestyle Issues							X	X	X	X
Professionalism								X	X	X
Culture								X	X	X
Roles and Responsibilities								X	X	X
Coach Expectations								X	X	X
Player-Coach Dynamic								X	X	X
Loans										X

Teaching Diary

In the following reflective diary, I will consider my evolution as an educator over the last several years. While the delivery of my teaching philosophy has developed over time and I have encountered hurdles along the way, I have always possessed the same foundational elements of my teaching philosophy. One reason that might account for this consistency is that I did not engage in teaching or education until I was approximately a year and a half into the professional doctorate programme, and I utilised that time to develop my philosophy of practice, which has a significant impact on my teaching philosophy. My views about humans and humanity do not change whether I am discussing learning through one-on-one psychology sessions or in educational settings – the nature of delivery is what changes. Additionally, many of the women in my family are teachers, and I have been lucky enough to both witness their development and have countless conversations about how their own philosophies developed over the years. From my perspective, the aim of education is growth, which aligns with humanistic psychology's consistent pursuit of self-development throughout life.

In line with this, my pedagogical approach assumes that learning does not happen *to* a person, but *within* them (Tomlinson & McTigue, 2006). My consultancy taught me that one cannot 'teach' someone to change, but that my role is to ignite and foster change in a person; my teaching philosophy reflects just that. I have always assumed that should introduce and foster reflection surrounding (novel and already known) topics and people's experiences in order to foster more complex and synthesised understandings of their own knowledge and the world they live in (Dewey, 1933; Stover et al., 2011). My aim is to establish learning environments that are psychologically safe where individuals feel that their voices are valued (e.g., Toll, 2006). Despite having clear philosophies in line when entering the arena of education, I found significant challenges when the environment did not suit my philosophy,

and my development as an educator has involved steep learning curves. In particular, I encountered challenges surrounding how to prioritise the needs of those I teach, avoid imposing my own strict adherence to philosophy on environments that are not necessarily well suited to its execution, and learning how to remain congruent in my personality, style, and philosophy in different teaching environments. I will discuss this journey below with the acknowledgement that my development as a teacher has not finished, and I still have much to learn.

Delivering Education in Football

I have had two primary educational delivery experiences within football. The first was a six-week educational course with the aim of introducing academy stakeholders (physiotherapists, coaches, welfare officer) to psychology in football and begin to facilitate basic mental health literacy within the club (e.g., Gorczynski et al., 2020); all stakeholders were men working at a Category Two football academy, and this was my first role working within a football organisation. The second experience was (and still is) a seven-month education and development programme designed with the aim of developing Women's Super League coaches as competent and positive mentors for younger coaches; initial educational sessions were delivered, followed by (ongoing) monthly educational and development sessions as the coaches prepared for then engaged in the mentorship process. All coaches are women, and this programme began almost exactly three years following my first experience delivering education in football. Notably, my comfort levels both in delivering education and within the role as an educator in the football setting could not have been any more different; this was likely due to numerous factors, such as environment, culture, and my own development as an educator, which will be discussed below.

Category Two Academy Stakeholders

The first educational programme, delivered at a Category Two football academy, was designed after working in the club environment for two months and conducting a needs analysis through observation and conversations with the academy manager, physiotherapists, coaches, and a welfare officer ($n = 7$). The academy manager agreed that a six-week educational programme would be useful in facilitating engagement with psychology from stakeholders, primarily the coaches, who tended to avoid the topic altogether; he was willing to offer one hour for six weeks where the stakeholders were required to attend if they were on-site. The aims of the programme were to: 1) introduce the staff to potential mechanisms by which they might engage with a new psychologist, and 2) allow stakeholders the opportunity to become more reflective about and aware of broader factors that can impact those operating in an academy setting. With this in mind, I designed the programme to cover, in linear order, the following hour-long workshop-type sessions: a) sport psychology and academy athletes, b) reflective practice for stakeholders, c) stakeholder philosophy, d) mental illness, e) mental health, and f) holistic approach to mental health and performance in football. Sessions were designed to be educational and reflective, and I encouraged participants to actively engage in alignment with my teaching philosophy. A much more thorough exploration of this educational development and delivery is available in the above case study, and a more in-the-moment teaching reflection is also available in reflection 16. The below serves the purpose of a broader teaching reflection, rather than a comprehensive analysis of the case.

This was my first time evaluating the effectiveness of an educational programme, and I attempted to do so in a way that was aligned with my values, teaching philosophy, and programme aims; additionally, I was wary of utilising survey-based tools based on what I had read (and started to experience) about stakeholders being suspicious about psychologists (e.g., Nesti, 2010). I qualitatively assessed (e.g., Franklin & Jordan, 1995) programme

effectiveness by observing: 1) stakeholder engagement throughout the programme, 2) stakeholder development throughout the programme, and 3) stakeholder engagement and development in the weeks following the programme, which I noted and reflected upon throughout the process. While delivering the education, I felt as if the participants were enjoying the experience, learning, and applying some of what they learned to their work within the club or their overall personal development. However, soon after the end of the programme, I noticed a decline in stakeholders' engagement with the learning outcomes (e.g., comfortability using language surrounding mental health and mental illness) and even encountered pushback when attempting to facilitate longer-term learning and continued development. That I perceived the programme to be going well at the time, then having it not 'stick,' was difficult to process at the time, and resulted in many reflections. While there were obvious systemic issues in place that significantly hindered the implementation and longevity of this education (see reflections three, nine, and 16), especially surrounding a topic such as psychology (e.g., Gorczynski et al., 2020; McGinty-Minister et al., 2023), having the advantage of perspective granted by time and additional teaching experiences provides me the opportunity to reflect on my delivery within this environment and how I might approach making changes in these environments in the future.

Upon reflection, my solution is to provide participants with more autonomy, and perhaps less content in such a short period of time. Additionally, I developed the content for this educational delivery (see Teaching Case Study) through observational and conversational needs analysis based on club and individual *deficits*. I witnessed the dearth of knowledge surrounding psychology more broadly and how this negatively impacted both individuals and system, and decided that education might contribute to solving this problem if done the right way. First, this focus on deficit, while important in many cases in organisational needs analyses, is not in line with the strengths-based approach I like to use as a balancing

mechanism. If I were to reformulate this educational programme, I would have included at least one session building upon environmental strengths. Perhaps more importantly, I did not offer stakeholders the opportunity to tell me what they would like to learn. Looking back, I do not think I was comfortable enough as a practitioner and in the environment to do so; I felt I needed to ‘prove’ myself and my value through my knowledge, and it seemed like asking stakeholders what they would like to learn would open the door for critique or for them to walk all over me. However, autonomy and the responsibility of making choices, and self-determination more broadly, are essential aspects of my philosophy of practice, which is integrated with my teaching philosophy; additionally, Self-Determination Theory more broadly is essential in comprehension and autonomous motivation in learning (Guay et al., 2011; Rowan & Glouberman, 2018). While I attempted to provide autonomy, relatedness, and competence within sessions through reflective conversations and activities, perhaps I should have involved stakeholders more in my formulation of the education. With my experience and confidence as a practitioner, four years on, I would not question doing so – even if I were less comfortable in the environment. Finally, there is a chance that I attempted to teach too much content at once; six weekly educational sessions might have been information overload and may not have allowed stakeholders the time necessary to process and implement this knowledge into their practice. This is something I would consult the manager or stakeholders about next time and attempt to engage with education when the season is not at its peak.

Despite the changes I would make in the future, particularly ensuring participants perceive more autonomy at each stage of the programme, I recognise that there are countless barriers to this in football. For example, the academy manager had to compel rather than encourage the stakeholders to attend, negating any choice stakeholders had in engaging with education. Unfortunately, one of the primary mechanisms by which organisations can improve factors such as mental health literacy is to provide and require stakeholders to

engage with educational programmes, which significantly undercuts the autonomy one might provide within the programme (e.g., Gorczynski et al., 2020; McGinty-Minister et al., 2023). Additionally, no educator can only deliver topics that individuals want to hear about, which will inevitably remove some of the autonomy from the situation no matter what. Perhaps the best we can do is offer a choice where we can (e.g., contribution to programme development where able) accompanied by interesting information and appropriate delivery.

Women's Super League Coaches

More recently, I have had an antithetical experience with Women's Super League (WSL) team coaches. My director of studies brought me on to deliver coach mentorship education at a WSL team in the autumn of 2023; the team wanted to develop their women coaches and engage in more grassroots reach-out, and reasoned that developing the coaches as mentors for up-and-coming women coaches would be an effective way of doing so. The aim of the programme overall is to: 1) introduce the coaches to mechanisms by which to develop themselves as coaches and people, 2) educate coaches on how to create and foster psychologically safe relationships, and 3) support the development of coach mentors through education and reflection throughout the programme. With this in mind, we provided coaches with two three-hour sessions accompanied by one-hour developmental sessions for the remainder of the season.

The first session involved education surrounding self-awareness and self-development, including: a) introduction to psychological safety, b) introduction to reflection, c) developing self-awareness (e.g., Figure 1), d) developing and communicating core values, and e) using Think Aloud as a coach. The second session was developed to integrate coaches' self-development with their role as a mentor, and included education surrounding: a) actioning values, b) the role of a mentor, c) facilitating psychological safety, d) intake sessions with mentees, e) needs analysis, and f) an introduction to teaching Think Aloud to

coaches. Following this, coaches engaged in (and are still engaging in) monthly development sessions, where education relevant to their needs is delivered, followed by reflective conversations and input from coaches about what they would like to learn next. For example, one of these monthly sessions involved education and reflection surrounding setting appropriate boundaries as a mentee (e.g., Figure 2). We have been evaluating programme effectiveness throughout (e.g., Appendix 5); initially, this was done with an online survey that participants filled out after each session. The programme scored well (e.g., scored either nine or ten on programme satisfaction), and received positive qualitative feedback: “I also really enjoyed getting to know myself through the values more to help me understand others - this helped me not just as my role as a mentor but within a MDT”. However, engagement with the survey only reached 50% of participants each time and fell considerably after the second session, so we have transitioned to qualitative (verbal and/or emails) feedback, which we ask for in each session.

This experience has facilitated the reaffirming of my beliefs that individuals – especially coaches, who often have a great deal of autonomy in their environments – require autonomy to learn is imperative. This is not surprising and is an essential component of all psychology interventions I design; however, there are various differing considerations to make within an educational setting compared to one-on-one psychology sessions. The programme has aimed to develop those coaches who are attending to be good mentors for up-and-coming coaches. First, it is important to identify that within football, the culture (and its impacts) in WSL and Category Two academies due to the unique development afforded to men’s and women’s football, resources afforded to each level and club, level of play and professionalisation, and the individuals within each organisation; these cultural differences (e.g., views on mental health and gender) will have direct effects on the organisations in which one delivers education or psychology practice more broadly. This is evidenced by my

own experiences working in applied and teaching settings, anecdotes from peers, is becoming a popular topic in the media (e.g., Dhillon, 2023), and is supported in peer-reviewed literature (e.g., Champ et al., 2018). Organisational factors (e.g., club approaches to mental health, job stability, etc.) influence factors that impact how stakeholders engage with those within the club as well as educational ‘outsiders’, along with additional elements that will inform educational delivery. Additionally, each group of learners is different based on the individuals attending and their interpersonal and intrapersonal experiences before and throughout the course.

While the aim of the programme is to develop the coaches holistically, I wonder if my experience of educating non-self-aware and defensive stakeholders in the Category Two academy environment informed my focus on self-awareness and self-development *before* attempting to deliver education surrounding the actual mentorship process. As I reflect, I recognise that the experience allowed me to better and more thoroughly integrate my philosophy that learning happens *within* a person (Toll, 2006) with my approach to education. For example, a person must be aware enough of their own experiences, biases, and interactions with incoming knowledge (e.g., session one on self-awareness) to better incorporate relevant knowledge (e.g., session two on being a mentor). Finally, while I was aware that while I was excited to experience teaching a new and different group within football, my past experiences made me nervous, and perhaps a little ‘guarded’ when beginning delivery. With this in mind, while I reflect on how my own experiences of teaching in this environment differed from my academy experience and the development that occurred, it is important to recognise that factors outside of programme design and delivery impact my experience programme performance.

So far, the programme has been a success; our two in-person days were fantastic, with a great deal of learning and quality conversation. Importantly, each of the coaches on the

programme *chose* to be there; they viewed this as a development opportunity that they might also use on their CV, and therefore, the programme offered both choice and development – integral aspects of my own teaching philosophy. Since we had large blocks of time, we developed very reflective sessions that allowed for more engagement, thorough reflection, and relatedness than I was able to offer at the academy. When it came time to engage in virtual sessions, our first session reflected the atmosphere experienced in our in-person sessions. However, the virtual session engagement has diminished; while this has been primarily due to organisational issues in assigning mentees to the coaches, some have also described how one person in the group detracted from their psychological safety. This factor emphasises the importance of constructing and maintaining psychological safety in educational environments, and that when this is detracted from, engaging with learning becomes difficult (e.g., Advance HE). As this is an ongoing programme, I will not discuss additional details; however, my chief learning outcome from this experience regarding the above is the importance of culture, environment, and learner autonomy in how it *feels* to deliver education.

While I cannot yet examine comprehensive programme effectiveness, I can provide an important reflection on my own teaching development. I do feel as if I am much more comfortable in asking those I am teaching for input and becoming more ‘flexible’ in my teaching (this word is very relative!). Additionally, throughout the past few years, I have been developing my skills as a lecturer but did not have the chance to observe many other individuals teach in various environments. Observing AW deliver to the group was interesting, and I learned a great deal about delivering in a non-directive manner, which I have struggled with in some educational settings. This programme runs parallel to my experience of ‘de-masking’ after an autism diagnosis and exploring how this has impacted my development as a person, practitioner, and teacher. One worry I have had throughout this

process is that I will ‘copy’ rather than learn from the teaching practices I witness. I am aware that my teaching delivery needs (and will always need) improvement, however, I wish to ensure that I develop in my own direction. It is easy to fall into the trap of mimicking others when they are receiving positive outcomes or social feedback: this is a tactic many late-diagnosed autistic individuals have employed as a social and performance survival mechanism for their entire lives (e.g., Russo, 2018). Developing my teaching style while also learning to unmask has been an interesting experience (explored further in reflection five), and I look forward to determining the difference between autistic camouflaging and my own style of teaching – which I have been able to explore more throughout my lecturing experiences.

Developing as a Lecturer

After engaging with the 3is programme in 2020, I was qualified to guest lecture at the university. In 2021, I began guest lecturing on a topic I am obviously quite passionate about – our sexism in sport research. I was quite excited, as academia more broadly has always been an environment I have enjoyed and felt comfortable in; this could be a result of having been in academia for the last sixteen years, that the environment suits my own traits, and many additional factors. Lecturing has provided me the opportunity to reflect and practice educational delivery more frequently, leading to more accelerated development than in sporting environments. Additionally, one might consider that the comfortability I feel in educational environments allows me a larger comfort zone and the space for trial and error, which I have found enjoyable. Despite this, I was not expecting my first experience delivering a lecture to feel so uncomfortable! I felt as if my delivery consisted of reading from slides, despite this not being characteristic of my delivery in sporting delivery or presentations. While I was not aware of this at the time, I now view this as a reaction to being in a ‘new’ environment. I had been used to attending lectures and delivering small

presentations in educational environments for over a decade; however, I was never ‘in charge’ or responsible for the learning of others, particularly those earlier in their development than myself. The new responsibility and role was

Since then, I have been lecturing by myself, alongside LS, and briefly alongside AW; as mentioned above, it has been interesting to observe others lecture, as well as students’ responses to their delivery. While AW delivers in a relaxed, inquisitive manner, LS somehow exudes empathy and curiosity to students immediately. I have always viewed my own ‘style’ as quite direct, not unlike my own personality and style as a practitioner, and perhaps unsurprising with my autism diagnosis. Additionally, while I am an extremely empathetic person (e.g., can sense emotions around me and put myself in others’ shoes), I often struggle to convey sympathy. Despite knowing that practising authentically is important in promoting knowledge, I often worry that my authentic self will scare people away from engaging with learning! My development as a teacher, especially over the past year or so, has been considerations surrounding the desire to remain ‘unmasked’ and continue to develop my own style (not taking on others’) versus anxiety surrounding being too direct or even intimidating (and taking on others’ styles to counter this). Despite this, both LS and AW provide in their teaching aspects that I find imperative to include such as asking questions, being reflective, and establishing psychological safety as a foundation of their teaching. These are aspects I would have prioritised in my teaching regardless, since they align with my teaching philosophy, but observing different methods of demonstrating these teaching mechanisms has both provided me with ideas for skill modification and confidence that having my own delivery of these concepts is ok.

Consistently reflecting on this, accompanied by the work I have engaged in over the last year, has provided me with the space and ability to recognise that I can be myself while ensuring that my delivery is in line with my philosophy and values. My ability or methods of

processing and conveying information should not mean that I cannot establish a psychologically safe and reflective environment – I know this from my own practice teaching and as a psychologist. As soon as I recognised this and began to be less concerned with my ‘style’ through acceptance of my authenticity as an autistic person, I have been able to explore and develop my skills and delivery as a lecturer. For example, I have determined that being upfront about who I am is essential to student understanding, and therefore, engagement; when introducing myself as a lecturer, along with the ‘about me’ section, I have added a small conveyance that I am autistic and what this might mean for communication. While it makes some students seem uncomfortable, others seem interested. Either way, I feel that the way I convey my thoughts or information has been taken better by students. Additionally, I have improved my approach to asking questions. For example, I used to get frustrated about how people answered direct questions (see reflection 19), but now that I know this is a result of neurological differences, I am more open and curious with students about their answers. In fact, I was always curious, but I felt that people’s failure to answer a direct question reflected badly upon me (though I am sure this is the case in some situations), rather than being a result of their interpretations of a question. I feel like this recognition, accompanied by my confidence in engaging more with students, has generated better reflective conversations within the classroom. Additionally, I have learned over time how to remain authentic in my philosophy while also changing the lecture depending on the environment (e.g., virtual vs. in-person, level of student).

Overall, I view lecturing as a vocation that I would be passionate about pursuing. On a more minor note, the environment is incredibly suitable and facilitative to my performance and well-being as an autistic person. More importantly, I enjoy being around and witnessing the various stages of development and learning individuals engage in and wish to contribute to this where I can. I think that for those who wish to be challenged, I can ask challenging

questions, provide an awareness of strengths, and overall contribute to growth and development. I value being in environments where others value learning as much as I do, and hearing about established or burgeoning interests (see reflection 17). I enjoy and value this exploration through both lecturing and marking and would like to engage in more supervisory work at some point to have more interactions with students exploring and developing their interests.

Summary

First, it is important to recognise that an important lesson I have learned is that while there are factors out of my control in educational settings (e.g., systemic issues, personal bias, etc.), there are countless factors within my control. For example, I must consider environmental and cultural factors before designing educational delivery rather than relying on my idealistic version of what I want or think people should learn. However, I cannot altogether determine others' engagement with the education I provide; this is dependent on the complex interaction between cultural, interpersonal, and individual factors that I will never be aware of, accompanied by my delivery as an educator. I have learned a great deal about teaching from each student I have encountered; those who have not enjoyed my topics or delivery have aided in my reflections and skill development, and those who have enjoyed my educational sessions have provided me with motivation and potential strengths to explore in my teaching.

With this in mind, I am aware that we are *all* teachers, and that humans are consistently learning from one another. I believe that my role as an educator is to provide the 'starting block' for students to engage with the world through the topics I present. I can potentially spark interest in individuals, establish and maintain psychological safety in an educational setting, and encourage individuals to engage with topics that might be uncomfortable. This, combined with my unique approach and philosophy, has the potential to

encourage others' learning and development. Additionally, it is my responsibility to continue to develop my skills as an educator; I do not believe this journey will ever end, and I look forward to my philosophical and skill development as I evolve as an educator. In line with humanistic philosophies and my pedagogical approach (Rowan & Glouberman, 2018; Tomlinson & McTigue, 2006), my development as an educator has corresponded with my development and learning as a person – learning has happened *within* me. My experiences teaching, observing others, reflecting, listening, and acting upon what I have learned have intrinsically changed me as a person, and therefore, my development as a teacher.

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Figures

Figure 1: A Self-Aware Mentor

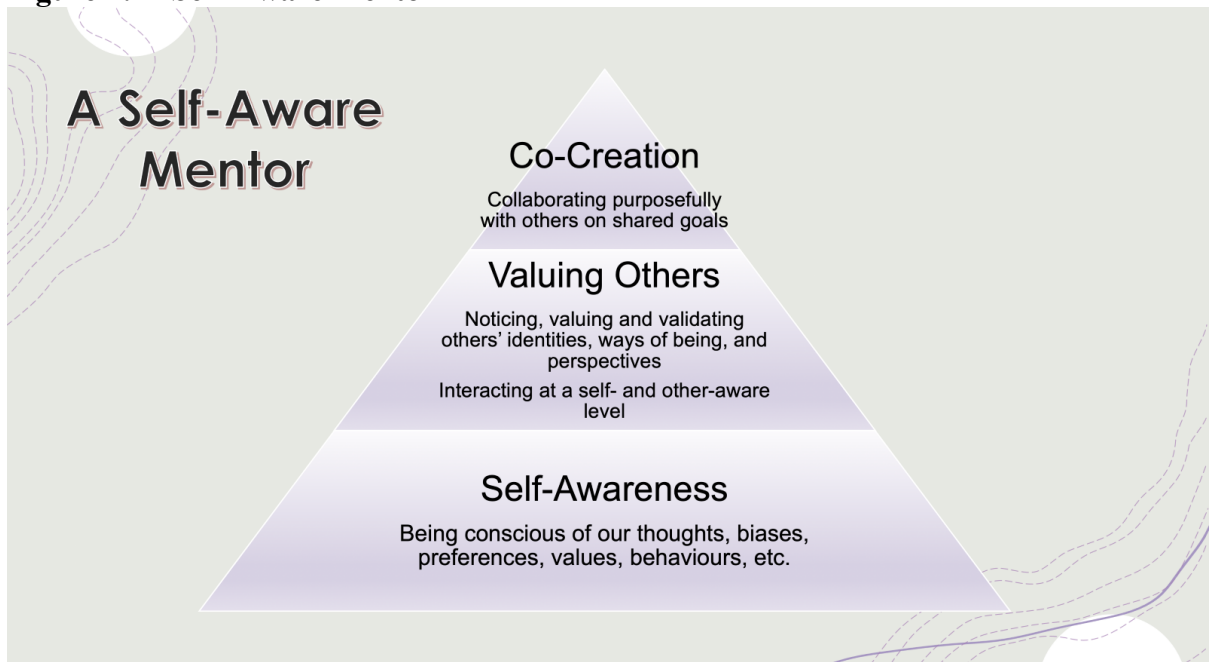


Figure 2: Setting Boundaries as a Mentor



Systematic Review

“Not a place for women”: A scoping review exploring women’s experiences of sexism while working in sport

Abstract

Stories surrounding women’s experiences with sexism in sport, despite their prevalence, are often disregarded as purely anecdotal. The objective of this scoping review is to explore what is known from existing qualitative peer-reviewed literature about women’s experiences of sexism while working in sport. Six databases were searched for peer-reviewed publications; 40 studies were included following screening and study identification (Arsket and O’Malley). Descriptive results were analysed and reported. Four general dimensions were co-created, each with their own higher- and lower-order themes. General dimensions included *benevolent sexism*, *hostile sexism*, *managing sexism in sport*, and *intersectional pressures*. Sexism was a significant barrier for women, and these experiences were compounded for those with intersecting marginalised identities. Hostile sexism was the most common form of sexism women experienced. Results reflected a dearth of research and reporting on individuals with intersecting identities and numerous additional gaps in the peer-reviewed literature.

Introduction

Gender-based inequality has spanned culture and history, with men possessing significantly more power, resources, and status than women (e.g., Connor et al., 2016). Sport has historically played a key role in maintaining heteronormative white patriarchy; one mechanism by which sport, and patriarchy more broadly, does this is through sexism (for more thorough review, see McGinty-Minister et al., 2024). For the purposes of this review, we adopt the standpoint that sexism is prejudice or discrimination against individual or groups of women based on their sex or gender and can include individual, interpersonal, organisational, and broader cultural discrimination and oppression (e.g., McGinty-Minister et al., 2024).

A useful lens through which to understand the paradoxical nature of women's hegemonized experiences and the relatively positive gender relations is through ambivalent sexism theory (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Ambivalent sexism theory poses that the relationship(s) between men and women are marked by deep-rooted contradictions (ambivalence) as a result of our biological, social, and cultural evolution and interdependence (e.g., Connor et al., 2016; Glick & Fiske, 1996). In order to maintain a patriarchal power structure, the dominant group (men) must incentivise women to participate in the system by 'rewarding' those who engage in preferred ideology and behaviours through what is known as benevolent sexism; those who challenge this are met with hostile sexism (Connor et al., 2016). Benevolent sexism is a more subtle type of sexism that might not be perceived as sexism upon first glance. More specifically, benevolent sexism refers to 'positively perceived' but patronising beliefs about and attitudes towards women (e.g., emphasising men's protection of women or conceptualising women as more caring than men). Benevolent sexism 'rewards' and gives affection to women for engaging in their restricted (e.g., domestic, caregiving, subordinate, etc.) roles, essentially "offering male protection and provision to women in exchange for their compliance" in their own oppression (Connor et al., 2016, p. 295). While benevolent sexism has a more positive

tone than hostile sexism, it has a significant negative impact through re-enforcing patriarchal gender stereotypes that maintain barriers to the progression of women in domestic, professional, economic, legal, social, political, and religious settings, their bodily autonomy, and in society more broadly (e.g., Connor et al., 2016; Garcia, 2021). In contrast, hostile sexism is more obvious through its overtly negative attitudes and behaviours towards women who do not comply with traditional gender roles (e.g., Connor et al., 2016). When women are perceived to pose a threat to the gender hierarchy by ‘stepping out’ of the ‘accepted’ ways of being (e.g., having a leadership role in a male-dominated field or expressing their sexuality), hostile sexism is employed to put women back in their ‘place’. In other words, “benevolent sexism represents the ‘carrot’ dangled in front of women to motivate them to accept inequality, while hostile sexism represents the ‘stick’ that beats them when they do not” (Connor et al., 2016, p. 298).

Sexism in Sport

Throughout the last decade, recognition of and interest in sexism in sport has grown considerably with numerous studies demonstrating that sexism is not just commonplace, but “embedded,” within sport (e.g., Fink, 2016; Goldman & Gervis, 2021; McGinty-Minister et al., 2024). At the most basic level, patriarchal gender stereotypes have restricted the type of sports that women are encouraged to participate in as athletes. For example, historically, it has been frowned upon for women to take part in contact, power and/or strength-based sports, evidenced by women’s football being banned in England from 1921-1971 despite its popularity at the time. More recently, sportswomen have spoken about the impact of sexism on their sporting experiences. For instance, a study conducted by BBC Sport (2020) found that elite sportswomen faced discrepancies in pay, lack of basic facilities, selection inequalities, and suggestive comments from men during their sporting careers. Perhaps most concerning, 65% of elite British sportswomen reported experiencing sexism, while only ten percent felt able to report this due to believing that it would have negative ramifications for their careers (BBC

Sport, 2020). Moreover, significant bias exists in terms of the media coverage and representation of sportsmen and sportswomen: ten percent or less of sport coverage is devoted to women in European countries, despite media coverage being a significant driver of people engaging with women's sport (Women in Sport, 2024).

While there has been heightened focus on the sexism experienced by women athletes, it is imperative to recognise that women working in sport also experience considerable sexism and its resulting negative consequences. In 2016, 'Women in Football' disseminated a survey to women working in the football industry in the UK. Over half (61.9%) of the respondents reported that they had been the recipient of sexist banter, 40% working in leadership roles felt less valued than their male counterparts, 30% detailed experiencing inappropriate behaviour from men, and 14.8% had been sexually abused (Women in Football, 2016). Furthermore, Goldman & Gervis (2021) explored the impact of sexism on women sport psychologists' ability to practice. Focus group findings suggested that the male-dominated nature of professional sport, privileging masculinity, and failing to act upon acts of sexism exacerbated the challenges that women sport psychologists faced in professional sport settings. Most recently, McGinty-Minister and colleagues (2024) adopted an ecological approach to understand women's experiences of sexism while working in sport; findings demonstrated clear evidence of sexism at all levels of the ecological model, highlighting the need for comprehensive change throughout the sporting culture and structure.

Despite centuries of women detailing the issues of patriarchy and sexism more broadly (e.g., Wollstonecraft, 1759) and decades of women identifying their experiences with sexism in sport in peer-reviewed literature (e.g., Fink, 2016; Roper et al., 2005), change is still incremental due to a myriad of challenges. Notwithstanding sport's potential to facilitate societal change (e.g., Peachey et al., 2019), broader sport culture often appears to be one of the last remaining strongholds for mechanisms of social oppression such as sexism (e.g., McGinty-

Minister et al., 2024) and racism (e.g., Cable et al., 2022). Stories surrounding sexism, although increasing exponentially in the media, books, editorials, and so on, are often disregarded due to being perceived as ‘just a few women’ or purely anecdotal. The comprehensive diminishment of women’s experiences at interpersonal, organisational, and cultural levels is nothing new, and has resulted in challenges ranging from issues reporting sexism (e.g., McGinty-Minister et al., 2024) to doubting the stories of survivors of sexual harassment (Epstein, 2020), not to mention the extensive and negative physical and mental health impact of patriarchy on individual and groups of women (e.g., Gupta et al., 2023; Heise et al., 2019). These experiences are significantly compounded for women with intersecting marginalised identities (e.g., Veenstra, 2011). In light of the historical absence of women’s data being studied and utilised to improve their lives more broadly (e.g., Criado-Perez, 2019) and in sport (e.g., Anderson et al., 2023), it is imperative to continue to build upon evidence of women’s experiences to make positive change.

Recently accumulating literature has provided the opportunity to take a step back and capture what we know about women’s experiences of sexism while working in sport. While women’s stories are often unfairly dismissed, our hope is that the accumulation of peer-reviewed literature will present a broad picture of women’s experiences while working in sport that cannot be overlooked. Against this historical and present-day context, the purpose of this scoping review is to present the first broad overview of qualitative peer-reviewed findings surrounding women's experience of sexism while working in sport. In doing so, we identify gaps in the existing literature and subsequently propose relevant future research directions, with the aim of creating a catalyst for evidence-based prevention, management, and support policies and structures, accompanied by an essential recognition of the value of women’s stories.

Methodology

Design and Protocol

We designed and conducted a scoping review to map women's experiences of sexism while working in a support role in sport; more specifically, women who engage in supporting roles for athletes or sporting organisations (e.g. psychologists, physiotherapists, management roles). Scoping reviews allow researchers "to map the literature on a particular topic or research area and provide an opportunity to identify key concepts, gaps in the research, and types and sources of evidence to inform practice, policymaking, and research" (Daudt et al., 2013, p. 8). Due to the under-researched nature of women in sport more broadly (e.g., Cowley et al., 2021; James et al., 2023) and women working in sport (e.g., McGinty-Minister et al., 2024), a scoping review is especially relevant. Scoping reviews are particularly informative for topics that have not been thoroughly reviewed and/or are complex in nature (Mays et al., 2001). While systematic reviews address a specific research question for a particular area of interest, scoping reviews allow for a broader mapping of the literature on the topic in question (Arkey & O'Malley, 2005; Daudt et al., 2013). Finally, scoping reviews allow for the examination of wide-ranging study designs and methodologies; scoping reviews do not address study quality and provide insight into available empirical evidence through a broader lens rather than a more critical analysis of a specific aspect of that topic (Arkey & O'Malley, 2005; Campbell et al., 2023). The research team followed Arkey and O'Malley's (2005) methodological framework to guide our approach to this scoping review, each stage of which will be addressed below.

Identifying the research question

Women's experiences of sexism while working in sport have been historically under-researched despite its "embedded" nature in the development and present nature of sport (e.g., Anderson, 2009; Fink, 2016; McGinty-Minister et al., 2024); in line with this, the subject has never been reviewed. Women's experiences are frequently undervalued (e.g.,

Criado-Perez, 2019), and when women do have the opportunity to share their stories, their experiences are often disregarded. Peer-reviewed evidence of women's negative experiences has been mounting over the last several decades despite prevailing hurdles for women attempting to share their stories in a peer-reviewed manner (e.g., Cowley et al., 2021). With this in mind, the research question for this scoping review is "what is empirically known from existing qualitative peer-reviewed literature about women's experiences of sexism while working in sport?"

Identifying relevant studies

Eligibility criteria were developed through thorough consultation with the research team and were strictly adhered to (e.g., Siddaway et al., 2019). In order to be included, studies must have: 1) disclosed experiences of sexism experienced by women working in a supporting role or supporting capacity within sport organisations or with athletes, 2) consist of original qualitative data, and 3) be peer-reviewed, full-text studies written in or translated to English and published between 2000-2024. The first author searched six databases: SPORTDiscuss, Scopus, APA PsychInfo, MEDLINE, Web of Science, and Pubmed; this initially took place between August and September 2023, then again in February 2024.

The research team utilised their expertise in the field of women's experiences in sport to develop the following search terms: 1) women* OR woman* OR gender* OR female*, 2) Sexi* OR Chauvin* OR Misogyn*, 3) Sport* OR exercis* OR coach OR manag* OR psychologis* OR nutrition* OR physi* OR train* OR welfar*. Available limiters were applied (e.g., available in English, publication year). Retrieved articles were amalgamated with the reference manager EndNote, at which point duplicates were removed through the software and then manually. Finally, manual searches of study references and Google Scholar were conducted by the first author. An initial screening of potentially relevant studies was conducted by the first author by identifying studies' research question, research framework,

and key findings; potentially relevant studies (67) were recorded in a Microsoft Excel document to be examined more thoroughly at the next stage.

Selecting relevant studies

The first author read and screened each of the potentially relevant studies to determine possible suitability. Studies that clearly fit within the inclusion criteria were highlighted in green, while studies that clearly sat outside inclusion criteria were highlighted in red; studies with unclear fit were highlighted in yellow. The first author included notes regarding their reasoning for studies' respective labels. Following this, two additional authors randomly screened ten percent of the studies highlighted in green and red, and all studies highlighted in yellow, to allow for a thorough examination of manuscript suitability (e.g., Van Tulder et al., 2003). Subsequently, the research team discussed the application of inclusion and exclusion criteria to any studies in question. For example, it was initially unclear whether studies examining sport-academics would be included in the review; the research team concluded that studies examining sport-academics specifically in their university environment would be excluded, but if those academics were discussing their broader experiences inclusive of consultancy or working within a sporting organisation, studies were eligible for inclusion. 40 relevant studies were selected for data extraction and analysis.

Charting the data and critical analysis

Descriptive content of the 40 peer-reviewed studies was extracted by the first author and stored in a Microsoft Excel document. After the first author read each study twice to familiarise themselves with the dataset, the articles were uploaded to a thematic analysis software (NVivo). Qualitative data was inductively analysed by the first author in line with Braun & Clarke's (2022) reflective thematic analysis. Data was approached with no 'guiding theories,' but it must be acknowledged that in line with our chosen methods of thematic analysis and guiding feminist theory (e.g., Cook & Fonow, 2018), the authors' experiences as

women working in sport informed the analysis of the data. The first author reflectively coded the qualitative data and took continuous notes throughout the process. Their analysis allowed them to generate a high number of initial codes, at which point the first and second authors engaged in discussions to define and refine codes. Through these reflexive discussions, the first and second authors developed higher and lower-order themes with deeper meaning. Finally, the research team engaged in critical reflective discussion about the meaning and presentation of the results and determined that each of the higher-order themes and their sub-themes fit within one of four ‘general dimensions’. The research team sought to develop and present findings that would present a comprehensive portrayal of available literature surrounding women’s experiences of sexism in sport to allow for more critical examination of the topic. Due to the exploratory, complex nature of this study and the considerable quantity of data, the presented findings include a descriptive overview followed by a thematic summary and tables reporting more specific findings from our thematic analysis.

Consultation

The research team engaged in this ‘optional’ stage of Arksey and O’Malley’s (2005) framework in order to provide deeper meaning to our analysis and presentation of the women’s stories in the included studies. Following the above analysis and development of themes, the research team invited one researcher onto the project to apply their own lens to the research team’s analysis of the data. This allowed the research team to offer a higher level of meaning and perspective to our findings. While our team’s analysis and presentation of the present data is unique to our own context and analysis, the research team did attempt to conduct a thorough review within the specifications outlined above.

Findings

Descriptive Summary

Year Range of Publication

There were 40 manuscripts in total included within this review. From the year 2000-2010, only four papers were published. A surge of research was conducted from 2011 onwards, with 36 papers having been published from 2011 to 2024. Further, 47.5% (19) of the included papers were published since 2020, demonstrating a growing interest in the topic.

Author Gender

Of the 40 manuscripts, 22 were authored by women-only authors (individual or team), and 18 manuscripts included a mixed-gender authorship team. No manuscripts were solely authored by a man or men.

Theoretical Model and Study Design

Studies were situated in a broad range of theoretical models and study designs. The most common theoretical lenses employed were various feminist approaches (14), while intersectional (8), socio-ecological (2), and organisational culture (2) approaches were also used. Three studies did not report their theoretical model. All studies were qualitative in nature, and while there was a varied approach to engaging with data collection and analysis, semi-structured interviews (25) were the most common form of data collection and thematic analysis (14) was the most reported mechanism by which to engage with the data. Only one study employed a qualitative survey to capture participant data.

Sport and Sport Types

Level of sport varied, with elite (13) and mixed levels (13) being the most common; eight studies did not report sport competition level. As for team versus individual sports, studies reported that the women operated in mixed (15), team (11), or individual (1) sports, while 13 studies did not report this metric. Finally, studies examined women operating in either one specific or various sporting environments. The most common sports investigated included soccer/football (13), basketball (9), and volleyball (6), with 14 studies examining

multiple sports and 11 studies not reporting which specific sporting environment(s) the women operated in.

Sample Size

Stories were collected from a total of 515 women. Study sample size ranged from three to 105 participants; the second highest sample size was 30, and all but one manuscript ranged from 3-30 participants.

Population

Participant Roles

A range of roles were studied, and some studies explored the experiences of women occupying various roles at once. Of the 515 women, their primary roles consisted of 230 coaches, 67 working in director roles, 50 occupying management or executive roles, 42 physiotherapists or athletic trainers, 42 sport psychologists, 23 women in organisational support roles, 17 participants' roles were unspecified, 15 were strength and conditioning coaches, ten were coach developers, eight were conference commissioners, six were Japanese *Manêjâ*, and five occupied an equity, diversity, and inclusion role.

Participant Characteristics

Only 22 studies reported participant age, while 18 did not. Of those 22 studies, participants' ages ranged from 17-63 years old. Twelve studies did not report ethnic background; while two of those studies noted that this was to maintain anonymity, the other studies did not reference ethnicity at all. Some studies consisted of women from various ethnic backgrounds, while others did not, either intentionally or unintentionally. White women were the most investigated (18), with 13 studies examining the experiences of Black women. Few studies explored the experiences of Asian (5), Latino (4), women from mixed ethnic backgrounds (4), and Maōri (1) women, or any women from additional ethnic backgrounds. In terms of participant country, most studies were conducted on Western

women, with 18 studies involving participants from the United States, nine from England, eight from the United Kingdom more broadly, five from Canada, and one from Poland. Only one study was conducted with Japanese women, and one with women from New Zealand.

Out of 40 studies, 34 did not report on the sexual orientation of their participants; three studies explicitly explored the experiences of lesbian women, while two studies explored the experiences of lesbian and straight women, and one study had nineteen heterosexual and one “non-heterosexual” participants. Only one study reported a broader spectrum of sexual orientation. Finally, an overwhelming 36 studies did not report whether participants were disabled; three studies reported that their participants reported no disability, and one study reported that one participant reported a disability.

Thematic Summary

The research team’s review of the data and reflective thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2022) generated four co-constructed broader dimensions, each with their own higher- and lower-order themes. The considerable number of themes, accompanied by the desire to do women’s stories justice, makes it impossible to extensively thematically discuss each layer of the general dimensions, higher-order themes, and sub-themes. Additionally, the aim of this scoping review is to present our findings rather than discuss their meaning throughout. With this in mind, we will present and define each general dimension and their higher-order themes below; more specific information surrounding deeper data analysis, alongside raw data examples, can be found on each general dimension’s respective Tables (1-4).

General Dimension One: Benevolent Sexism

The first broader dimension resulting from our data analysis was *benevolent sexism* (Table 1), or women’s experiences of benevolent sexism while working in sport; this involved the domestic idealisation of women and protective paternalism towards women who were perceived to reflect traditional patriarchal standards (e.g., Glick & Fiske, 1996). The first

higher-order theme in this dimension was *patriarchal assumptions about women*. Women were often assumed to exist within the normalised patriarchal expectations of women and were treated as such while in the sporting workplace. Sub-themes were *assumed (and enforced) femininity, assumed domesticity, assumed fragility, and benevolent objectification*. The second higher-order theme was *benevolent sexism in the sporting workplace*, or women's experiences of active benevolent sexism in the workplace, which had two sub-themes: *mothering role at work, and patronisation toward women*.

General Dimension Two: Hostile Sexism

The second general dimension co-created by the authors reflected women's experiences with *hostile sexism* (Table 2); this involved hostility, derogatory beliefs and comments, dominative paternalism, and maltreatment more broadly towards women who were not seen to represent traditional patriarchal standards (e.g., Glick & Fiske, 1996). Women's experiences with hostile sexism were reported most frequently in the data and consisted of six higher-order themes. The first, *barriers to entry and career progression*, meant that women experienced significant barriers to entering careers in sport and/or issues progressing throughout their careers. This higher-order theme consisted of six sub-themes: *boys' club, double standards, having (or the potential to have) a family, occupational gender stereotypes, overt misogyny and discrimination, and lack of salary or equal pay*.

The second higher-order theme was *bullying and harassment*, where women were being consistently bullied and harassed while working in sport. This higher-order theme incorporated two sub-themes, *bullying and intimidation, and sexual advances, harassment, and assault*. Third, the research team co-constructed a higher-order theme of *dehumanisation and lack of respect*; women were systematically disrespected and dehumanised while working in the sporting environment. This higher-order theme consisted of four sub-themes: *banter,*

inferiorising women and their accomplishments, isolation and alienation, and sexualisation and objectification.

The fourth higher-order theme reflecting *hostile sexism* was *privileging men and masculinity*: men and masculinity, particularly hyper-masculinity, were prioritised and valued, while women and femininity were simultaneously ostracised while also perceived as a signpost for harassment within the sporting context. This higher-order theme consisted of three sub-themes: *exclusion of skills coded as feminine, prioritising men and men's teams*, and *privileging men's knowledge and skills coded as masculine*.

In the fifth higher-order theme, *systemic and institutional sexism*, sexism was perpetrated by organisations and the general sporting system and culture. Sub-themes included *lack of (development and job) opportunities for women, lack of facilities, kit, etc.*, *sexism as part of the culture*, and *sport is built and coded for and by men*. Finally, our last higher-order theme for the broader dimension of hostile sexism was the idea that *women and sport do not mix*: women's presence in male-coded sport was consistently challenged and undermined. This higher-order theme consisted of four sub-themes, including *assumed lack of competence, being unable to do one's job, overt questions about women's place in sport*, and *unfair standards and scrutiny*.

General Dimension Three: Managing Sexism in Sport

The third general dimension resulting from data analysis, *managing sexism in sport* (Table 3), portrays how women managed their experiences with sexism in sport and had three higher-order themes. In the first, *importance of role models and mentors*, women stressed the importance of role models, mentors, and a community of women in facilitating development and career progression and 'offsetting' the isolation experienced in their respective sporting environments. This higher-order theme had no sub-themes. Second, for the higher-order theme *managing perceptions through gender performance*, women developed specific gender

performances to manage others' perceptions and offset their marginalised identity (or identities). This higher-order theme had two sub-themes, *managing appearance* and *regulating behaviour and body language*. Finally, the higher-order theme *coping with sexism* portrays how women coped with the consistent sexism they faced and consists of two sub-themes: *normalising and/or accepting sexism*, and *problem-focused coping*.

General Dimension Four: Intersectional Pressures

The fourth general dimension, *intersectional pressures* (Table 4) demonstrated how intersecting marginalised identities compounded women's experiences of sexism in sport and had five higher-order themes. First, *cultural taxation* refers to the additional labour demanded from women from underrepresented or marginalised groups; this higher-order theme had three sub-themes, consisting of *burden of creating change*, *increased or assumed role mode or maternalistic pressures for Black women*, and *representative status*. The second higher-order theme, '*further from the norm*', portrayed how the further from the White, heterosexual, non-disabled, male norm a woman was (e.g., the greater extent of one's marginalised identities), the more complicated and difficult women's experiences were. The three sub-themes included *intersecting identities as a barrier*, *privileging heterosexuality*, and *privileging whiteness*.

Third, *self-regulation* was co-created as a higher-order theme in which women with multiple marginalised identities found it necessary to further regulate their bodies, behaviour, and the perceptions of others in order to make others feel comfortable with their presence, often in order to keep their jobs or feel physically or psychologically safe. Sub-themes for this included *systemic 'don't ask don't tell' towards non-heterosexuality*, *managing appearance*, and *managing expression and expectations of behaviour*. The fourth higher-order theme for this general dimension was *systemic and institutional barriers*, where the systems in place (coded for white, heterosexual, non-disabled men) acted as barriers for women with intersecting marginalised identities; the two sub-themes were *lack of opportunity for*

development and career progression and *systemic lack of diversity and/or inclusion*. Finally, the higher-order theme of *unfair standards and scrutiny* had no sub-themes and describes how women with multiple marginalised identities felt more scrutiny and an increased need to be perfect than women with no other marginalised identities.

Discussion

Our scoping review identified 40 peer-reviewed studies published between the years 2000-2024 that qualitatively explored women's experiences of sexism while working in sport. This is the first review to explore women's experiences working in sport more broadly, and more specifically, the first to explore women's experiences of sexism in the sporting context.

Descriptive Findings

From a descriptive point of view, results indicated a marked increase in published research relating to the topic since 2010; notably, 47.5% of the research was conducted in the previous four years, and every article included women authors. This is positive on many levels. First, these findings are indicative that more women are either researching or detailing their experiences, potentially beginning to forsake the assumption that sexism is a part of sport culture that we should neither speak about nor attempt to solve. Second, this suggests that women's interests are being explored to a greater extent in peer-reviewed research, and to extend this further, that the leaky pipeline that acts as a barrier to women progressing in academia (e.g., Cowley et al., 2021) is becoming less pervasive. The pervasive lack of women researchers has been linked to the underrepresentation of women in exercise sciences (James et al., 2023), indicating that the leaky academic pipeline has had a direct impact on the repression of women's (psychological, biological, sociological, physiological etc.) experiences in sport and therefore the insufficient progress and representation of women in sport and sport science. That said, these results represent a step towards positive change, rather than systematic change – there is still a long way to go.

Unfortunately, many studies lacked any focus on the intersectional nature of sexism. The majority of participants were white, Western women, and even when studies reported participants from a range of backgrounds, the intersectional nature of their experiences was rarely discussed unless this was specifically related to the research question. Only six studies reported participant sexual orientation, and there was no exploration of disability, with most studies not engaging with this characteristic even in their reporting. It is possible that women with multiple marginalised identities are further excluded from sport, resulting in fewer women with these identities participating in research. Additionally, women with multiple marginalised identities might feel either more of a burden (e.g., cultural taxation) to participate in research or that voicing their experiences might add to the environmental stressors through increased sexism, racism, homophobia, ableism, etc. Regardless, this is a serious failing from a feminist and qualitative research perspective, where we have the chance and responsibility to explore the nuance of participants' experiences and how individuals' intersecting identities might impact their interaction with sport culture.

Acquiring knowledge can be dialectical in nature (e.g., Weskott, 1983), and qualitative research can be crucial in understanding context and providing a voice to marginalised individuals and groups to facilitate progress (e.g., Elliot and Timulak, 2005). Notably, one might argue that qualitative research's broad objective to uncover meaning suggests a responsibility to design research that provides the opportunity for marginalised groups to make their experiences, and what this means to them, clear. Additionally, feminist enquiry has both critical and emancipatory power, and arguably the responsibility to act in line with this (e.g., Weskott, 1979; 2018). Importantly, we must ensure that future feminist research does not fall into the trap of employing research to advance careers and fail to improve the lives of those who provided the data; we must avoid exploiting *all* "women as objects of knowledge," or else we contribute to the patriarchal structures that we are

attempting to deconstruct (e.g., Weskott, 2018, p. 63). While there are clearly ethical matters to consider, transparent, authentic research can positively contribute to progress when recognising the co-creation of data throughout the research process (e.g., Smith & Sparkes, 2017). It is imperative that researchers improve their focus on individuals with marginalised identities to explore possibilities that facilitate positive change and make sport a more welcoming environment for all. While it is important that we do not reduce women to statistics, an essential starting place for normalising the broad spectrum of women existing in sport and providing solutions for their negative experiences is to both explore the experiences of women with various marginalised identities and to accurately report this data.

Thematic Findings

While it is impossible to provide a nuanced discussion of this review's thematic findings in the present format, we will attempt to consider what we perceive as the most consequential aspects of our findings. Women experienced benevolent sexism interpersonally, while hostile sexism ranged from interpersonal through to organisational and systemic mechanisms, likely in an attempt to exclude women from sport. While some sub-themes (e.g., "exclusion of skills coded as feminine") may not seem hostile at first glance, the reported experiences that contributed to the co-creation of these themes were direct and hostile in nature (e.g., barring women from doing the jobs they were hired for as a result of perceived femininity). Not only were women bullied and dehumanised at an interpersonal level, but the systems in place were active barriers to women existing in sport through factors such as being unable to do their job, lack of equal pay, double standards, or the mere potential to have children resulting in assumptions about how women's time should be spent (benevolent sexism) and being denied career progression they have earned (hostile sexism).

Importantly, hostile sexism was the most frequently reported, and most deeply explored, type of sexism in the reviewed studies, with many studies not even delineating

experiences of benevolent sexism. While hostile sexism might be more likely to be noticed and therefore reported, the summative experience of the women in these studies was that hostile sexism reflected their experience of working in sport. When one considers that sport was built for and by men as one powerful mechanism by which to maintain the white, heteronormative patriarchy we are embedded within (e.g., Anderson, 2009, Bourdieu, 2001), it makes sense that women (and queer, non-white, or disabled individuals) simply existing in sport might be considered an act of defiance against patriarchy, and therefore, leaves them open to hostility.

In line with this, being a woman in itself was a barrier to simply existing in sport that often provoked various forms of hostile sexism, and women engaged with varying methods of coping with their experiences. Women were often at a loss as to why they were obliged to change how they looked and worked, how they acted, and their presentation of self more broadly to (even attempt) to work effectively in the domain they were passionate about. One might consider that this contradiction was one reason for the considerable accounts reflecting Fink's (2016) article detailing the embeddedness of sexism in sport; the women in these studies attempted to normalise their experiences as the price they paid for engaging with their passion, with variations of "it's just part of the culture!" common throughout the studies' data. Women strategically performing traits congruent with traditionally masculine fields are often looked upon more favourably than those who acknowledge their gender (e.g., Wessel et al., 2014); therefore, it is no surprise that women working in sport were frequently analysing and altering their self-presentation to survive the hyper-masculine sport culture. However, constant regulation of oneself to conceal a stigmatised identity has been linked to anxiety, memory impairment, and compromised well-being, as well as physical impacts such as negative effects on one's cardiovascular system (Elliott & Doane, 2015; Richards et al. 1999). Additionally, this identity concealment can compromise performance (e.g., Ellemers &

Baretto, 2006), adding to the idea that women do not belong in sport. Importantly, perceived organisational support is integral to embedding strategies to confront stigmatisation in male-dominated fields (e.g., Ryan et al., 2019), signifying a significant onus on sport organisations to actively challenge sexism rather than accept it as part of a culture they cannot change.

While women as a whole were excluded from career entry and progression in sport, experienced a great deal of hostile sexism, and engaged in necessary but potentially damaging coping mechanisms to survive in the sporting environment, this experience was compounded for women with additional marginalised identities. Women with intersecting marginalised identities, particularly women from the global majority, described experiencing cultural taxation through additional interpersonal and organisational burdens. Adding to the ethical issues surrounding this increased unpaid emotional and organisational labour, diversity-related labour can have a negative impact on performance (e.g., Rosales et al., 2022), which might provide (false) evidence that these women do not belong in the sporting environment. Additionally, women with intersecting marginalised identities described engaging in extended identity management. Non-heterosexual women were actively encouraged to conceal their identities from both interpersonal and organisational sources. Women from global majority backgrounds necessitated suppressing their cultural authenticity, with many Black women referencing continuously walking a fine line to avoid the “angry black woman” stereotype. As stated, considerable research demonstrates that the above identity management can have negative impacts on both well-being and performance (e.g., Boyles, 2008; Ellemers & Baretto, 2006; Williams, 2017). Importantly, while there were no direct discussions surrounding managing or hiding a disability or disabilities in sport organisations in the included studies (due to the lack of reporting and/or exploration), we are aware that this can significantly compromise mental and physical well-being (e.g., Pryke-Hobbes et al., 2023).

Recommendations for Future Research

This scoping review has revealed a significant dearth of peer-reviewed information surrounding women's experiences of sexism while working in sport, despite the acknowledgement of sexism as embedded in sport culture (Fink, 2016), the numerous and consistently rising anecdotal reports of women's experiences, and the damaging personal and career consequences (e.g., McGinty-Minister et al., 2024). Additionally, and perhaps unsurprisingly, this review has revealed the under-researched landscape of intersectional identities in sport, accompanied by a focus on and prioritisation of Western experiences. While each reader's individual expertise and interpretation of the presented data will likely inform additional areas to explore, the research team can recommend some initial areas to prioritise.

Primarily, we recommend that researchers engage in a 'zoomed-in' approach so that we might gain a more nuanced understanding of sexism in sport. Importantly, sport research requires closer examination of sexist attitudes and experiences while working in a) various sports, b) women's, men's, and mixed-gender sports, c) various levels of sport, and d) various sport countries and cultures. Additionally, it is consequential to learn who is perpetrating the most sexism at interpersonal, organisational, and cultural levels. For example, it is relevant to understand whether there are specific stakeholder roles, sporting organisations, or sport-specific cultures that engage in more sexism; if so, we must explore instances of hostile and benevolent sexism, what sexism looks like in practice, and its outcomes. Researchers should consider how sexism in their organisations impacts all performers, inclusive of stakeholders and athletes. We must deduce whether organisations have policies in place to deal with sexism like they do many other forms of discrimination. Further, it is crucial to explore the interpersonal and organisational outcomes of sexism; for example, are perpetrators disciplined, and what are the psychological impacts of experiencing and witnessing sexism in sport? Additionally, research should diversify in its exploration of a range of characteristics

(e.g., job role); despite the wide-ranging roles individuals might occupy in sports, only 11 roles were specifically investigated in the 40 studies, 44.5% of which were coaches.

Significantly more research must be conducted on the cultural taxation women engage in and the mental and physical impacts this has on women in sport-specific settings. Further exploration of the broader spectrum of sexual orientation, and how this impacts women's experiences of sexism, must also be prioritised. Considerable research needs to be conducted on disabled women working in sport, and how their intersecting identities impact their experiences of sexism and subsequent coping. Importantly, specific exploration into the physiological and psychological impacts of constantly managing self-expression for women of all identities in sport is paramount.

Additionally, there are several broader approaches to explore. First, because scoping reviews do not assess study quality (e.g., Campbell et al., 2023), it is imperative to explore the quality of research being conducted on women's experiences in sport. Further, exploring more specific intersecting identities at a broader level (e.g., a systematic approach) might highlight priorities for research and intervention. We should also examine sport culture more broadly, considering the culture itself was often identified in the studies as the intermediary between women's experiences and sexism. Finally, one merely needs to examine the descriptive findings of this study to understand that we must prioritise exploring significantly more diversity in women's experiences. Broadly speaking, this review can only paint a very white, Western picture of women's experiences of sexism, which is a major finding in itself.

Summary

Barriers for women in sport, and society more broadly, are not unheard of; in fact, these restrictions and obstacles are so normalised that we often look past them. This is incredibly evident in our scoping review, which has identified numerous sexist barriers and experiences that are rarely highlighted, and when they are, are often unlikely to be taken

seriously. Despite the challenges associated with women's experiences being documented in peer-reviewed sport research (e.g., Cowley et al., 2021; James et al., 2023), we have presented a review of the experiences of 515 women; even in light of the understanding that the reported population is far from representative, we have provided credible, peer-reviewed evidence that women working in sport experience various forms of hostile and benevolent sexism, and that these experiences are compounded by additional marginalised identities and result in various coping and management strategies, many of which can compromise mental and physical well-being.

Limitations

As with any review, there are limitations to the present scoping review. While we aim to be exhaustive in our searches, data analysis, and reporting, there is a chance that the research team omitted relevant studies or 'missed' data that another research group might have reported. For example, given that the inclusion criteria meant that only studies written in or translated into English were included, there is a chance we excluded data that would have contributed to our findings. Notably, the research team utilised the language excluder in the final stage of the exclusion process and noted that this changed the number database-generated of studies by between one and four studies on the various databases. As referenced, there are various considerations to engage with when undertaking qualitative research of this nature; the research team recognise that their interaction with the data resulted in data co-creation, and while employing their own experiences in the research process this is a key, beneficial aspect of our chosen methodology, we acknowledge that we cannot completely depict the stories of the represented women. Finally, an obvious limitation of this review is reflected throughout in the nature of the white, Western, heteronormative, and ableist focus that excludes the experiences of many women working in sport.

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Tables

Table 1: General Dimension One: Benevolent Sexism

Higher Order Theme	Lower Order Theme	Lower Order Theme Definition	Raw Data
Patriarchal Assumptions about Women	Assumed (and enforced) Femininity	Women were assumed to be ‘feminine’ and were ‘punished’ when stepping out of prescribed patriarchal gender norms	“Come on girls, get your make-up on, let’s go” (Goldman & Gervis, 2021, p. 90)
	Assumed Domesticity	Women were assumed/expected to have and prioritise lives as wives and mothers	One point said to me: ‘oh you’ve got a daughter so obviously you can’t come’ (Goldman & Gervis, 2021, p. 91)
	Assumed Fragility	Women were deemed too fragile to handle crass language or assumed to be mentally or physically weaker than men	I thought I was part of a group discussion, and one of the males turned to me and said ‘sorry for swearing darling, I forgot you were there’ (Lafferty et al., 2022, p. 10)
	Benevolent Objectification	Women were assumed to be objects to ‘date’ or ‘have children’. Benevolent objectification cherished women in these roles, unlike hostile objectification.	Married women, she said, do not face the same scrutiny regarding player relationships because they are seen as “less of a threat . . . I mean, more of just a person, and less of she’s female?” While Lisa alluded to the idea of married women restoring some amount of their “personhood” versus “womanhood,” it appears that their objectification as women does not necessarily lessen, but rather shifts direction (Hindman & Walker, 2020, p. 70)
Benevolent Sexism in the Sporting Workplace	Mothering Role at Work	Women were expected to partake in ‘mothering’ activities in the workplace (e.g., look after others)	The female athletic trainers in our study described their role in relation to that of a mothering figure or “team mom” (Barrett et al., 2018, p. 116)
	Patronisation towards Women	Men were condescending towards women	It is little comments like “oh, I am surprised you have managed to get the match on,” and I will just think why are you surprised? The members of the committee also call me “love”

all the time. That annoys me. You would not be calling me “love” if I was a male colleague (Clarkson et al., 2019, p. 77)

General Dimension 2: Hostile Sexism

Higher-Order Theme	Lower-Order Theme	Lower-Order Theme Definition	Raw Data
Barriers to Entry and Career Progression	Boys' Club	Groups of men acted as exclusionary mechanisms for women	Men often meet outside official business hours and make friends. With time, they develop relationships that allow them to work effectively and help each other. Most often, women are absent from these meetings that make work easier for men and good for their careers (Organista, 2020, p. 506)
	Double Standards	Double standards for women and men meant women struggled to do their jobs or gain entry/progress through sporting careers	You couldn't oversee a man's sport because you hadn't played that sport and you can't oversee football because you've never played football...you'd be in the same environment where they have men hiring men to coach women sports (Welch et al., 2021, p. 24)
	Having (or the potential to have) Children/a Family	Having or the ability to have children was used against women for hiring decisions, responsibility allocation, etc.	She casually mentioned to her boss that she planned to have children someday, he "freaked out." She had to reassure him it was not happening anytime soon (Hindman & Walker, 2020, p. 71)
	Occupational Gender Stereotypes	Gender stereotypes informed the work women were expected to do, and/or prevented women from obtaining male-coded roles and leadership positions	They assumed I was there to make the cups of tea and to tidy up (Lafferty et al., 2022, p. 10)
	Overt Misogyny and Discrimination	Women experienced overt discrimination in hiring and career progression	These golf outings are often used to raise money for the athletic arm of the institution, so when Faith was hired she knew donors "wanted to invite me, but this one guy who's in this group just flat out

			told me, ahh, you have the wrong plumbing.” As she laughed, she continued to say “so they invited my husband to go with them.” (Taylor & Wells, 2017, p. 168-169)
	Lack of Salary or Equal Pay	Women either struggled to be paid for their work or did not have equitable pay, leading to many leaving their profession	Lack of financial compensation was a common factor that was brought up by many participants, and precipitated their departure from athletic training (Mazerolle et al., 2017, p. 17)
Bullying and Harassment	Bullying and Intimidation	Women were actively bullied and intimidated by men	One method by which women’s performance is often undermined is by threats to their physical and mental well-being and safety: “Male coaches would interject to take over a conversation with an athlete, even though I was coaching at a much higher level and have much more experience. One male coach followed me around when I was coaching, which I felt was intimidating, and he wouldn’t stop when I told him it was making me uncomfortable.” (McGinty-Minister et al., 2024, p. 11)
	Sexual Advances, Harassment, and Assault	Women experienced sexual advances from co-workers who were men, were sexually harassed at work, and/or experienced sexual harassment from men	“I’ve had people try to kiss me on the mouth.” She also shared a story of a season ticket holder “jokingly” telling her she could sit on his lap (Hindman & Walker, 2020, p. 70)
Dehumanisation and Lack of Respect	Banter	Men used banter as a tool to disrespect and/or dehumanise women	Shelcey offered one such example, sharing how a man in her department joked, “Whose d*** did you suck to get that lead?” (Hindman & Walker, 2020, p. 68)

Inferiorising Women and their Accomplishments	Regardless of position, women's skills, accomplishments, experience, etc. were systematically undervalued by men	One participant recounted her experience of not being selected for a national coaching position because her playing achievements were trivialized by the [male majority] board of selectors...they start saying that "you've only played women's [sport]". . . I've played at the top; I've played in a World Cup final! (Norman, 2010, p. 95)
	Isolation and Alienation Women were actively alienated by men and felt isolated and 'othered'	Ann previously worked for a team where she was the only—and the first—full-time woman on staff. She described her relationship with her boss, the team's general manager: "He wouldn't talk to me, he would have somebody who was considered on the same level as me tell me how to do things." (Hindman & Walker, 2020, p. 68-69)
	Sexualisation and Objectification Women were viewed as sexual objects, especially those who did not 'fit' with the prescribed benevolent gender roles	A man in Christy's organization said of the women in the office, "I can't wait for you girls to wear sundresses all of the time." Diane described how some members of the event staff at her team's arena were "treating us like we're meat" (Hindman & Walker, 2020, p. 70)
Privileging Men and Masculinity	Exclusion of skills coded as feminine Skills women are socially constructed to possess or might naturally possess were unvalued, seen as suspicious, or mocked	"the first team director of rugby will not allow a psychologist in, even though his players are crying out for it, because it will make them weaker. She will make them cry." (Goldman & Gervis, 2021, p. 89)

	Prioritising men and men’s teams	Men and sports/teams consisting of men were the ‘marker’ by which everyone were prioritised for funding, progression, marketing, development, etc.	Participants also argued that men tend to receive more resources and funding, and female coaches are “judged against” male coaches (Kamphoff, 2010, p. 366)
	Privileging Men’s Knowledge and Skills coded as masculine	Men’s knowledge and expertise was valued and prioritised	Although not everyone who already had access to the table had experience playing or coaching football, their male status granted them permission and acceptance Gerri was not afforded (Taylor et al., 2018, p. 327)
Systematic and Institutional Sexism	Lack of (development and job) opportunities for women	Women’s careers were inhibited by a lack of development opportunities, and there were far less jobs available for women than men; men were prioritised in hiring and development	One coach believed that flawed coach education in her sport had prevented her from being the best coach she wanted to be (Norman, 2010, p. 100)
	Lack of facilities, kit, etc.	Organisations did not provide women with appropriate facilities (e.g., toilet, locker room) or kit	“No female toilets, I quickly got the sense that they felt this was not a place for women” (Lafferty et al., 2022, p. 9)
	Sexism as Part of the Culture	Women reported that sexism permeated all aspects of sport culture and often outlasted staff changes	Overall, the women felt their organizations were unaware—or perhaps unconcerned—with the sexism women experience (Hindman & Walker, 2020, p. 68)
	Sport is built for and by (coded for) men	Sexism was interwoven throughout all social, economic, infrastructural, etc. structures in sport	Hope declared “[Men] get these opportunities because it’s built for them” (Price et al., 2017, p. 71)
“Women and sport don’t mix”	Assumed Lack of Competence	Women were automatically assumed to have no or little knowledge about sport, despite qualifications and/or experience	She has had to show parents “that I know what I’m talking about, I know what I’m doing” and there were “kids [boys] saying oh my Dad didn’t think I should be coached by a girl.” (Fielding-Lloyd & Mean, 2016, p. 414)

Being Unable to do Job	Men consistently undermined women's attempts to do their job; women needed to design strategies to be able to do their job	“I would have a father approach me and [say] ‘I want to speak to who’s in charge here’, [and I say], ‘Well, it’s me’ [and the parent will respond], ‘No, I want to speak to who’s in charge’ [and I have to respond again] ‘Sorry, you’re speaking to the person in charge’” (Norman & Simpson, 2022, p. 9)
Overt Questions about Women’s Place in Sport	Women’s involvement in sport was constantly questioned and invalidated	‘women shouldn’t be involved in our sport, you should be at home, making the dinner’. This was in front of players, I felt humiliated and unable to defend myself (Lafferty et al., 2022, p. 10)
Unfair Standards and Scrutiny	Women were held to unfair performance standards, felt they needed to be perfect and had no room to make mistakes, and felt like there was a constant microscope on them	Women stated that they were treated with a high degree of distrust, they had to work harder than men and prove their utility for work (Organista, 2020, p. 506).

General Dimension Three: Managing Sexism in Sport

Higher Order Theme	Lower Order Theme	Lower Order Theme Definition	Raw Data
Importance of Role Models and Mentors	Internalised Misogyny		100% lack of female role models. Who do I have to look up to? (Lewis et al., 2018, p. 35) One woman explained the problem: I don't do the low-cut shirt thing. I don't do any of that because it's not me. But I see, I see women giving the sideline reporting for NFL games in a tank top. And I'm thinking 'I wouldn't listen to her.' (Whiteside & Hardin, 2011, p. 219)
			"I have to think carefully about how I'm presenting myself before I go to work" (Goldman & Gervis, 2021, p. 92)
Managing Perceptions through Gender Performance	Managing Appearance	Women crafted their appearance to fit an identity that would be more positively perceived. These 'masks' offered some form of physical and/or career safety by making others more comfortable	"I've had some times where I've thought, should I change my personality?" (Hindman & Walker, 2020, p. 71)
	Regulating Behaviour and Body Language	Women altered their behaviour and body language to 'better' fit identities that would be the most palatable to those around them	"It's pretty much the norm for women working within male sport environments, and the worst part is you can feel like you need to let it slide, or go along with it, otherwise you aren't seen to be 'one of the lads' and thus you're not integrated within the sporting culture and your work can be rendered ineffective." (McGinty-Minister et al., 2024, p. 9-10)
	Normalising and/or Accepting Sexism	While most women agreed that the sexism they experience was not right, they coped with their situations by normalising their experiences and maintaining that sexism was just "part of the job"	'I'm not being gagged, I am not submitting to it'. She left, I'm still involved, but getting an awful lot of grief about it. (Norman & Rankin-Wright, 2018, p. 437)
Coping with Sexism	Problem-focused Coping	Very few women reported actively attempting to take steps to confront, mitigate, or stop sexism. These efforts were often unfruitful and resulted in accepting sexism as part of their job, or left sport altogether	

General Dimension Four: Intersectional Pressures

Higher Order Theme	Lower Order Theme	Lower Order Theme Definition	Raw Data
Cultural Taxation	Burden of Creating Change	Women with intersecting identities felt a personal burden to create change, instead of individuals with privilege and/or power	Participants felt that the onus was on them to change the system themselves, rather than relying on members of the existing structures to enact change (Clarkson et al., 2022, p. 7)
	Increased or Assumed Role Model or Maternalistic Pressures for Black Women	Black women were often expected to be role models or take on a maternalistic role towards others, primarily Black student-athletes	Out of the 105 [players], 90 of them are black and they probably look at her, they'll probably pay more attention to [a black woman] and they're viewing her as a mother figure or sister figure that they don't get the same from an administrator or white male (Price et al., 2017, p. 66)
	Representative Status	Women with intersecting identities felt additional pressure to 'inspire' those around them rather than be able to exist alongside their role description; they were also often given, or felt the responsibility, to take on, extra labour to represent their 'group' (e.g., sitting on boards, develop policy, etc). This labour was not compensated.	Tamara's comments reflected the manner in which her identity as a person of color was seen as an important tool by a white, male administrator for relating to student-athletes (Price et al., 2017, p. 67)
'Further from the Norm'	Intersecting Identities as a Barrier	Women with intersecting marginalised identities found this to be a barrier to securing roles and adequately doing their jobs; they often wondered which of their identities this was a result of, but determined the intersecting of identities was the cause	The double disadvantage of being Maori and female was more noticeable in a Paakeha environment: A classic is going into a Paakeha environment and they immediately discount you because you're a Maori and you're a woman (Palmer & Masters, 2010, p. 336)
	Privileging Heterosexuality	Heterosexuality was privileged and preferred in sporting contexts	During school holidays, many heterosexual administrators and coaches would have their family meet them at their office for lunch...I

Self-Regulation	Privileging Whiteness	Being white afforded women (and men) privilege and preference in their sporting context	<p>decided to have my [same-sex] partner and stepdaughter meet me at my office before heading off to lunch...the next day my head coach sat me down and relayed a message from the athletic director, in which he said I am not allowed to bring “those people” to the office any more (Walker & Melton, 2015, p. 264)</p> <p>You mean that you have diverse people, but they need to act like you. We can be a different color, but we need to act like you (McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017, p. 402)</p> <p>Kim continued to discuss the frustration she felt for having to hide “the person you are” and “this little secret world with a lot of pressure.” (Kamphoff, 2010, p. 368)</p>
	Systemic ‘Don’t ask don’t tell’ towards non-heterosexuality	Non-heterosexual women were encouraged or blatantly told to hide their sexuality	
	Managing Appearance	Women with marginalised identities felt the need to regulate their appearance to ‘fit’ prescribed cultural expectations	<p>And now I feel like I have to think about, “Okay, well I’m a woman in this space, so how am I dressing properly? I’m Black in this space? So is my hair appropriate? (Keaton, 2022, p. 8)</p>
	Managing Expression and Expectations of Behaviour	Women felt the need to manage their body language and behaviour to more closely reflect prioritised identities and needed to provide explanations for some behaviour (e.g., leadership styles) to manage others’ perceptions	<p>During her initial interview, she recalled feeling the need to emphasize her “straight forward” behavior that she understood to be off-putting to some men (Price et al., 2017, p. 69).</p>
Systemic and Institutional Barriers	Lack of Opportunity for development and career progression	Women with marginalised identities experienced increased lack of opportunities to progress through their careers compared to women with no other marginalised identity	<p>They talked generally about three areas that served as barriers: access discrimination or limitations placed on minority groups that were not related to their potential performance in a head coach position; lack of ongoing support</p>

<p>Unfair Standards and Scrutiny</p>	<p>Systemic Lack of Diversity and/or Inclusion</p>	<p>There was a broad lack of diversity and inclusion throughout the sporting context, and a systemic lack of support for those with marginalised identities</p>	<p>from their own athletic departments to encourage development; and harmful stereotypes that alter the perception of gatekeepers that Black females can be leaders (Borland & Bruening, 2010, p. 412) All of the coaches and coach developers felt that The FA needed to work harder to diversify their workforce to be more representative and attractive to, the playing and coaching population (Norman et al., 2018, p. 403) Not only would boosters and stakeholders question their presence, but their colleagues would challenge their decisions more often (Price et al., 2017, p. 71)</p>
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Empirical Paper One

Please find at :

McGinty-Minister, K. L., Champ, F., Eubank, M., Littlewood, M., & Whitehead, A.

(2023). Stakeholder conceptualizations of mental health and mental illness in English Premier League Football academies. *Managing Sport and Leisure*, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2023.2239259>

Empirical Paper Two

Please find at:

McGinty-Minister, K. L., Swettenham, L., Champ, F. M, & Whitehead, A. E. (2024) ‘Smile more’: women’s experiences of sexism while working in sport from a socio-ecological perspective, *Sport in Society*, DOI: 10.1080/17430437.2024.2321357

Research Commentary

Throughout this reflection, I will consider my development as a researcher throughout my academic experiences, with a primary focus on the professional doctorate programme. This is a broader reflection on my development as a researcher and academic, where I will touch on important aspects of my development; more specific reflections about distinct, potentially critical moments can be found in the reflective practice section of this portfolio, principally the research-centred reflections.

Initial Research Experience

Before the professional doctorate, my only exposure to the research process was either brief or for a specific purpose such as writing a dissertation to fulfil programme objectives. More specifically, I explored the following topics throughout my degrees: a) emerging adulthood in my BA degree (e.g., Arnett, 2015), b) imagery and injury recovery in my MSc Applied Psychological Therapies, and c) superstition in basketball for my MSc Sport and Exercise Psychology. I have always really enjoyed and performed well in research projects (e.g., merit and distinction), but for whatever reason, did not recognise just how much research could or would shape a person's career – or how much I would enjoy research when I encountered a topic I am truly passionate about. While I did enjoy the research process, and did have an interest in the topics, I felt as if my engagement with research was very process- and outcome-based rather than driven by interest.

Professional Doctorate

When I began the professional doctorate, I realised that I was behind my peers when it came to research. Some had one or two publications from their MSc, while others at the very least had a topic they were excited to start researching. On the other hand, we had never even discussed publishing in either of my MSc's! I was also still heavily focused on and convinced that as sport psychology trainees, we needed to take a performance lens (e.g., reflection 11);

this never sat right with me, and I was not sure why. I balanced this confusion and need to choose a topic of interest with something that had had a personal impact on myself and my family, that I could frame through a performance narrative: injury, injury recovery, and well-being. Over the next year or so, I delved into injury research while also developing my philosophy of practice; this parallel exploration led to a more in-depth exploration into well-being, at which point I found the Keyes (2014) model for mental health. Interestingly, I recently came across a research notebook of mine from 2019, a time when my approach to well-being and philosophy learning might be described as ‘going down the rabbit hole’. In the notebook, countless attempts at justifying my interest in well-being through a performance lens are obvious; for example, I was under the impression that I needed to justify exploring athlete well-being, and thoroughly researched well-being outcomes that could be linked to performance. My conclusion was “Overall, well-being suffers, performance suffers – WB = PERF!”. There are also many notes attempting to justify my preference for qualitative data through the importance of contextualised data to strengthen quantitative findings, rather than a belief that individuals’ experiences and stories matter in their own right. Perhaps more interesting, upon reflection, were notes surrounding what would become my passions and significantly inform my research identity: “holistic ecological approach to development? Rather than just identity/inner focus?” and “female athletes neglected in sport psych lit!”. My notebook was littered with similar annotations, but my tunnel focus on well-being and performance might have prevented me from recognising their importance.

In the summer of 2020, a group from the professional doctorate (current and previous students) engaged in research on critical moments and COVID-19 (Whitcomb-Khan et al., 2021). Now that I reflect three and a half years later, I view this as the ‘fire spark’ for my true research journey for two major reasons. First, the experience urged me to better consider my

research paradigm, which I had spent much time on; this prompted me to integrate my two years' worth of reflections about my views on humanity and the world with how I conceptualised research, which aided in 'justifying' exploring topics that were not centred around performance – or rather, recognising that a topic's relation to performance does not denote its worth. Second, working alongside this group was such an amazing experience. Historically, I have not enjoyed group projects for several reasons (e.g., awkward/forced social interactions, there are always those who do not do the work); however, this group introduced me to the possibilities of a group of passionate, hard-working individuals collaborating on an important topic. Being able to engage in topics surrounding research paradigms, critical moments, and other research-relevant topics, while also being able to have catch-ups about life and some great lives, acted as a major coping mechanism during COVID-19 lockdowns and also contributed to my development as a researcher.

Empirical Study One

For my first empirical study, I was asked to be a part of an ERASMUS-funded project examining mental health within football. The timing of this project seemed serendipitous as it intersected with my newfound passion for well-being and my own experiences in football; while many of my football-related experiences were not enjoyable, they influenced my passion and interest in the topic greatly, and I felt motivated to make change in football. We designed an interview schedule surrounding football academy stakeholders' understanding of mental illness and mental health and how their respective clubs managed athlete and stakeholder well-being. I then interviewed academy stakeholders. There was a great deal of data, and while the interviews and transcribing were time-consuming, the most difficult aspect of this project was creating meaningful themes from the countless codes that had arisen. Because we had such a broad interview schedule, there were countless directions to explore with the data, which was extremely overwhelming when I wanted to do justice to the

data. Thankfully at this time, FC was brought onto the project to help me be more reflective in the development of themes and the paper more broadly. FC aided in the co-development of meaningful themes, gave constructive feedback to improve my writing, and was extremely supportive throughout the process. More specifically, one aspect I needed help with was choosing which themes to report in the manuscript. I have always felt that leaving out information can be equivalent to lying by omission, but at the same time, there are word limits! Additionally, determining what data takes priority over other data can feel exclusionary. Overall, I found the thematic analysis and presentation of data to be both my favourite and most challenging experiences with this paper – before publishing.

This paper was my first experience with publishing as a first author, and I did a great deal of reflection on the process. Our first attempts at publishing were in the summer of 2021; we submitted the paper to multiple journals and received extremely mixed feedback (see reflection 12) that was incredibly frustrating and confusing. Even more frustrating was that I felt that we were ahead of the curve with this research and that others would soon catch up and make our research less novel. Thankfully, the manuscript was published in the summer of 2023 after two years of development, and we have received positive feedback so far (McGinty-Minister et al., 2023).

Empirical Study Two

While my first empirical study for the doctorate involved a steep learning curve in terms of thematic analysis, data presentation, and publishing, my second empirical study has contributed most significantly to my identity as an academic. As mentioned in reflection 13, a number of (cultural, external, and internal) factors contributed to the feeling that I have ‘had enough’ of accepting the status quo of being a woman in this world. I decided that I might have the power to make positive changes in my environment, and because of that, I should. When considering this study, I contacted LS about my thoughts; after a discussion, we

decided to move forward with the research and asked FC, who was acting as my supervisor, and AW, who would soon become my supervisor, to support the project. It was the first time I had a solid research group around me with a shared interest, and I felt comfortable expressing and pursuing my ideas for the research.

I adapted and distributed the Everyday Sexism Survey to explore women's experiences of sexism while working in sport (McDonald et al., 2016). Participants were extremely generous with the data they shared in the survey, garnering 105 responses with a great deal of contextual qualitative material alongside some qualitative information. I engaged in initial coding and theme development through reflective thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022); in line with this, I asked LS to meet as a 'critical friend' to explore my interpretation of the data, reflect on the themes that had begun to form and provide any insight or challenge my thought processes. While this process had some challenges due to the sheer amount of data, there was nothing on the more practical level that was challenging. However, we found the data extremely difficult and emotionally taxing to reflect on. Women's experiences ranged from experiencing 'commonplace' acts of interpersonal and organisational sexism (e.g., banter, lack of basic facilities) to outright intimidation and sexual assault. Reading and interpreting the stories of women was an extremely emotional process, and recognising that this was occurring in environments we ourselves worked within compounded this experience. Thankfully, we were able to engage in some emotion-focused coping as well as utilise the paper as a problem-focused mechanism of coping in the hopes that the research would facilitate change. We had two potential broader categories to report: women's experiences of sexism and women's suggestions for making change. As a research group, we concluded that it was important to share women's experiences to emphasise the importance of change before making these suggestions, so we have saved the second category to report in an upcoming paper.

We have been delivering workshops, lectures, and keynotes about this research for two years now; we have continuously had positive feedback from women about the research and have ignited interesting conversations in many settings (e.g., reflections 18, 20). Additionally, the paper was very recently published (McGinty-Minister et al., 2024), and we have had positive feedback so far. Overall, this research process, along with the resulting conversations and feedback, have reaffirmed my desire to engage in research that positively impacts people and changes the systems in place around us for the better.

Systematic Review

The systematic review has been an ‘interesting’ aspect of my professional doctorate experience. One might assume that a systematic review is an ideal manner to research as an autistic person: one does not need to speak to anyone often, the research can be done on your own time, and compiling, analysing, and reporting data about a topic of special interest is honestly a dream. However, I have spent the last several years avoiding this particular assignment; I have never been sure why, and even avoided exploring this through reflection, but I may have developed a theory through reading my reflections surrounding alternative topics throughout my years on the doctorate. As is evidenced by additional aspects of my research and practice (e.g., reflection 14), I struggle to engage with this process when there is a genuine lack of interest. Systematic reviews can consume hundreds of hours, and I desired to conduct a qualitative systematic review. Attempting to engage in this level of work for a topic I am not interested in might have genuinely been impossible (or potentially damaging) in light of what I have learned about autism, special interests, and that a lack of interest can contribute to executive dysfunction in autistic individuals.

However, having established and developed my research passions, I began to become excited about the prospect of a systematic review. Additionally, engaging in empirical study two lead to my recognition of the dearth of research on sexism in sport, further fuelling my

desire to rectify this in any way possible. Since this discovery, I have enjoyed the systematic review process to the extent that I am now planning another one! I honestly cannot think of something more suited to an autistic person than finding an under-explored area of your topic of interest, reading and analysing everything available on that topic, and reporting your findings in hopes of making positive change.

Research Philosophy

My research philosophy has developed over the last several years parallel to my philosophy of practice and values as a person. I value individuals, their experiences, and their perceptions of experiences over reducing people's experiences to data sets that we are expected to believe reflect whole groups. There are countless issues with a reductionist approach to research (or anything, really), and while quantitative data is valuable in many situations, I find the process often difficult to engage with. From my perspective, context and nuance are imperative for understanding a topic as best as a person can, and these important factors are essential in creating change. For example, the majority of physical health-related research has historically been conducted on White men (e.g., Criado-Perez, 2019); most of this research has been quantitative, and researchers have frequently extended their findings to the broader population despite consistent evidence that this is harmful. This lack of context (e.g., how redlining has impacted Black Americans' housing access and therefore physical health) and nuance (e.g., not all liquid is the same, however, the first study examining real blood and menstrual products was published in 2023, leading to issues with product performance and even health issues; DeLoughery, 2023) are essential in understanding and improving the human experience. From my perspective, why do we engage in research, if not for progress?

With this in mind, my philosophical underpinnings consist of a critical realist approach to research (e.g., Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2019). In line with ontological relativism,

I assume that reality is subjective and comprised of human action, interaction, and broader factors and that no singular truth exists; I also situate myself in epistemological constructionism, in that knowledge is socially, culturally, and historically constructed, and not infallible (e.g., Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2019; Madill et al., 2000). While my personal philosophy and beliefs guide my own research, I do understand that when working collaboratively, research paradigms might need to be flexible to accommodate for context and human preferences – a belief in itself that is in line with my research philosophy.

Conclusion and Future Plans

Currently, I am enjoying where I am as a researcher, and am excited to take the next steps as a sport and exercise psychology researcher. My research has begun to make an impact in the field, which is exciting to see! The COVID-19 research has been cited in recent literature, inclusive of two chapters in the recently published *Routledge Handbook of Applied Sport Psychology*, demonstrating its novelty and importance at the time. I have had positive feedback from my football study; speaking about the study in person at DSEP while presenting the poster (Appendix 7) generated interesting conversations with researchers and stakeholders, and I am aware of the article being cited in upcoming studies. The sexism work has had the greatest impact so far, despite being my most recent project; even before its recent publication, the research has been shared at conferences and in lectures and has generated both challenging and motivating conversations with peers and students. The sexism study has won two awards: Best Poster Presentation (WiSEAN Conference, June 2023; Appendix 8), and the Student Free Communication Award (BASES, November 2023; Appendix 9). Having been published four weeks ago at the time of writing this reflection, we are at 654 views of the paper – hopefully the work provides a foundation for positive change!

Additionally, I am involved in numerous projects. I have enough data for two more sexism studies and plans for an additional study, as well as a scoping review ready for journal submissions and plans for another. I am also involved in a number of additional research projects that are extremely interesting and will provide me the opportunity to learn about topics that sit outside of my potentially narrow sexism and well-being lenses while also remaining congruent with my philosophies and making positive change. Overall, my journey as a researcher has not only involved academic development, but it has informed and been informed by my development as a person and practitioner. Of course, we cannot separate the person from their role(s) in life (e.g., researcher, practitioner), and congruency throughout one's many identities can be important in one's growth as a human being (e.g., Rowan & Glouberman, 2018). I have learned that I have a passion for not just the research process, but conducting research that will positively impact individuals and contribute to positive social change. Additionally, the individuals who have aided in my development as a researcher, whether supervisor or peer, have contributed significantly to my recognition that working alongside others on important topics can be an extremely positive, meaningful experience, and I am incredibly happy to have learned that lesson and integrated these groups into my life.

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Reflective Commentary

The following commentary will reflect upon my training experience over my six years in the doctorate programme. I began the doctorate in 2018 after experiencing four years of consistent deaths in both my and my husband's families, accompanied by everything that surrounds those experiences (e.g., grieving, supporting others, etc.), while I now end the programme with a late autism diagnosis accompanied by the processing and rewiring that go hand in hand with such an experience. The doctorate programme has provided me with a platform by which to engage in personal development that aided in my healing, provided me the platform to engage with subjects I am passionate about but did not necessarily know how to engage with, and aided in my overall personal and professional development through its various hurdles *and* support mechanisms – though I did not necessarily recognise this at the time. Aligned with the idea that I am a whole person and not a separate person, practitioner, and researcher, my experiences over the last several years both in and out of sport have impacted my development as a sport psychologist in training. These experiences will be discussed and reflected upon below, particularly through the lens of my relatively novel autism diagnosis.

Finding my Feet: 2018 and 2019

Within weeks of beginning the professional doctorate programme, I recognised that I was far behind my peers on two important factors: research identity and philosophy of practice. So, not important aspects of my development at all! When it came to research, I did not have a topic of interest or published work like some of my peers; additionally, as reflected upon in reflection 11, “I was under the impression that individual and team performance gains were *the* essential role of sport psychology consultants”. I had not been introduced much to philosophy of practice, and I had no idea there were so many elements to consider in regards to my philosophy. At the time, I remember attempting to determine what

aspect of the programme to focus on first; it felt overwhelming, like I needed to go back in time and develop before entering the doctorate programme. I decided to focus on one challenge at a time, and in this case, I chose to dive into the world of philosophy. I bought countless books, read articles, and consumed myself with philosophy; I quickly veered towards humanism and existentialism, and spent nearly a year spending most of my time on the doctorate reading. In my mind, at the time, I needed to develop my philosophy of practice as soon as possible in order to begin working with clients ethically. Additionally, I was hoping that ‘choosing’ a philosophy would provide me answers about *how* to work with clients.

Now that I reflect on this time, a number of things stand out to me in light of my autism diagnosis, that if I would have known then, I might have been able to diversify my work a bit more. First, I think while I did choose to prioritise developing my philosophy to ensure I had a foundation for working with clients, I think underlying this choice was a lack of topic of interest to engage with from a research perspective. As an autistic person, it is difficult to imagine engaging with an ‘uninteresting’ topic at the depth required for research, so much so that it can contribute to executive dysfunction and/or avoidance. Additionally, I think I hoped that learning about my philosophy of practice would teach me how to engage with clients in sessions, just as psychology had ‘taught’ me about the human experience throughout my life. In fact, psychology (and related topics such as sociology) is a popular career for autistic people, who have spent much of their lives “studying” people in an attempt to decipher how and why people think and behave (BPS, 2022). This is done in an attempt to determine how to act in order to avoid negative social consequences (e.g., bullying), ascertain why humans can feel like an alien species sometimes, or a combination of both. I was hoping that philosophy of practice would give me more clues on how to act and react in sessions – especially as a high-masking autistic person. On reflection, one of the most confusing

elements of practice over the years to me was the concept of authenticity – how were we supposed to just...be our authentic selves? Little did I know, not everyone “was rehearsing conversations, needed to focus on intense eye contact, ‘pretended’ to be a social version of themselves and adapted their identity depending on context” (reflection five). I never understood how other psychologists went into sessions without designing and donning the ‘appropriate’ mask for that situation and person – until my autism diagnosis. Finally, with the advantage of time, I can see that my first year on the doctorate was essentially a hyper-focus on philosophy in an attempt to determine who I am as a practitioner, in the hopes that this might provide answers.

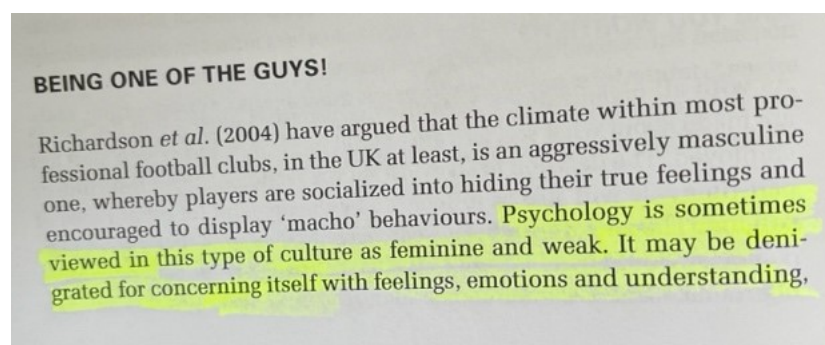
In 2019, I felt that I had developed a philosophy of practice that suited my values and beliefs about humans and the world. Humanistic psychology was (and still is) the foundation of my practice, and as I started engaging in more applied work, I began to consider the more practical rather than idealistic and theoretical elements of philosophy. I did feel consistently torn between my true beliefs and philosophy, and the fast-paced, results-driven nature of sport; I consistently pondered how to practically remain true to my person-centred focus while in these environments. Five years later, that is something I am still considering – but my beliefs still mirror this reflection from 2019:

While sport might be an inherently difficult culture to operate this philosophy within, I believe that most systems in the world have similar difficulties matching the human condition with the requirements of current society. Therefore a human-oriented take on psychology and philosophy might be even more necessary! (Reflection two)

Finding my Courage: 2020 and 2021

After taking some time to find my feet and some direction as a sport psychology degree, I was asked to take part in ERASMUS-funded research surrounding mental health in football in the autumn of 2019. I researched Premier League academy stakeholders’

conceptualisations of mental health and mental illness (McGinty-Minister et al., 2023), and this research accompanied my entrance into the world of working within a football academy. Working and researching in football was quite the shock to the system, and I was beginning to experience what I had read about in research, but I felt up to the challenge. However, by January 2020, I was beginning to become embittered about working in football: “While reading about this phenomenon can provide some context...it is quite another thing to experience the impossibility of working within these systems in person” (Reflection 11). I was starting to recognise that my poor treatment by the club was not merely due to a mistrust of psychology and psychologists, but the fact that I was a woman: “I also got the impression that me being a woman makes them feel I am incompetent” (Reflection 11). Despite this recognition, I did not necessarily consider that I was experiencing sexism – only that my femininity was not necessarily welcomed in the environment. Now that I reflect on this situation, I recognise that the clues were there all along, and that many individuals who have worked in football accept sexism, and rather than challenging this culture, both offer advice to minimise one’s femininity and link femininity to weakness. The photos below illustrate an excerpt from a book I heavily relied on for instruction on how to operate as a psychologist within football; the yellow highlights are from 2019, while the green is a recent addition (Nesti, 2010):



BEING ONE OF THE GUYS!

Richardson *et al.* (2004) have argued that the climate within most professional football clubs, in the UK at least, is an aggressively masculine one, whereby players are socialized into hiding their true feelings and encouraged to display 'macho' behaviours. Psychology is sometimes viewed in this type of culture as feminine and weak. It may be denigrated for concerning itself with feelings, emotions and understanding.

all of which are castigated for being associated with stereotypically feminine ways of thinking and acting.

Sport psychologists who are prepared to throw themselves into the physical activities that may be a part of pre-season training exercises, or team-building events, have a great advantage over those who adopt a more withdrawn role. The opportunity to share in masculine camaraderie and join in the ubiquitous 'banter' that is so much a part of this culture will do much to mitigate the feminine stereotype. If the psychologist has also been a former athlete, or, even better, played football to a good standard, there will be a greater acceptance of their role and function. This clearly means that female sport psychologists will face a different set of challenges, especially if they have not played the game. Interestingly, there are some female practitioners working in professional football who are well accepted, especially where they deliver psychology within their remit as education and welfare officers and with youth players. A possible advantage for a female sport psychologist in professional football culture is that at least she will not be viewed negatively – because she is delivering a service that is traditionally seen as rather feminine.

As mentioned, I heavily relied on various types of 'instructions' to inform the construction of my mask for distinct contexts, and never questioned whether this was an issue (e.g., I did not recognise that this was due to ableism). Now, not only was I unknowingly masking a disability, I was being encouraged to hide my femininity in order to be able to do my job. No one would listen to me if I wore pink, right? The aforementioned book accurately notes that footballers are socialised in a hyper-masculine way. I would argue that because sport is a heightened reflection of society and designed to maintain the white, male, heterosexual power structure we live in (Anderson, 2009), many women who choose to work in sport are socialised (more so than our broader patriarchal culture) to hide who they are in the hopes of being taken seriously. Additionally, imagine my surprise when the assertion that I "would not be viewed negatively because she is delivering a service that is traditionally seen as rather feminine" did not match my experience delivering educational interventions (p. 17)!

When the pandemic began in the spring of 2020, I welcomed the ability to leave the club; it took me a great deal of time to decompress from my experience, despite being thankful that the challenge provided me with the chance to develop. Outside of online client

sessions and continued reading, 2020 was not filled with much doctorate-specific activity, though I did engage in research surrounding critical moments and athletes during the pandemic with an amazing group of peers (Whitcomb-Khan et al., 2021). I was in a consistent state of stress due to events happening around the world, and I think this prevented me from engaging much in my work. However, despite no active doctorate focus, the events occurring, my interpretation of them, and how they impacted me would directly shape my development as a person and, therefore, a practitioner, researcher, and teacher.

As we know, 2020 was filled with countless hardships, and each person's pandemic-related challenges are unique. At an intrapersonal and interpersonal level, 2020 involved the death of my last remaining grandparent and my younger sister having a second brain surgery, both of which I was unable to be present for to offer support. At a broader level, I observed from afar the 2020 USA presidential election after four years of watching my country devolve, witnessing events that have historically been precursors to women losing rights so much so that Margaret Atwood wrote about them in her popular series (e.g., *Hendershot*, 2018), witnessing race-based violence, riots and protests as a result of these deprivations of basic human rights, mass shootings, and worrying about my family while all of this was occurring. Throughout the year, I knew that the upcoming election would determine the fate of my country, friends, and family more than determining a mere four-year presidency. The stress impacted me so much that despite running 5k each morning, horse riding daily, and an overall active lifestyle, I gained 17 kilograms in a three-month period and could not lose this weight no matter what I did. It took about a year of medical gaslighting to determine that my endocrine system was destroyed because of stress and determine a plan to work towards getting back to myself; years later, I know that this was likely also a nervous system response as a result of autism comorbidities.

In early 2021, I was able to visit my family, who I had not seen much throughout 2020; unfortunately, I tore my ACL skiing on one of the first few days of the year, missing out on one of my favourite experiences in the world. In a meta-reflection about my experiences in 2020 and 2021, I noted the following:

While racing my friends down one of my favourite runs, I tore my ACL; this was physically excruciating, however the importance I had placed on the experience made it even more difficult to bear. To illustrate this, despite the immense pain I was in and suspecting the tear (it was too early for an MRI), I skied three days later with my father, who I see a handful of days out of the year, binding my right leg and ending up skiing on my left leg for hours.

Upon returning to the UK and being unable to pick up my usual activity levels, I slipped into a bleakness that I had never experienced, even through years of familial trauma and a pandemic. I was not feeling myself, and in February of 2021, I started having panic attacks. The initial experiences were terrifying, leading me to A&E twice. For months, I was constantly terrified about my health, wondering whether there was something wrong with my heart or lungs and still waiting for the appropriate scans for my knee. I was unable to engage with much of the physical activity I enjoyed. I could not contribute to the many chores we have on the farm that I live. I was incapable of riding my horse, which had always allowed me my necessary mindful time in nature. I started to experience a brain fog, which impacted my work, making reading and writing critically extremely difficult. I even experienced memory loss, forgetting about conferences I presented in or work I had done during that time. I was physically and mentally incapable of doing anything I was good at.

After a year of constant stress, my injury deprived me of each of my coping mechanisms (being active, engaging in work I love), and I experienced major depression for the first time in my life. This took me some time to recognise, a fact that still shocks and

saddens me, considering I have spent the last fourteen years in training for psychology; it seems it is much easier to recognise this in others than it is yourself! I engaged in narrative therapy, and while I recognised that speaking to a woman would make my experience more comfortable, I did not predict how important it would be that she was also an expat: the empathy and understanding I received when disclosing the difficulties of being away from my friends and family in a culture that emotes entirely differently than what I am used to made these topics easier to discuss. Further, my therapist had a fantastic knowledge of the larger systems which contribute to our own narratives, and her knowledge and understanding made it easier for me to explore this critically. The only aspect of therapy I was uncomfortable with was my therapist's tendency to frame my experiences in clinical terms. Therapy was an interesting experience to engage with and impacted my views on being a psychology practitioner and researcher. For example, our exploration of my experience through the stories at different systemic levels led to my recognition that while my own intrapersonal experience had been directly impacted by factors such as family trauma and my injury, broader external and cultural factors (e.g., the chaos in the US, patriarchy, etc.) had compounded these experiences. This is obviously central to my current research, and while I had framed consultancy in a holistic manner previously, I began to integrate more socio-cultural factors into my assessments and formulations in applied practice. Additionally, my discomfortability with the clinical nature of some of our discussions reaffirmed my preference for engaging with clients on a person-to-person level; while my therapist was very person-centred, the clinical vernacular felt incongruent, leading to some lack of comfort that interfered with rather than facilitated my growth. This supports the humanistic notion that client perception of congruence is integral to facilitating the client's growth.

Importantly, my therapist and I focused on learning how to work toward meaningful wins, rather than treating accomplishments like a 'tick-box'. A reflective entry from 2021

included the following entry: “One of the meaningful wins I am engaging in is conducting research which examines and challenges our places in society (e.g., a piece on sexism in sport)”. This brings me back to the inception of my work in sexism. In the spring of 2021, I had reached a physical and mental breaking point when two incidents that had nothing to do with me happened. First, an article titled “Women are a cancer, you shouldn’t be working in sport”: Sport psychologists’ lived experiences of sexism in sport” was released (Goldman & Gervis, 2021). I was incredibly troubled to learn a) that what I had experienced was sexism, not “just football”, and b) that other women were having similar or worse experiences. The second realisation led me to two further recognitions that a) what I experienced was not because there was something wrong with me and my ability to camouflage to the environment, and b) this is a widespread problem, and I was incredibly disturbed that so many women were experiencing this in their working lives. Following this, we learned about the horrific murder of Sarah Everard by a person in power, which incited such sadness in me and...rage. Now that I reflect on those months, I recognise that those were likely the first real emotions I had experienced in a long time; ‘numbness’ is a common symptom of depression (Ma et al., 2021), and I think my lack of emotion and overall brain fog contributed to my inability to recognise my mental illness for so long. Additionally, I have recently learned that I have alexithymia, often associated with autism, which means that I have trouble identifying, processing, and describing emotions; I am sure this contributed to my experience with depression, and reflectively applying this knowledge to the experience still aids in my processing of the experience years later.

My sudden capacity to feel emotions, despite being negative, are what drove my recognition that I had been numb, and likely depressed, and therefore my engagement with the therapy process; this both improved my mental health and mental illness and also taught me a great deal about being a practitioner. They also ignited a passion within me to *do*

something about the problems I was witnessing. Goldman and Gervis's (2021) article led to the recognition that I can make a difference with research. I contacted LS to discuss my idea about researching women's experiences of sexism while working in sport, and we collectively decided that our research would benefit from FC and AW's perspectives. In this moment, our sexism research team was created! This project gave me something I was passionate about and found meaning in to work on, which are significant factors in psychological well-being (e.g., Ryff, 2013; Salama-Younes, 2011). Additionally, the project provided me with other essential aspects of well-being such as the opportunity for environmental mastery and personal growth (psychological well-being) and social acceptance (social well-being). This, coinciding with a successful knee surgery and other positive physical health outcomes, contributed significantly to my improved overall well-being and a reinvigorated engagement with the doctorate programme and sport psychology more broadly. In August of 2021, I reflected that "I want my research identity to reflect women in sport specifically, and promote inclusive equity in sport more broadly;" this felt 'right', as social justice has always been a passion of mine, but I had not known until then how to engage with this in the realm of sport psychology.

Reflecting years later and post-autism diagnosis, I recognise that my innate sense of justice, and inability to understand or even cope with injustice I witness, is a very autistic trait (e.g., BPS, 2014). This helps me better understand my reaction to witnessing the events both around the world and in the US throughout 2020 and the intense effect women's maltreatment and harm had on me, as well as a more comprehensive understanding of why solving problems relating to injustice and inequity are passions of mine. However, this does (and always has) pose an issue with how I cope with injustice in a world and career focus filled with constant injustice; my inability to process this makes it incredibly difficult to a) understand why people can simply exist without it affecting their mental health, and b) cope

with the injustice permeating our society. While I do not have the answer now, this is something I will continue to explore. What I *do* know is that this recognition has given me a purpose that I can engage with through empirical research, teaching, and working with both individuals and groups of clients. Additionally, it provides some solutions to the question of coping, as I can engage in quite a bit of problem-focused coping through the above mechanisms. Finally, this purpose has supported my well-being and aided in my healing from a very difficult handful of years.

Finding My Way: 2022 and 2023

Thankfully, 2021 provided me with the foundation to truly find my way in developing and maintaining my well-being and allowing me to recognise my broader purpose. Next, 2022 and 2023 allowed me to build upon this through my work in sexism, sport psychology work, and teaching. I began taking on sport psychology clients that were not likely to detract from my mental health as some of my initial clients did (see reflection three). One particular way I did this is by more explicitly describing and reflectively discussing my philosophy of practice (humanistic), values (integrity and well-being), ways of working (person-centred, holistic), and describing that I focus on building well-being that can support holistic growth and protect against mental illness symptomology through demonstrating the Keyes (2014) mental health continuum. I recognised that being aware of and clearly presenting these ways of working acted as a ‘filtering system’, and athletes who wanted to work in that way engaged with consultancy, while I was able to refer on those who were uncomfortable with one aspect or another.

One important recognition was the importance of social support. To contextualise this, perhaps unsurprisingly, I have struggled with social relationships throughout my life, all similar struggles to other autistic individuals such as being viewed as awkward by others for special interests, ‘fidgeting’ (stimming), lack of external emotional expression, incapacity to

tolerate injustice (and therefore standing up to ‘cool kids’/bullies), preference for deeper rather than surface-level conversation, and difficulty understanding and reacting to social cues. This is a large contributor to learning to mask as an autistic person. I struggle to make less meaningful social connections and tend to either shut down or mask in these situations. I have many meaningful friendships in my life, but unfortunately, a feature of never living in one area for more than a few years at a time (at most) is that your friends are never physically close. Enter the sexism research team! Our team, able to initially connect over an important topic, has provided me with the meaningful social connection I had not realised I was lacking. These relationships quickly developed into friendships and mentorships, which I will forever be thankful for. Knowing I had the support of a great group of people provided me a great deal of motivation and confidence to engage in my sport psychology work.

Additionally, the group provided me with a safe space to express concerns about my experiences (e.g., sexism), something that I had not experienced before. I wonder whether I would have had a less adverse experience, or even conceptualised my experiences as sexism earlier in my career, had I felt comfortable expressing these experiences to a supervisor or mentor. My experience, coupled with further experiences of sport psychologists and women working in sport (e.g., Lafferty et al., 2022; McGinty-Minister et al., 2024), suggest that we might need to revisit how supervisors and/or mentors are assigned or chosen in order to offer adequate support to trainees and students. For example, it might be important to consider relatability more broadly rather than just interest-based connections, particularly for marginalised groups.

Despite my greatly improved well-being, something still felt ‘off’, as it had my entire life. Additionally, I felt it more difficult to don what I now know is my mask after the break from social situations throughout covid and my experiences with mental illness. In mid-2022, I began to be exposed to some relatable content on social media, all of which was from

autistic creators; it happened enough that I was motivated to explore the possibility that I was autistic. It took me months to contact my GP about this, as I did not want to occupy a space not meant for me; despite this hesitancy, my GP told me that I scored “extremely highly” on the AQ-10, and I was referred for assessment. I was officially diagnosed/confirmed as autistic on 3rd July, 2023. This self-knowledge led to a great deal of reflection in order to aid in my processing of the information, accompanied by considerable reflection about how this would impact my research, teaching, and applied practice. For example, I questioned how I relate to people in consultancy:

One important reflection is how autism does/has impacted my practice as a sport psychology consultant. I have always questioned (potentially over-questioned) how I relate to people, and while some things have clicked into place with diagnosis, additional questions and mysteries have arisen. (Reflection ten)

While the processing and reforming, or acceptance of, my identity is an ongoing process, the last eight months of reflection post-diagnosis and the eight months of considerations leading up to speaking to my GP have allowed me a new lens through which to see myself and my interactions with the world. It has normalised or provided context for several of the challenges I have experienced and provided me with more motivation to engage with my work. While I changed from a full-time student to part-time within months of beginning the doctorate programme, I was never expecting to take six years to complete the programme.

Upon reflection, the lack of self-knowledge, and therefore inability to implement changes that support my disability needs (e.g., changes to how I schedule my days, learning to unmask), significantly contributed to struggles within doctorate programme. Since my diagnosis and subsequent processing, I have engaged with the doctorate in such an accelerated, motivated way that makes me think I could do it within the initial two years if I had the chance now! Of course, discovering and engaging with my passions has significantly

contributed to this, as well as the fantastic group of individuals supporting me. Additionally, changing *how* I work has contributed substantially to my improved productivity and engagement. This has been positively compounded by finally experiencing positive performance outcomes from my work, such as publication (e.g., McGinty-Minister et al., 2023; 2024) and conference awards (Best Poster Presentation, WiSEAN; Student Free Communication Award, BASES); I am a competitor at heart, and these things will always be important to me! More importantly, our work has been received positively in the sense that it has resonated with many people we have spoken with, and it is generating conversations about how to make change. Overall, I feel as if I am in a strong, motivated place in my career as a sport psychology consultant, researcher, and teacher as a result of my growth as an individual and the support I have around me.

Summary

Altogether, my experience over the last several years has been a strange journey of self-knowledge and acceptance. In my opinion, this journey reflects the epitome of the person-practitioner narrative, and more generally, the humanistic belief that we are whole people who cannot be separated from distinct facts of our lives (e.g., problems, career role). This reflective practice commentary has been a healing and a learning experience in itself. As I read through my reflective log to determine which reflections to include in my portfolio and to provide context for this commentary, I witnessed a person trying to determine how to work in a world that is not built for them. It is widely accepted that those labelled with disabilities are disabled because of society and the systems around them; this is clearly evident in my attempts to work well in sport, often in contexts that also do not welcome women. Funnily enough, I hypothesise that I could merely hand my reflective log to any autism assessor, and they would immediately say “this person is autistic!” – that is how obvious it seems upon reflection. My reflections are one consistent mechanism by which I tried to understand the

world, and I am grateful for the opportunity to engage in them throughout this journey – not only did they help me along the way, but they have provided me with a great deal of context for my experiences many years later.

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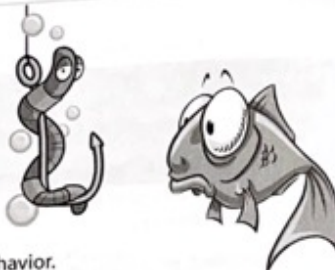
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Jake's 'hook' worksheets

Worksheet

Know Your Hooks



A hook is any experience that impacts your behavior. Once you bite it, it reels you in and decides what happens next.

1. What Happened?

Write down a situation where you did something problematic, or something you wish you had done differently. What did you do?

2. Pay Attention

Write down what thoughts, feelings, memories, or physical sensations showed up for you that led to the problematic behavior.

3. Is That a Hook?

Ask yourself if that private experience is a hook for you. Here's how you can tell: Did that thought, feeling, memory, or physical sensation cause you to act in a way you didn't want to? If so, give that hook a name to help identify it (i.e., my anxiety hook, "I'm unloveable" hook, etc.).

4. Prepare

The next time that hook shows up, what do you want to do instead?

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Daily Hook Tracker

Worksheet

Notice Your Hooks

Noticing your hooks can help you in many ways. You don't get to choose whether you have hooks or not but you can choose what you do when they show up. Take time over the next week to intentionally pay attention to when hooks show up. They can be sneaky sometimes.

When & Where	Hook	Response To Hook

Appendix 2: Jake's Character Strengths

Your Top Strengths



1

Kindness

HUMANITY

Doing favors and good deeds for others; helping them; taking care of them.



2

Humility

TEMPERANCE

Letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves; not regarding oneself as more special than one is.



3

Teamwork

JUSTICE

Working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group; doing one's share.



4

Gratitude

TRANSCENDENCE

Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks.



5

Fairness

JUSTICE

Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice; not letting feelings bias decisions about others; giving everyone a fair chance.

Your Middle Strengths



6

Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence

TRANSCENDENCE

Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in various domains of life, from nature to art to mathematics to science to everyday experience.



7

Love of Learning

WISDOM

Mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge, whether on one's own or formally; related to the strength of curiosity but goes beyond it to describe the tendency to add systematically to what one knows.



8

Perseverance

COURAGE

Finishing what one starts; persevering in a course of action in spite of obstacles; “getting it out the door”; taking pleasure in completing tasks.



9

Bravery

COURAGE

Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; speaking up for what’s right even if there’s opposition; acting on convictions even if unpopular; includes physical bravery but is not limited to it.



10

Hope

TRANSCENDENCE

Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it; believing that a good future is something that can be brought about.



11

Love

HUMANITY

Valuing close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing & caring are reciprocated; being close to people.



12

Creativity

WISDOM

Thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualize and do things; includes artistic achievement but is not limited to it.



13

Judgment

WISDOM

Thinking things through and examining them from all sides; not jumping to conclusions; being able to change one's mind in light of evidence; weighing all evidence fairly.



14

Forgiveness

TEMPERANCE

Forgiving those who have done wrong; accepting others' shortcomings; giving people a second chance; not being vengeful.



15

Honesty

COURAGE

Speaking the truth but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way; being without pretense; taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions.



16

Spirituality

TRANSCENDENCE

Having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe; knowing where one fits within the larger scheme; having beliefs about the meaning of life that shape conduct and provide comfort.



17

Curiosity

WISDOM

Taking an interest in ongoing experience for its own sake; finding subjects and topics fascinating; exploring and discovering.



18

Social Intelligence

HUMANITY

Being aware of the motives/feelings of others and oneself; knowing what to do to fit into different social situations; knowing what makes other people tick.



19

Zest

COURAGE

Approaching life with excitement and energy; not doing things halfway or halfheartedly; living life as an adventure; feeling alive and activated.



20

Prudence

TEMPERANCE

Being careful about one's choices; not taking undue risks; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted.

Your Lesser Strengths



21

Self-Regulation

TEMPERANCE

Regulating what one feels and does; being disciplined; controlling one's appetites and emotions.



22

Perspective

WISDOM

Being able to provide wise counsel to others; having ways of looking at the world that make sense to oneself/others.



23

Humor

TRANSCENDENCE

Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing the light side; making (not necessarily telling) jokes.



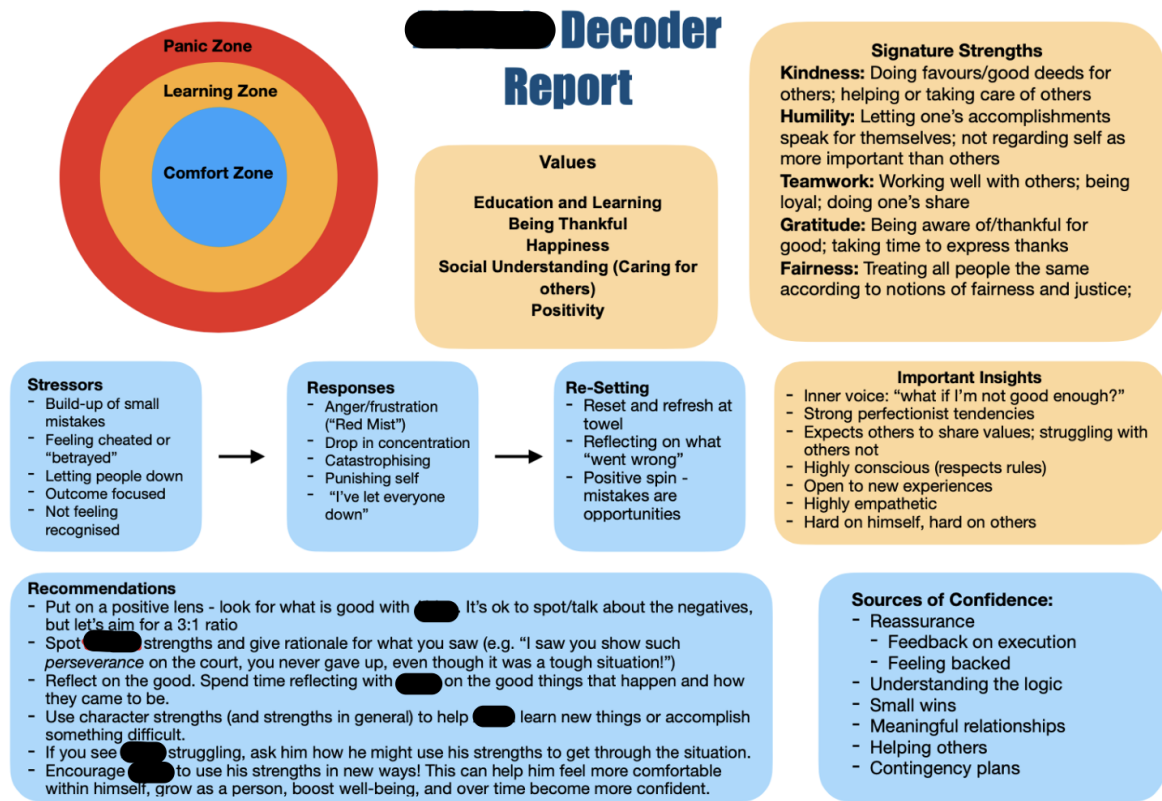
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Leadership

JUSTICE

Encouraging a group of which one is a member to get things done and at the same time maintain good relations within the group; organizing group activities and seeing that they happen.

Appendix 3: Jake's Decoder Report



Appendix 4: Self-Compassion Scale Short Form

HOW I TYPICALLY ACT TOWARDS MYSELF IN DIFFICULT TIMES Please read each statement carefully before answering. Indicate how often you behave in the stated manner, using the following scale:

Almost never

Almost always

1

2

3

4


5

1. When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy. ____
2. I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like. ____
3. When something painful happens, I try to take a balanced view of the situation. ____
4. When I'm feeling down I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am. ____
5. I try to see my 'failings' as part of the human condition. ____
6. When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need. ____
7. When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance. ____
8. When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure ____
9. When I'm feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong. ____
10. When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are shared by most people. ____
11. I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies. ____
12. I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like. ____

Appendix 5: WSL Team Feedback Survey

Mentor Programme Day 2 Survey


Page 1: Page 1

As you participate in the  Mentor Programme in the coming months, we would like to hear about your experiences and how the programme has contributed to your personal and professional development journey. We also want your feedback and opinions on how we could improve the experience in the future.

Page 2: Part 1: Tell Us About You

1. Date of birth * Required

Dates need to be in the format 'DD/MM/YYYY', for example 27/03/1980.



(dd/mm/yyyy)

2. What is your current occupation? * Required

- Employed
- Self-Employed
- Full-time Student
- Part-time Student
- Volunteer
- Other

2.a. Please specify:

Page 3: Part 2: How do you view the [redacted] Mentorship Programme?

Tell us what you think about the [redacted] Mentor Programme:

3. I am satisfied with my experience of the [redacted] Mentor Programme (Rate from 0, not satisfied at all, to 10, very satisfied) * Required

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

4. The [redacted] Mentor Programme has positively contributed to my professional development (Rate from 0, no positive contribution, to 10, significant positive contribution) * Required

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

Page 4: Part Three: How has the [redacted] Mentor Programme contributed to your professional development?

5. I feel as if I am becoming a more self-aware person (Rate from 0, strongly disagree, to 10, strongly agree) * Required

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

6. Participating in the [redacted] Mentor Programme has improved my ability to connect with people on an authentic level (Rate from 0, strongly disagree, to 10, strongly agree) * Required

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8

- 9
- 10

7. How confident are you in your abilities to connect with coaches you mentor? (Rate from 0, not confident, to 10, very confident) * Required

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

8. How confident are you with reflecting in action (e.g., utilising tools like Think Aloud)? (Rate from 0, not confident, to 10, very confident) * Required

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7

- 8
- 9
- 10

9. **How confident are you with reflecting on action (e.g., written reflection)?** (Rate from 0, not confident, to 10, very confident) * Required

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

10. **I feel confident teaching my coaches how to be more reflective** (Rate from 0, not confident, to 10, very confident) * Required

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

11. I feel confident applying my values to my behaviour(s) (Rate from 0, not confident, to 10, very confident) * Required

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

12. I feel confident applying psychological safety to mentorship (Rate from 0, not confident, to 10, very confident) * Required

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

13. I feel confident conducting and adapting a needs analysis for my coaches (Rate from 0, not confident, to 10, very confident) * Required

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

14. I feel confident developing and delivering thoughtful feedback as a mentor (Rate from 0, not confident, to 10, very confident) * Required

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

15. The Mentor Programme has increased my awareness of the leadership qualities needed to be an effective mentor (Rate from 0, strongly disagree, to 10, strongly agree) * Required

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

16. I feel prepared to undertake a role mentoring coaches (Rate from 0, strongly disagree, to 10, strongly agree) * Required

- 0
- 1
- 2

- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

Page 5: Part 4: Areas of good practice

Tell us what you enjoyed:

17. Identify some of the things that you have enjoyed about the Mentor Programme.
Please provide a few sentences to explain why: * *Required*

Page 6: Part 5: Areas for improvement

Tell us how we could do better:

18. Identify any areas for improvement. Please provide a few sentences to explain why you think this area could be improved and what changes you would like to see: *
Required

19. Please provide your name if you are comfortable doing so:

Page 7: Final page

Thank you for completing this survey!

Appendix 6: Sexism in Sport Survey

Sexism in Sport

Page 1: Participant Information

Sexism in sport: Experiences of women practitioners working in sport

Before you decide whether you want to participate, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it involves. Please take time to read the following information and get in touch if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. You have as much time as necessary to decide if you want to take part or not.

About this survey

The purpose of this survey is to better understand experiences of sexism in sport. Sexism is commonly occurring unfair treatment on the basis of gender.

It may be experienced by both men and women. Examples of sexist behaviour include:

- Being told you were employed for the way you look rather than your skills, knowledge or abilities
- Expecting people to perform tasks outside their job description on the basis of gender stereotypes, (e.g. expecting women to always clean up a shared office kitchen or expecting men to always move or lift objects)

All women (18 years and older) who are currently working or training within sport, or who have previously worked or trained in sport within the last five years are invited to complete the survey. **Your participation is entirely voluntary.**

What does it involve?

This survey will take between 10-30 minutes to complete depending upon your answers. You may stop participation at any time.

At the end of the survey, you will be asked whether you would like to be contacted for a

follow-up interview. If you agree, and the research team contacts you, you are under no obligation to participate if you have changed your mind.

Privacy and confidentiality

Your survey responses will remain strictly confidential. No person will be identified in any communication of the results of the survey. You will not be asked to provide identifying data beyond general information about your role and an email address. Data will be stored on password-protected PCs and files. Only the research team will have access to the data. In accordance with UK law, the researcher will be obliged to breach the promise of confidentiality if given reason to believe that you are in danger from others or are likely to cause danger to others.

Consent

By completing and submitting this survey you are providing your consent to participate. You can withdraw from the study at any time by closing your web browser prior to submitting or by emailing the lead researcher if you have already submitted your response and request for your data to be permanently deleted.

Options for support

This survey may raise sensitive issues. If you require support before, during or following completion of the survey, you may contact The Samaritans at 116 123

If you any concerns regarding your involvement in this research, please discuss these with the researcher in the first instance. If you wish to make a complaint, please contact SPSethics@ljmu.ac.uk and your communication will be re-directed to an independent person as appropriate. This study has received ethical approval from the School of Sport & Exercise Sciences Research Ethics Committee (UREC confirmation).

Contact Details of Researcher: K.L.McGinty@2018.ljmu.ac.uk

Contact Details of Research Supervisor A.E.Whitehead@ljmu.ac.uk

Page 2: Demographics

Please state how you identify for the following questions (or, if you prefer not to say write NA):

1. Gender identity: * Required

2. Sexual Orientation: * Required

3. Ethnic group: * Required

4. Nationality: * Required

5. Age: * Required

Please enter a whole number (integer).

3 / 22



Page 3: Personal experiences of sexism

6. Have you personally experienced any of the following behaviour while training for your role, while in your workplace, while dealing with clients or contractors, or at a work-related event? *

Required

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

	Never	Once	Sometimes	Often	I don't wish to answer
Sexist or crude remarks, jokes or gestures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insulting or offensive terms about men or women	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Had assumptions made about your career/role/interests on the basis of gender (e.g. that women will want to work in supporting roles, or that men will want to do physical work)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suggesting that you are not capable of performing part of your role because of your gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Missing out or being looked over for career opportunities because of your gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being expected to do tasks that are not part of your job description (e.g. women always expected to clean up the staff kitchen or remove coffee mugs after meetings, men always expected to move boxes)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Referred to the workplace as a "man's space" or a "woman's space" (e.g., women /men do not belong here)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Referred to particular jobs or tasks as "men's work" or "women's work"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Someone assuming you do not hold a senior role or that you are in a subordinate role to a male colleague	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Being greeted or introduced on the basis of being a woman (e.g. in terms of personal/family role such as mother) rather than your work role	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being excluded from important tasks or decision making because you are a woman	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Someone assuming that you do not want a particular career opportunity or role (e.g. an operational or factory role) because you are a woman	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments on your body shape, size, or how you look	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being told your clothes were inappropriate or too revealing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Different standards of accepted dress for men and women	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being told you were employed for the way you look rather than your skills, knowledge, or abilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Being asked if you are watching your weight/told you should be on a diet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Someone not trusting information you provide until a man confirms it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A man explaining something to you that you already have skills or knowledge about	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A man interrupting or talking over you in meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your views not being listened to until they are re-stated by a man	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being asked about personal life/family plans at a job interview where these are not relevant to the job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Someone assuming that you are not committed to your job because you have flexible work arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being asked who is looking after your family while you're at work (e.g. if you have to stay late)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Being asked to explain why you do or don't have children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Receiving negative comments about whether or not you are in a relationship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being asked to change your voice or tone (e.g. being told your voice is shrill)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being accused of being too bossy or not assertive enough	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being called too emotional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being criticised for not behaving 'like a woman should'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6.a. Have you ever witnessed or heard about any of these sexist behaviours that you didn't personally experience? If so, please provide examples; if not, please type NA. * Required

Page 4: Sexism in your organisation/Organisational responses

Please answer the below multiple choice questions; you may select more than one answer for each question.

7. Where you have experienced or witnessed sexism, which people in your organisation are mainly responsible? * *Required*

- Manager/supervisor
- Senior manager
- Co-worker
- Co-worker more senior than you Client/customer
- Colleagues or workers in other companies
- Prefer not to say
- Other

7.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

8. Where you have experienced or witnessed sexism, which areas or functions of the organisation need improvement? * *Required*

- Conferences and events
- Meetings
- Facilities and equipment
- Marketing and communications Recruitment processes

- Talent development
- Training
- Prefer not to say
- Other

8.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

9. Thinking about the consequences of sexism while training for your career and/or in the workplace, would you say: * *Required*

- There have been consequences
- It has negatively impacted on your employment/career/work
- It has impacted negatively on your relationships with partner/children/friends/family
- It has impacted on your self-esteem and confidence
- It has impacted on your general health and well-being
- There were some positive aspects to the experience (for example, greater assertiveness, confidence in managing difficult situations)
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say
- Other

9.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

10. Have you ever personally responded to sexism while training for your career and/or in the workplace in any of the following ways? * Required

- Tried to laugh it off or forget about it
- Took time off work
- Pretended it didn't bother me
- Sought a transfer to another role/location Sought a roster change
- Avoided the person(s) by staying away from them
- Avoided locations where the behaviour might occur
- Confronted the person responsible for the sexism/told them it was not OK Told someone else about what happened
- Talked, listened to, or supported a person experiencing sexism
- Offered advice ta person experiencing sexism
- Reported the behaviour to a manager
- It genuinely hasn't bothered me
- Don't know/unsure
- None of the above
- Prefer not to say
- Other

10.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

11. When sexism occurs in your organisation, what are the typical responses? * Required

- Covering up the sexism (e.g. by denying it)
- Devaluing the person who experienced the sexism (e.g. calling them uptight, saying they were dishonest/incompetent or that they couldn't take a joke)

- dishonest or incompetent or that they couldn't take a joke)
- Reinterpreting the sexism (e.g. by saying it was 'just banter' or 'just joking', claiming the sexism was 'harmless')
- Intimidating the person targeted by the sexism (e.g. making threats, or offering bribes) Gaining support from managers to avoid any negative consequences of the sexism
- Encouraging sexist behaviours such as laughing or joining in
- None of the above
- Prefer not to say
- Other
- 'harmless')

11.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

12. Have you ever raised the issue of sexist behaviour with anyone (e.g. sought assistance or advice or made a complaint)? * Required

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

13. If yes, who did you raise the issue with or seek advice from? * Required

- Friends or family
- Manager/supervisor
- Employer/boss

- Human Resources manager or equivalent at work
- Co-worker/peer
- Co-worker more senior than you
- The person or people responsible for the sexist behaviour
- A union or employee representative
- A lawyer or legal service
- A Counsellor / Psychologist
- The internet (including search engines such as Google and Yahoo)
- Community-based or religious service
- Ombudsman
- Police
- Prefer not to say
- NA
- Other

13.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

14. Have you ever taken any of the following actions after witnessing sexism in your organisation? * *Required*

- Confronted the person or people responsible for the sexism
- Reported the behaviour to a supervisor/manager
- Talked, listened to or supported the person experiencing sexism
- Offered advice to the person experiencing sexism Didn't take any action
- Prefer not to say
- Other

14.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

15. If you haven't raised the issue of sexist behaviour with anyone or haven't taken any action after witnessing sexist behaviour, why not? * Required

- I haven't experienced or witnessed sexism at work I didn't think the behaviour was a problem
- I didn't know who to talk to
- I was advised not to by family/friends
- I was advised not to by colleague(s) or peer(s)
- I didn't think it would make a difference
- I believed there would be negative consequences for my career (e.g. opportunities for promotion/progression, risk of being fired)
- I believed there would be negative consequences for my reputation (e.g. that I would be blamed or not believed or thought to be over-reacting)
- I believed there would be negative consequences for the person/people responsible for the sexist behaviour
- Prefer not to say
- Other

15.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

Page 5: Your views and about you

16. The following questions ask about views on gender. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of these statements. * *Required*

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Prefer not to say
Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in sport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When jobs are scarce men should have more right to a job than women	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I like having women in my workplace/team/course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am comfortable working for a female supervisor/manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women have the same career advancement opportunities as men in sport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women who experience sexism should sort it out themselves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The following questions ask about you. For all of these questions, you may write or select the option 'Prefer not to say' if you would rather not respond.

17. Please state your role(s) in sport: * Required

18. Please list your professional accreditations and qualifications (e.g., BSc, MSc, BASES, UEFA) * Required

19. Your Seniority * Required

- Senior manager
- Middle manager
- Line manager
- Not a manager
- Student
- Prefer not to say
- Other

19.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

20. Length of tenure in current role * Required

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 20+ years
- Prefer not to say

21. Length of tenure working in sport overall * *Required*

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 20+ years
- Prefer not to say

Page 6: Open-ended questions

Below are open-ended questions; if you prefer not to answer, please type "prefer not to say" in the text box.

22. How can sexism be prevented in sport, and how might governing bodies in sport respond to gender inequality or sexism? * *Required*

23. Can you detail your experience(s) of sexism while training or working in sport? * *Required*

24. Is there anything else about sexism in your workplace or the culture of sport that you would like to tell us? * *Required*

25. Why is reducing sexism in sport important to you? * *Required*



Page 7: Follow-Up

Thank you for your time in completing this survey! You have made a valuable contribution this important study.

26. Would you be interested in participating in a follow-up interview? If so, please opt-in by providing your email address below. If not, please state NA. There is no requirement to participate, and you may withdraw interest at any time. * *Required*

Page 8: Final page

Thank you again for your participation!

This survey may have raised sensitive issues. If you require support, you may contact The Samaritans at 116 123

If you any concerns regarding your involvement in this research, please discuss these with the researcher in the first instance. If you wish to make a complaint, please contact SPSethics@ljmu.ac.uk and your communication will be re-directed to an independent person as appropriate.

Contact Details of Researcher: K.L.McGinty@2018.ljmu.ac.uk

Contact Details of Research Supervisor A.E.Whitehead@ljmu.ac.uk

Appendix 7: FLAME Poster (DSEP)

PSYCHOLOGICAL FLOURISHING AND MENTAL ILL-HEALTH IN ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL ACADEMIES

INTRODUCTION

- Conceptualising MH in a pathology-derived manner contributes to denial and stigma, impedes effective care, and is not sufficient to protect athletes from mental ill-health (Uphill et al., 2016)
- Focus on prevention and treatment in mental ill-health in football despite the benefits of psychological flourishing to MH/mental ill-health
- Mental Health Literacy (MHL) Knowledge of effective self-management strategies, challenging mental disorder stigma, awareness and use of mental health first-aid to assist others, and the facilitation of help seeking behaviours (Gorczynski et al., 2020)
- In order to support the MH of elite athletes, it is essential to conceptualise mental ill-health and MH in a matter conducive to the elite sporting environment Flourishing and human potential

RESEARCH AIMS

The present research aims to address the following objectives:

- Explore the knowledge, perceptions and understanding of mental ill-health and psychological flourishing in support staff employed by EPL academies
- Explore current and future provision methods and strategies to facilitate psychological flourishing and treat or protect against mental ill-health in place within EPL academies

METHOD

- Interviewed eight stakeholders at five EPL academies using semi-structured interview guide
- Key stakeholders within the EPL are often extremely difficult to access due to barriers such as time constraints and stigma (e.g. Nesti, 2010; O'Gorman et al., 2020)
- Employed reflective thematic analysis to engage with data and determine themes (Braun & Clarke, 2019, 2020)

RESULTS

Knowledge and Understanding of the Spectrum of MH

Conceptualisations of MH

"It's been quite limited previously. So, over the last two years probably improved that and I've done the Mental Health First Aid course which probably made me feel a little bit more comfortable... in terms of MH, is where an individual... might be struggling with something and that can be anything from issues at home, low mood, that are causing low mood to rehab, playing as well with more on the behavioural spectrum."

- Head of Player Care

Organisational Mental Health Literacy

"The perspective of psychology department is that it's okay to deliver the one-hour workshop, but we have to embed the culture at [CLUB NAME], so people understand what is important... no matter what your delivery of sessions are, if the culture's not a sensible environment for good MH you might as well deliver nothing."

- Club Doctor

"If there's an issue... it would go to the welfare officer, and the welfare officer wouldn't tell anybody. Even if they weren't the suitable person... they would say 'ok, no your secret's safe with me' to gain that trust. So that's been a real criticism... of the MH support that we provide, is that we should be upfront and honest with them... I say, look, you've come to me, which is great, we'll work on a few things, but I might not be the best person, for you? And that's not to say I won't work with you, but do you mind if I... share certain information... to make sure you get the best care? I've been banging down the door through higher management."

- Psychologist

Mental Health Support Auditing Mental Health

"That's a huge area of concern, for this place... I'm well aware that they haven't been documenting one-to-one support sessions... as well as they should have been. And that's another thing that I've raised, in the club. We need to document one-to-one time, no matter what it is, erm... so in terms of MH audit... if the Premier League came in and said, show us what you do for MH... the tendency for our club would be, 'look at our personal development, look at our great personal education session that we do, once a month for one hour on depression or one hour on addiction, or substance abuse. Oh and we've got a few people who do one to one, you know, and that's probably limited."

- Psychologist

Support and Referral Process for Athletes Suffering from Mental ill-Health

"The mandate for us is development... I would see myself as being a talent developer who looks at it from a psychological angle... I see it as just trying to support the long-term development of the players. Part of that might be supporting performance, but performance wouldn't be the number one objective in a development environment."

- Psychologist

"We've got a player voice group with each phase, a chance for them to have a good moan in a safe environment... It makes them feel like they're heard and gives them a bit of autonomy in the decision making of the academy. It's amazing some of the stuff they come up with. Sometimes you do get a real moan (laughs). But other times, you get some real gems of information."

- Psychologist

Looking to the Future

"An overall picture to how the organisation can help with flourishing? At the moment, it's very much, the coach looks after the technical [and] tactical side... myself will look at the psychological side, and the welfare staff look at the social side. But if we can get to a point where there's guidance and education for an organisation to say it's... the whole environment, that promotes... the opportunity to flourish, that's where I would see it going? I'm firmly of the view that a coach can promote flourishing just as much, if not more than me, but at the moment it's just the performance psychologist that you look after that bit... just, building that... MH awareness... because they are brutal these environments."

- Psychologist

"I think it comes down to scientific research that would show the benefits of flourishing performance. So, the relevant people within [CLUB NAME] understand the benefits of flourishing... Look at that sport in Australia, the central bargain made by the Players' Union shows where we could get to. Where you've got designated working hours and designated time for education. The terms are on the players' side and not on the club's side. The more research that comes into football to show that. Listen, if you give these guys chance to develop and relax and enjoy themselves, it's going to have a positive impact on their development on the field. I don't know if we're going to get to this because of the structure of football, but it's mandatory things that need to come into the sport... I don't think we've got any mandatory requirements for player care in the sport. There's no mandatory time off in a schedule. There's no mandatory education time. So, the more scientific research that proves the benefits of psychological flourishing and positive MH, the better. And that's what the more research that comes out and the more papers that come out to show it, then great. I think, as a club, we get it and we're trying. But until the culture's completely changed and changes in football, I don't know to be honest with you."

- Head of Player Care

IMPLICATIONS

Regulatory/Culture-wide

- Improve EPPP (or other guidance) to include MHL recommendations (inclusive of psychological flourishing)
- We recommend the EPL employ a group of experts spanning sport psychologists, sport psychiatrists, and clinical psychiatrists (Gorczynski et al., 2020) to inform these important policy changes.
- Implement mandatory requirements which will improve psychological flourishing
- MHL interventions at all levels

Research

- Develop Gorczynski et al's (2020) MHL model to include psychological flourishing
- Knowledge of effective self-management strategies, challenging mental disorder stigma, awareness and use of mental health first-aid to assist others, and the facilitation of help seeking behaviours
- How psychological flourishing impacts performance and development in athletes

Applied


- Engage in improving your own MHL
- Make suggestions within your organisation
- Implement programs or ideas which might encourage psychological flourishing
- Work on reducing the stigma surrounding mental health in football
- Lead by example with your own mental health
- Encourage psychological flourishing in others
- Engage in conversations surrounding mental health and mental ill-health

Authors: Francesca Champ, Martin Eubank, Martin Littlewood, Kristin McGinty-Minister

Appendix 8: Sexism in Sport Poster (WiSEAN)

“SMILE MORE!”

WOMEN’S EXPERIENCES OF SEXISM WHILE WORKING IN SPORT



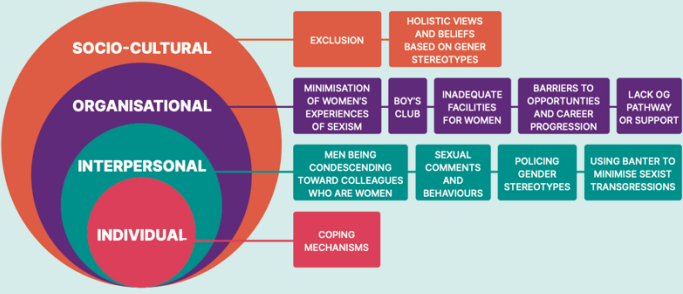
INTRODUCTION

- Gender inequality and sexism have a negative impact on everyone (Fink, 2016)
- Hostile and benevolent sexism are prevalent in sport though rarely discussed

METHODS

- 105 women who work across a range of professions in sport
- 21-68 years old (M = 35.8)
- Everyday Sexism Survey (McDonald et al., 2016) updated to be more sport-specific
- Data were analysed using LaVoie and Dutove’s (2012) Ecological Model
- Qualitative data was analysed using reflexive thematic. Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) and quantitative data is presented in percentages

RESULTS



INDIVIDUAL LEVEL:

Coping Strategies: The strategies women engaged with to cope with sexism

“It’s pretty much the norm...worst part is you feel like you need to let it slide, or go along with it, otherwise you aren’t seen to be ‘one of the lads’ and thus you’re not integrated within the sporting culture and your work can be rendered ineffective.”

Women avoided reporting sexism because they thought there would be...

- 38.1%** negative consequences for their reputation
- 33.3%** negative consequences for their career overall

INTERPERSONAL LEVEL:

Condescending Behaviour: Men treating women as inferior

77.2% experienced men interrupting or talking over them in meetings

70.3% experienced not having their views listened to until re-stated by a man

Sexual comments and behaviour: Direct or indirect comments and behaviours towards women that are sexual in nature

Policing Gender Stereotypes: Enforcing behaviours and expression based on assumptions made about how gender norms apply to their bodies, emotions, behaviours, and roles

“smile more in meetings”

Using Banter to Minimise Sexist Transgressions: Using jokes and ‘teasing’ as a method of engaging in casual or explicit sexism, or to minimise sexism

“sexist jokes being passed off as banter plays down the whole problem. Raising awareness is very difficult”.

ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL:

Boys’ Club: Informal groups of men that exclude women, often keeping women from integrating into the organisation

“The men have a ‘Boys’ club’ and regularly meet up during the work day for coffee, the gym, a chat, etc. If the women do this we get reprimanded and branded as lazy. Important work information is discussed amongst them.”

Minimisation of Women’s Experiences of Sexism: Minimising reports or experiences at an organisational level (excusing it as the norm, banter, untrue, etc.)


One woman stated that there is *“a culture of accepting the sexism as just part of the job”*

Inadequate Facilities for Women: Sport organisations being built and designed primarily for men’s needs

Barriers to Opportunities and Career Progression: Being a woman is a disadvantage to opportunities and career progression within sport

“A colleague was over-looked for promotion. I heard the interviewing male manager say ‘she will just pop out another kid, I’m not promoting her to fund her baby-making’.”

When sexism occurs in your organization, what are the typical responses?



- Intimidating the person targeted by the sexism (e.g. threats, bribes) **71%**
- Gaining support from managers to avoid any negative consequences **15.5%**
- Encouraging sexist behaviours (e.g. laughing, joining in) **22.6%**
- Devaluing the person who experienced the sexism (e.g. calling them uptight or dishonest) **35.7%**
- Reinterpreting the sexism (e.g. saying it was just ‘banter’ or ‘harmless’) **65.5%**
- Covering up the sexism **38.1%**

SOCIO-CULTURAL LEVEL:

Exclusion: Exclusion from equal treatment and opportunities to work and/or lead in sport based on gender

	Never	Once	Sometimes	Often
Had assumptions made about your career/role/interests on the basis of gender	18.1%	9.5%	26.7%	45.7%
Missing out or being looked over for career opportunities because of your gender	31.4%	12.4%	29.5%	26.7%
Someone assuming you do not hold a senior role or that you are in a subordinate role to a male colleague	25.7%	5.7%	28.6%	38.1%

Holistic Views and Beliefs Based on Gender stereotypes: Gender stereotypes influencing people’s beliefs about men and women

“I was asked (at a work event) how strange it was that I drink black coffee and beer, and I play a contact sports, they said ‘this is not what a lady does’. The UK education system segregates in school by gender, women play netball, men play rugby and football, is automatically telling the society that women should not play ‘men’s sports’... society tells the girls that ‘this is not what a lady does’.”

TAKE HOME MESSAGES




- Sexism evident at all four levels of model
- Connection between all levels of ecological model in women’s experiences of sexism
- Burden at the top to create change due to unique culture of sport, but we can make changes at organisational and interpersonal levels particularly by working with:
 - Women with privilege
 - Male allies

CONSIDER...

How can I be a better ally?

How might experiencing or witnessing sexism impact my work?

Kristin McGinty-Minister, Dr. Laura Swettenham, Dr. Francesca Champ, Dr. Amy Whitehead

Appendix 9: BASES Presentation slides

“Smile more”

Working as a woman in sport and exercise

Kristin McGinty-Minister
 @KM_SportPsych
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Research Team:
 Dr. Laura Swettenham
 Dr. Amy Whitehead
 Dr. Francesca Champ



Introduction

- Gender inequality and sexism have a negative impact on everyone (Fink, 2016)
- **Sexism:** Actions towards women that maintain and promote patriarchy
- **Ambivalent Sexism Theory** (Glick & Fiske, 1997)
 - A complicated combination of animosity and perceived benevolence
- **Hostile** and **benevolent** sexism are prevalent in sport, though (relatively) rarely discussed
 - Focus on athletes
 - “Part of the culture”

Sexism that presents as anger, resentment, and violence, commonly toward those who pose a threat to the gender hierarchy. Often more obvious and more easily challenged.

A subtle and socially accepted form of sexism; presents as compliments and rewards for patriarchy approved behaviour. Assumes women's value and/or roles should be based on typical gender expectations.

HOSTILE	BENEVOLENT
Using sexist language/insults	Women must be protected and cherished
Blatant dehumanization of women	Women are better caregivers
Banning women from sport/football	Women are better suited for secretarial roles
Precursor for sexual harassment, violence, and abuse	Women are emotional and sensitive

Methods

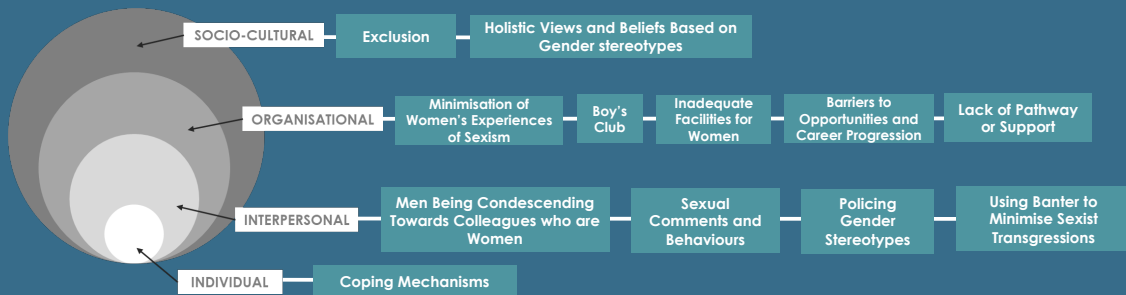


LaVoi and Dutove's (2012) Ecological Model

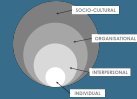
- 105 women
- 21 – 68 years old (M = 35.8)
- Mix of career roles:
 - Coaches: 46%,
 - Support role: 22%
 - Organisational: 20%
 - Academia: 8%
 - Media: 4%
- Mix of ethnicity, nationality, and sexual orientation
- Used the everyday sexism survey (McDonald et al., 2016), originally created to measure sexism in organisations
- Data was analysed abductively using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022)
- Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS



Overview of Themes



Individual



Includes personal, biological and psychological factors such as cognition, emotions, beliefs, values, expertise and personality of the individual

Coping Mechanisms

- The strategies women engaged with to cope with sexism experienced

"Not many options available to you at that point besides screaming into the void"

"I have raised it. In the end when it wasn't resolved- I left"

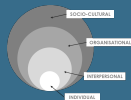
"I regularly experience sexism in the office, I'd say on a daily basis. Sometimes I challenge it if it's really bad but most of the time I shrug it off."

Avoidance-based coping was most common

If you haven't raised the issue of sexist behaviour with anyone or haven't taken any action after witnessing sexist behaviour, why not?	% of participants who selected this response
I believed there would be negative consequences for my reputation	38.1%
I didn't think it would make a difference	35.7%
I believed there would be negative consequences for my career	33.3%



Interpersonal



Social-relational influences such as colleagues, a significant other, friends and parents

Condescending Behaviour

- Men treating women as inferior

"If the group is asked a question, I answer but it's always double-checked...I no longer bother answering until no one else knows the answer."

72.4% were interrupted or talked over by men in meetings
56.8% experienced views not being listened to unless restated by a man

Sexual Comments and Behaviour

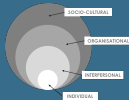
- Direct or indirect comments and behaviours towards women that are sexual in nature

"Being told by a manager that 'you don't need any Viagra when you're around' in front of 25 male staff and players, sexual advances by multiple managers..."



Interpersonal

Social-relational influences such as colleagues, a significant other, friends and parents



Policing Gender Stereotypes

- Using gender-based assumptions to enforce behaviour/expression

"Expectation to clean make colleagues' mess up"

"Describing other men as **"on their period"** when display[ing] an emotional response"

Banter

- Using jokes and 'teasing' as a method of engaging in casual or explicit sexism

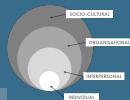
"Sexist jokes being passed off as **banter** plays down the whole problem [and makes] raising awareness very difficult"

81% experienced sexist and/or crude remarks and jokes
75.2% experienced insulting or offensive terms about men or women



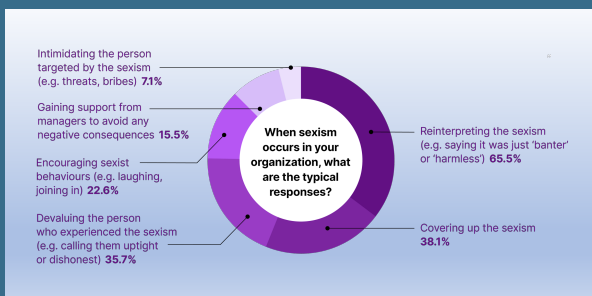
Organisational

Defined by organizational policies, job descriptions, professional practices, use of space, and opportunities (or lack thereof).



Lack of Pathway for Support

- The inability to progress with complaints about sexism within an organisation; no support for individuals who experience sexism in their organisation.



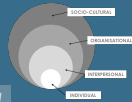
Boys' Club

- Informal groups of men that exclude women, often keeping women from integrating into the organisation

"The men have a "boys' club" and regularly meet up during the work day for coffee, the gym, a chat, etc. If the women do this we get reprimanded and branded as lazy. **Important work information is discussed amongst the males"**



Organisational



Defined by organizational policies, job descriptions, professional practices, use of space, and opportunities (or lack thereof).

Inadequate Facilities for Women

- Sport organisations being built and organisations primarily for men's needs

Women are often "provided with **inadequate facilities** (e.g. no access to female toilets/changing rooms)."

Barriers to Opportunities and Career Progression

- Being a woman is a disadvantage to opportunities and career progression within sport

"A colleague was over-looked for promotion. I heard the interviewing male manager say **'she will just pop out another kid, I'm not promoting her to fund her baby-making'**."

Minimisation of Women's Experiences of Sexism

- Minimising reports or experiences at an organisational level (excusing it as the norm, banter, untrue, etc.)

"Things like men telling women **sexism does not exist** in sport...that she was making it up."

"There is a culture of older men in coaching and leadership roles [and] a "boys' club" is formed. When comments are made by men in the office it is laughed off as 'that's just X being X', so it is **a culture of accepting the sexism** as just part of the job"

65.5% reported that when sexism is reported, it's just reinterpreted as 'just banter' or 'he was just joking' and it's 'harmless'



Socio-Cultural



Encompasses norms and cultural systems that indirectly affect women

Holistic Views and Beliefs Based on Gender stereotypes

- Gender stereotypes influencing people's beliefs about men and women

"I was asked in the UK (at a work event) how strange it was that **I drink black coffee and beer, and I play a contact sports**, they literally said **"this is not what a lady does"**. The fact that the UK education system segregates in school by gender, women play netball, men play rugby and football, is **automatically telling the society that women should not play "men's sports"**... **society tells the girls that "this is not what a lady does"**.

56.2% were accused of being too bossy or not assertive enough
66.7% experienced someone assuming they do not hold a senior role or are subordinate to a male colleague

Exclusion

- Exclusion from equal treatment and opportunities to work and/or lead in sport based on gender

"**Not seen as leadership material** against the men who are the norm and perform less well when it comes to leadership behaviours."

56.2% missed out for career opportunities because they were women
60% experiences suggestions that they were less capable of performing their role due to gender

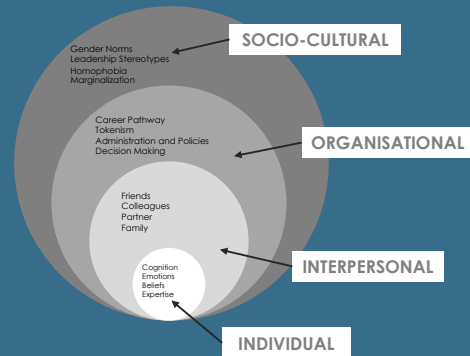


Take Home Messages

- Sexism evident at all four level of model
- Connection between all levels of ecological model in women's experiences of sexism
- Burden at the top to create changes due to unique culture of sport, but we can make changes at organisational and interpersonal levels particularly by working with:
 - Women with privilege
 - Male allies

- Future research is needed to explore:
 - The impact of sexism at all levels
 - Strategies to support people experiencing sexism and to improve equity

- Considerations
 - Do you witness or experience sexism, if so how does this impact you?
 - How can you be a good ally?

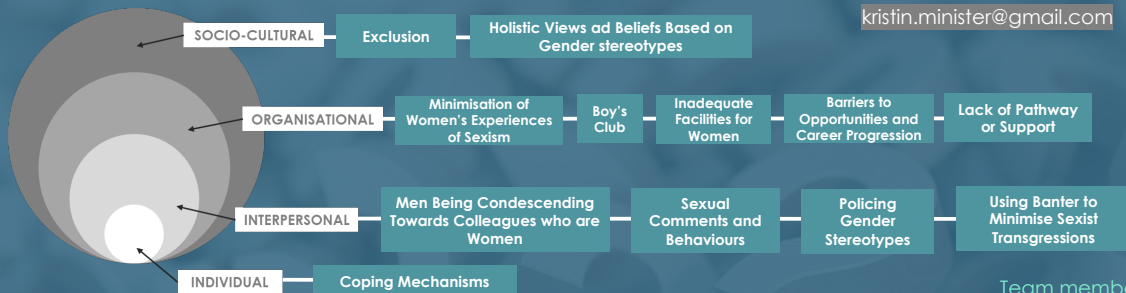


Thank you!

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