PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE MOVEMENT

Association for Applied Sport Psychology

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What is PEM all about?

The Performance Excellence Movement (PEM) is designed to increase student, practitioner, and public awareness of the application of sport and exercise psychology skills. PEM also serves to increase awareness, knowledge, and skill sets in relation to how sport and exercise psychology expertise can be effectively applied in a number of domains. The hope of PEM is to provide readers with interesting information about how some of our colleagues successfully apply their sport and exercise psychology techniques in their field and in other areas.

This year's newsletter takes on a different focus than previous newsletters and is geared towards YOU, AASP students! In the newsletter, you will find two articles written by fellow AASP students, two interviews with past and current AASP student regional representatives, a sneak peak to the upcoming Internship and Practicum Experience Database (IPED) manual, and brief overviews of the AASP student initiatives. Hopefully, by the time you are finished reading the newsletter, you will have read about two sport psychology topics, learned how to become more involved in sport psychology and been presented with opportunities that are available for students in AASP. Enjoy!

Read on for exciting information!

How Do I Become Involved?

- Contact the editors to learn more
- Submit a proposal to write an article
- Volunteer to become a peer reviewer for an article
- Read the newsletter and spread the word
- Attend conferences to meet those involved

Inside This Issue

Backdraft: The use of applied sport psychology to characterize firefighter *performance*

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The recognition of sport psychology as both a science and a professional discipline can be attributed to, in part, the symbiotic relationship between research and practice across various domains. Theories and best practices from clinical psychology and counseling routinely inform the work of sport psychology researchers and practitioners. In turn, theories and best practices from sport psychology inform work in other domains. For example, in business, concepts such as executive *coaching* (Ducharme, 2004) and *team* cohesion (Michalisin, Karau, & Tangpong, 2007) are influenced by the literature on coaching and team cohesion in sport. Consequently, the scope of applied sport psychology expands with each scholarly exchange. While recent *exchanges* include the use of theories and best practices from sport psychology to better understand the performance needs of military personnel (Fiore & Salas, 2008) and law enforcement officers (Janelle & Hatfield, 2008), a population that has been overlooked is firefighters.

To illustrate the similarities between the performance needs of athletes and firefighters, and to support our suggestion that sport psychology literature can be used to inform scholarly and applied endeavors in firefighter performance, consider the following scenarios:

- An NHL athlete, skating 20 miles per hour, checks an opponent into the boards to regain possession of the puck. His teammates would say that he always seems to have control of his nerves and is rarely affected by the stress of competition. The game has been extremely physical, and he can feel muscular fatigue and dehydration setting in. Down one goal with 10 seconds remaining in the first overtime period of the seventh game of the Stanley Cup Championship, the athlete passes the puck to a teammate at center ice and sprints down the ice to receive the next pass. With three seconds remaining, the athlete has one shot to tie the game.
- A firefighter arrives to the scene of a burning 20 story building where a victim is trapped on the top floor. The firefighter, who typically thrives on being the hero, just returned from another intense call and starts to climb the 20 flights of stairs. While carrying an additional load of 75 pounds of gear on his back, battling flames burning at greater than 1000°F, and facing extreme dehydration, the firefighter crawls through the pitch black smoke filled room and locates the victim who is barely alive. Well aware that he has less than five minutes before the building collapses, he starts to move the victim down the stairs.

The scenarios above highlight the physical, technical, and psychological aspects of performance in both sport and firefighting. Research to date on firefighters has focused mainly on improving the physical (Elsner & Kokhorst, 2011) and technical (Smith, 2011) aspects of their job performance. Since psychological factors such as personality (Salters-Pedneault, Ruef, & Orr, 2010), stress (Hill & Brunsden, 2009), and social support (Tuckey & Hayward, 2011) have surfaced within the literature on firefighters, it makes sense to expand the scope of applied sport psychology by examining the psychological aspects related to firefighter job performance. Given the overlap in athletics and firefighting regarding psychological factors that influence performance and well-being, the theories and best practices of sport psychology should be considered in future research and applied endeavors with firefighters. To those ends, this article provides a discussion of how constructs from sport psychology may be relevant to firefighters, a unique population of *athletes.*

“Given the overlap in athletics and firefighting... the theories and best practices of sport psychology should be considered in future research and applied endeavors with firefighters.”

Psychological Constructs in Sport Psychology and Firefighting

As indicated above regarding firefighters, several psychological constructs (i.e., personality, stress, and social support) have been addressed in the literature. These same constructs in sport psychology literature have been linked to peak performance and overall well-being in athletes. Below, a brief review of the literature regarding personality, stress, and social support in the field of sport psychology and in the field of firefighting is discussed. Also, after examining sport psychology concepts, ideas for how to further psychological research with firefighters are presented.

Personality. According to the Big Five framework (McCrae & Costa, 1987), core personality is comprised of five factors: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness. Sport psychology scholars have long believed that personality is an important construct in sport participation and performance. For example, Morgan (1974) suggested that individuals with certain personality characteristics (e.g., extraversion) are more likely to gravitate toward sport. Additionally, higher levels of extraversion and lower levels of neuroticism have been identified as personality characteristics observed in elite athletes (Eagleton, McKelvie, & deMan, 2007). Among athletes, conscientiousness and neuroticism have been linked to high levels of perceived stressor control and low levels of perceived stressor control, respectively (Kaisler, Polman, & Nicholls, 2012). More specific to

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performance, personality characteristics (i.e., the iceberg profile) may also account for a small amount of variance observed between successful and less successful athletes (Rowley, Landers, Kyllo, & Etnier, 1995).

Psychological Constructs in Sport Psychology and Firefighting

1. **Personality**
2. **Stress**
3. **Social Support**

Even though there is a paucity of personality research related to firefighters, a few studies indicate that personality may be related to firefighting performance. For instance, in 2003, Fannin and Dabbs identified weak correlations between the characteristics of extraversion and openness and firefighting skill level. Six years later, results of a study conducted by Wagner, Martin, and McFee (2009) indicated that a sample of firefighters recorded higher levels of extraversion than a sample of non-rescue workers. Consistent with the findings of Wagner et al., Salters-Pedneault and colleagues (2010) reported that compared to a normative sample, firefighter recruits recorded higher scores on excitement-seeking, which is a facet of extraversion. Given the established links between personality and sport performance, the psychological construct of personality must be further examined to better understand firefighting performance and well-being.

Stress. Stress, or the negative emotions (e.g., anger, anxiety, guilt, shame, etc. [Lazarus, 2000]) associated with the perceived inability to meet environmental demands (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), is a popular topic among sport psychology researchers and practitioners. Years of research have led to the conclusion that there is a link between the performance outcomes in sport and the emotional responses associated with stress. For example, Pensgaard and Duda (2003) reported that Norwegian and Danish winter sport athletes said that dysfunctional emotions such as pessimism, fear, and anxiousness impaired their performance during Olympic competition. Furthermore, corresponding with the Individual Zone of Optimal Functioning Theory (Hanin, 1995), the high levels of emotional arousal associated with stress can negatively influence sport performance (Hanin, 2000).

Similar to the literature on athletes, it has been suggested that stress has implications for the overall well-being of firefighters (Tuckey & Hayward, 2010). In a qualitative study examining traumatic experiences associated with firefighting (Hill & Brunsden, 2009), six firefighters were asked to recall an incident in which a fellow firefighter was killed on duty. Negative feelings such as shame, guilt, and embarrassment were identified, and serve as one example of the traumatic distress experienced by firefighters on the job. Concomitantly, Tuckey and Hayward (2011) reported that the job demands associated with firefighting may be linked to negative health outcomes such as depletion of energy reserves, burnout, and psychological strain. While little research exists to document the effects of stress on firefighter performance, there is even less research on ways to cope with the stress of the job. Furthermore, unlike the sport psychology research, where both individual and group coping strategies have been studied, the primary focus of the firefighter literature has been on group coping strategies. In other words, to better understand and tailor to the individual needs of firefighters, additional research is needed to examine the relationships between stress, coping skills, performance and overall well-being.

Social Support. Social support, a multi-dimensional construct defined as, "an exchange of resources between at least two individuals perceived by the provider or the recipient to be intended to enhance the well-being of the recipient" (Shumaker & Brownell, 1984, p. 13). Social support has several implications for applied sport psychology. In particular, social support has been linked to enhancing sport performance and coping with competition-related stress (Crocker, 1992). In a qualitative study of high performing international athletes in various sports, Rees and Hardy (2000) reported that athletes used social support to deal with stressors such as a performance slump. Similarly, in a more recent study examining coping strategies among Olympic athletes, Pensgaard and Duda (2003) found that emotional social support was one of the most frequently reported strategies for dealing with perceived stressors during competition. In addition to facilitating performance and coping with stress, social support has been linked to improved team climate (Rosenfeld & Richman, 1997) and increased team cohesion (Weiss & Friedrichs, 1986). For example, support provided by coaches has been linked to perceptions of cohesion among collegiate basketball teams (Weiss & Friedrichs, 1986). Similar to the findings that increased team cohesion is associated with improvements in sport performance (Carron, Colman, Wheeler, & Stevens, 2002), social support may, in turn, indirectly facilitate performance enhancement.

Consistent with the research mentioned above on athletes, social support may also have implications for enhancing well-being (Beaton, Murphy, Pike, & Corneil, 1997), buffering the development of post-traumatic stress disorder (Haslam & Mallon, 2003) and improving stress management among firefighters (Regehr, 2009). For example, perceptions of social support have been correlated with job satisfaction and work morale as well as the appraisal of occupational stressors among active professional firefighters (Beaton et al., 1997). Seeking social support has also been identified by firefighters as a coping strategy to regulate the emotions associated with stressful events (Regehr, 2009). Considering that social

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support has already been linked to well-being and stress management in firefighters, it is logical that additional research to examine the relationship between social support and performance is warranted.

Future Considerations

As indicated at the beginning of this article, sport psychology has a long tradition of sharing research and practice resources across disciplines. Recent calls to improve firefighter well-being (e.g., the Fire Service Joint Labor Management Wellness-Fitness Initiative) prompted this paper which examined the psychological demands associated with firefighting, thereby suggesting new areas of study for sport psychology researchers and practitioners, alike. To use a sport analogy, in which firefighters are athletes and the fire fight is a performance, researchers could first use qualitative methods to operationalize performance to this unique population of athletes and quantitative methods to study the psychological characteristics that are related to that performance. These research findings, along with others, could then be used to inform psychological skills training programs aimed at enhancing the performance, well-being, and safety of firefighters. In doing so, this paper continues the call for additional research on firefighters and expands the scope of practice for sport psychology consultants.

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Opinions from students in the field: Research in Sport Psychology

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There are many ideas and possible misconceptions about what a researcher in sport psychology, who takes the role of a researcher/ academic, does. From your perspective, what does someone in such a role "do"?

I am not sure this is a question that can be answered with one response or from one perspective. I think the reality is that there is a breadth of possibilities in terms of what a sport psychology academic "does" and that is going to be dependent on a person's life and career goals. You could probably talk to 100 people within the broad field of sport and exercise psychology and find that all 100 of them do different things on a day-to-day basis. For me, it should really come down to what are you passionate about, and what work is going to give you the energy to invest in what you are doing.

What tips would you give graduate (MA & Doctoral level) students interested in doing research in sport psychology?

Find a good mentor. I do not necessarily think this has to be someone who has the exact same interests as you, but rather someone who is willing to invest in you as a student and a future professional. I have been fortunate to have this experience as both a Master's and Doctoral student, but I know this is not always the case.

I would also consider looking at job postings on a regular basis (even if you are not looking for a job). They will tell you a lot about the trends in the job market and the skills and/or background you need to have. As an example, many university job postings in the last year have included a preference for applicants that are able to establish a line of research that can secure extramural funds. If you are entering a PhD program, and want to stay in academia, grant writing skills and experience are only going to help.

Talk about some of the projects you have been involved with concerning sport psychology.

On the research side, I conducted a study with mixed martial arts (MMA) fighters. Going in to the study, I did not know much about the sport, and decided the best way to learn was to experience it first hand. I spent over a year training at an MMA facility, taking notes, and interviewing athletes. It was fascinating to see what these athletes did on a daily basis to prepare physically and mentally for competition. It was also fun to work with the athletes through the research process. From training along side these athletes, conducting interviews, and discussing my interpretations of the findings with the participants, I feel I was able to see into the world they experience every day.

From an applied standpoint, our lab has begun to do more work in the talent identification and talent development world. This work has focused on understanding the symbiotic relationship between identifying and developing athletic talent, and how identifying an athlete's strengths and areas for development can inform the resources an organization can provide to develop an athlete's potential.

What career options would someone pursuing a PhD in sport psychology have?

Again, I think this really depends on personal preference and training. Sport psychology can mean different things to different people (e.g., youth development, exercise adherence, neurological effects of concussion, increasing athletic performance, to name just a few) so it really comes down to training and preference. If you want to focus on teaching, it would be prudent to get experience during your graduate training and look for a job that emphasizes teaching over grant funding and publications. If you want to work at a large, research intensive university, you would be wise to take additional course work in advanced statistical methods and grant writing, and get additional training through a post-doctoral fellowship. If you want to work in private practice, licensure as a psychologist might be the way to go.

The Role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in Team Dynamics: Implications for Athletes, Coaches, and Practitioners

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A variety of emotions are exhibited in sport, from extreme highs to extreme lows. One does not have to look far to find an athlete's recent breakdown, temper tantrum, or celebratory antics considering these occasions are often highly publicized. When success is often measured by wins and losses, it is easy to see why athletics seem to bring out the best and worst in people. The nature of sport elicits competitiveness and intense feelings and emotions in its participants and coaches, alike. The ability to perceive and manage emotions within oneself and in others could potentially be a highly valuable skill in sport. Past research has indicated such, in that emotion regulation can be a valuable predictor of sport performance (Chang, Sy, & Choi, 2012). The process of recognizing and managing emotions within oneself and in others can be referred to as Emotional Intelligence (EI; Chan & Mallett, 2011).

"By helping players to manage their emotional interactions effectively… it may enhance interpersonal relationships within the group ."

Anyone who has played sports knows the plethora of emotions that are experienced in the midst of competition. For example, the emotional temperature of a team before a big game may influence the outcome. If the mood in the locker room is subdued and lacking enthusiasm, players may perform to that standard. If the environment is too frantic or anxious, the team's emotional energy may be too high to control their performance. While emotions are not always easy to manage, studying and practicing EI can be a major step in finding a balance between the ups and downs of athletic life. Often it seems that the best players are those who are able to remain in control of their emotions, even in the face of adversity. Staying consistent mentally is vital to staying consistent physically. Mental practice, similar to physical practice, may be time intensive and require considerable effort. While emotional management is often aimed at individuals, practicing EI within a team can enhance the overall relationships between teammates (i.e. team dynamics). By helping players to manage their emotional interactions effectively (e.g., staying calm, remaining positive, encouraging teammates, etc.), it may enhance interpersonal relationships within the group (Nelson & Low, 2003).

EI is not only helpful for athletes; coaches and sport psychology practitioners can also benefit from practicing EI in their daily interactions (Chan & Mallettt, 2011). EI increases self-awareness of one's own emotions, while improving one's ability to recognize and appropriately react to the emotions of others (Nelson & Low, 2003). While a team consists of athletes, coaches may contribute to the team dynamic as much as the athletes themselves. For example, if a coach is particularly frustrated with his or her team, this will permeate through to the emotional environment of the team. One's coaching style (i.e., aggressive, passive, laid back, intense) can also affect the emotional environment of the team (Chan & Mallettt, 2011).


http://www.isteroids.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2009/01/highschoolfootball-steroids.jpg

It is important to note that understanding EI and choosing to behave in an emotionally intelligent manner are two distinct concepts. In order for EI to have a positive effect on team dynamics, this concept must be put into action. In other words, EI must be *practiced* in addition to being *learned*. Emotions are an immense part of the human experience, and serve a purpose in individual's daily lives. Emotions can often make people aware of important feelings. For example, intense emotions about a particular situation may elicit a change that needs to be made (Baltzell, 2011). Sometimes, however, in cases where the circumstances are out of one's control, emotions must be dealt with and accepted in the midst of certain conditions (Baltzell, 2011). While emotions are important to both human's basic and complex survival, being ruled by emotions alone can prove to be problematic, particularly in sport. Often, one must learn to cope with, or control, one's emotional responses in order to deal with situations that are less than ideal. Athletes, coaches, and teams who learn to develop EI and practice it within their intrapersonal lives and interpersonal interactions may find their overall experience to be more positive, balanced, and enjoyable (Baltzell, 2011). Also, a group EI profile may also be used to evaluate team dynamics and cohesion, which have been found to impact team satisfaction and performance (Carron & Hausenblas, 1998; Carron, Spink, & Prapavessis, 1997). In the current article, the major components of EI will be discussed, followed by a discussion of the influence EI can have on team dynamics and the implications which follow for athletes, coaches, and sport psychology practitioners alike.

Major Components of Emotional Intelligence

Three major components of EI that will be discussed in this article are perceiving, understanding, and managing emotions, based on Mayer and Salovey's (1997) Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence.

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Major Components of Emotional Intelligence:

1. **Perceiving**
2. **Understanding**
3. **Managing**

Perceiving. The ability to perceive emotions intrapersonally involves recognizing a given emotion in oneself (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Likewise, the ability to perceive emotions interpersonally involves recognizing what emotions another individual is experiencing. Emotion perception demands sufficient self-awareness, which can allow one to process and evaluate one's emotions. The ability to perceive others' emotions is a vital tool, especially for coaches (Meyer & Zizzi, 2007). Being able to recognize what one's athletes are feeling, as well as processing the possible cause of these feelings, is key for understanding the overall atmosphere of the team. Generally, the emotional state of a team cannot be dealt with unless the emotions are first perceived.

Understanding. The process of understanding emotions involves both the interpretation of one's own emotions and the emotions of others (i.e. the perceived cause of the emotions; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Understanding emotions is important because it can help anticipate the impact of those emotions on a given team, situation, or environment. For example, if a youth coach is feeling particularly frustrated with one of the parents, it may affect the way the coach treats that child, or it may come across in the coach/parent interaction within the competitive environment. Ultimately, one person's emotional state can affect teammates, coaches, and staff, as well as the climate of the team. Furthermore, *Emotional Contagion* is a phenomenon which involves "catching" and "feeling" the emotions of others in close proximity (Chan & Mallett, 2011; Meyer & Fletcher, 2007). Consider a situation in which an athlete, who is considered to be a leader on the team, is constantly losing his/her cool. He/she is not only the captain of the team but is the best player. He/she has been lashing out at teammates who have confronted him/her about his/her extreme emotional reactions, as well as officials who make calls against him/her. Lately, he/she has also been challenging and questioning the coaches' authority. The concept of Emotional Contagion would suggest that the behavior of a prominent and influential member of the team will have an effect on the overall team environment and mood of the team members. While Emotional Contagion has the potential for detrimental effects on a team if there are negative emotions, positive emotions in players can be used to one's advantage. Understanding and recognizing this phenomenon can help coaches promote a positive emotional environment by encouraging team leaders to learn and practice EI, in hopes that their emotional behavior will spread to teammates.

Managing. The conscious act of controlling one's emotional response, or one's response to the emotions of others, is known as the ability to manage emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). This management process is a *Meta-Regulation* of mood which can be described as a checks and balances system (Chan & Mallett, 2011). Meta-Regulation allows a person to manage his or her emotions through an external awareness and knowledge of one's emotions by finding intelligent and creative ways to effectively deal with them. This process is often practiced by leaders with strong emotional management, and its effects are evident in their balanced behavioral responses. The goal of Meta-Regulation in sport is to determine the ideal emotional state for maximum performance, thereby increasing one's chances for success (Chan & Mallett, 2011). For example, a golfer may recognize that he or she is extremely frustrated and angry after a poor shot. The emotionally intelligent athlete practicing Meta-Regulation would understand that dwelling on a bad shot will most likely result in increased bodily tension, leading to a faster, more aggressive swing. In turn, it leads to another poor shot. In an emotionally intelligent athlete will make a decision to be aware of his or her emotions, accept them, and manage them accordingly in order to optimize chances for success in the immediate future (i.e., the next shot).

Practicing Emotional Intelligence

Like any skill set, EI must be consciously learned and practiced on a consistent basis in order to be effective. Self-awareness is pertinent to perceiving, understanding, and managing emotions, and can be thought of as the first step to developing and improving EI. Similar to physical training, mental skills cannot be established without repetition, which includes correcting inevitable error. Just as the body must learn and replicate technical physical skills and motions, the mind must also become accustomed to practicing EI on a regular basis. This means that a person must be aware of her/his emotional tendencies, as well as have a willingness to work on these tendencies if she/he are negatively affecting their performance or interactions with others. Once EI is learned and consistently practiced, there are many positive skills associated with EI for athletes, teams, and coaches.

Sport psychology practitioners can also benefit from developing their own EI, because this practice will allow them to be more perceptive, receptive, and insightful when observing a particular athlete, coach, or team (Chan & Mallett, 2011). Developing a strong personal EI can create a more intuitive, empathic, and effective sport psychology professional. Empathizing with clients is one of the best ways to develop rapport and establish lasting client-practitioner relationships based on mutual respect and trust (Crisp, 2011). Tapping into one's own emotional reserves by increasing self-awareness and self-knowledge, creates more patient, understanding, and helpful practitioners who can empathize when listening to a client's or team's emotional experiences.

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Effects of Emotional Intelligence on Team Dynamics

The skills commonly associated with EI can be enormously beneficial to team dynamics, both on the individual and group level (Chang et al., 2012). Some of these skills include anger management, anxiety management, self-awareness, social awareness, commitment ethic, decision-making skills, empathy, and positive influence (Nelson & Low, 2003). In a study among netball, rowing, and rugby teams, both task cohesion and social cohesion of the group were linked to the emotional mood states of its athletes (Terry, Carron, Pink, Lane, Jones, & Hall, 2000). This suggests that emotions play a significant role in team dynamics and group cohesion. Learning to manage and control one's emotions, as well as the ability to cope with negative or uncomfortable emotions, can increase one's ability to deal with anger and anxiety in the face of adversity. As previously discussed, perceiving and understanding one's emotions and the emotions of others can cultivate a greater sense of self and social awareness, while increasing feelings of empathy between both athletes and coaches. High EI can also elicit more effective decision-making, by helping practitioners conduct faster and more comprehensive evaluations (Nelson & Low, 2003).

When learned and practiced consistently, having a strong EI results in a positive team dynamic while enhancing the team's overall commitment ethic, or dedication to completing team tasks and goals (Nelson & Low, 2003). A positive change in adaptability, or the ability to cope with the unexpected, is often a result of EI. In addition to these effects, EI can also positively influence individual abilities such as the setting and completion of goals, time management, and stress management, which enables athletes to develop a clear sense of their goals and effectively cope with stress. Developing a strong EI can increase self-confidence and self-esteem as well as self-efficacy. Learning to manage emotions effectively can also enhance personal satisfaction and overall enjoyment of the sport through increased intrinsic motivation (Nelson & Low, 2003).

Practical Implications of Emotional Intelligence

EI has multiple practical implications for athletes, coaches, and practitioners, which can ultimately benefit intrapersonal skills and interpersonal relationships and team dynamics.

Athletes. EI has been shown to impact team cohesion by increasing overall affect (i.e., likability of the activity); in turn, enhancing performance (Meyer & Fletcher, 2007). EI can help jaded athletes regain love for their sport while deriving joy from their experience by developing a more positive perspective based on newfound intrinsic motivation. Practicing positive emotions can also foster interpersonal relationships while building strong relationships among teammates. This can produce mutual motivation, which is seen in teammates encouraging one another to reach full-engagement and fulfillment in their given role. EI can also help athletes to cope with the demands of their sport environment by pushing through adversity and maintaining a positive outlook. Emotional Contagion, as previously discussed, can help spread emotions conducive to success through effective leadership. Overall, EI is good for the health and well-being of each individual athlete, as well as for the team as a whole (Meyer & Fletcher, 2007).

Coaches. Cultivating mental and emotional abilities is just as important for coaches as it is for athletes. Coaches often play an integral and influential role in their athletes' lives, both athletically and personally (Chan & Mallett, 2011). Practicing EI is helpful for coaches because it allows them to understand the impact they can have on each individual athlete. As a coach, EI can heighten performance outcomes by improving team affect, promoting effective leadership, and increasing empathy, motivation, and communication between athletes and coaches, alike (Chan & Mallett, 2011). For example, if a coach is able to read the individual emotions of his or her athletes and the overall emotional climate of the team, there is a greater chance of that coach taking active steps towards maintaining task and social cohesion (Terry et al., 2000). EI can also improve coach efficacy and the overall enjoyment of the coaching experience by fostering intrinsic motivation and career satisfaction (Chan & Mallett, 2011). Additionally, managing the demands of the sport environment is just as crucial for coaches as it is for athletes, if not more so. Many coaches experience burnout because of their inability to recognize their own emotions, which can result in the detriment of their own happiness and their athletes' overall experience (Chan & Mallett, 2011). Coaching can be a stressful, demanding, and highly criticized role, thus it is easy to see why coaches often experience negative emotions. Developing a greater EI is one way to help coaches recapture their vocational enjoyment while also having positive effects on the team as a whole.

Practitioners. Emotional Intelligence can be a useful tool for sport psychology practitioners. Not only can practitioners benefit from developing their own EI, but evaluating athletes' and coaches' EI can provide insight into team dynamics, potential problems, and suggestions for treatment planning. In addition to the skills associated with EI, emotional awareness can give practitioners a larger database for exercises such as imagery, self-talk, and relaxation, by using one's knowledge of individual and team emotions to customize treatment plans (Meyer & Fletcher, 2007). For example, by becoming familiar with an athlete's emotional tendencies, individualized imagery, self-talk, or relaxation scripts may be created to help the athlete to effectively anticipate and cope with certain performance related emotions such as stress, anxiety, and anger. Since EI can be a valuable predictor of performance (Chang et al., 2012), individuals' EI profiles may be considered when creating treatment programs (Meyer & Fletcher, 2007). While EI should not be the sole basis for program development, it may serve as another resource when assessing a given situation or event. Sport psychology practitioners can help athletes and coaches enhance their EI through education and practice (Meyer & Zizzi, 2007).

Gabana Article 2 Cont'd

Conclusion

The preceding was a discussion of the major components of EI, as well as the influence EI can have on team dynamics and the implications EI integration can have on athletes, coaches, and sport psychology practitioners. Similar to kinesthetic skills, EI is a state which can be developed over time and can be learned, practiced, and mastered. EI is an ability-based skill which can be rehearsed to increase desired mental and physical performance, as well as increasing overall satisfaction during performance and group cohesion (Meyer & Fletcher, 2007; Terry et al., 2000). The more familiar one becomes with one's emotions, the more malleable and usable these emotions become for performance enhancing sport psychology techniques.

Examples of specific exercises pertaining to EI that practitioners can use with athletes and coaches are included at the close of the article. This contains an outline of the Emotional Learning System (Nelson & Low, 2003) which can help in identifying the EI concepts of perceiving, understanding, and managing emotions. Useful Questions for Coaches and Athletes concerning Emotion Regulation are also provided (Nelson & Low, 2003); this can be a tool for self-evaluation of one's current EI, while introducing emotional awareness.

APPLYING THE EMOTIONAL LEARNING SYSTEM (Nelson & Low, 2003)

Step A:	**EXPLORE**	**SELF-ASSESSMENT**: Explore attitudes and behaviors
Step B:	**IDENTIFY**	**SELF-AWARNESS**: Identify your current skill level
Step C:	**UNDERSTAND**	**SELF-KNOWLEDGE**: Understand the skill using your own description
Step D:	**LEARN**	**SELF-DEVELOPMENT**: Use self-directed coaching, mentoring, or active imagination to learn the skill
Step E:	**APPLY & MODEL**	**SELF-IMPROVEMENT**: Practice applying and modeling the skill daily

EMOTION REGULATION
USEFUL QUESTIONS FOR COACHES AND ATHLETES

Define your problem and state it specifically (e.g., controlling my anger).

Identify and outline your usual response in a specific situation (e.g., when the referee makes a bad call, get really angry and start cursing).

List at least three options or possible solutions (e.g., I could ignore the calls, I could take a deep breath and focus on what I can control, I could take a time-out and think about what I want to do and say).

**References on page 15*

Opinions from students in the field: Application in Sport Psychology

Jessica Dale, PsyD

Jessica is a former AASP E-Board Student Representative. She just finished up her pre-doctoral internship at The Ohio State University. She currently is completing her post-doc.

There are many ideas and possible misconceptions about what a sport psychologist actually does, from your perspective, what does a clinical sport psychologist "do"?

I "do" a variety of things. In addition to providing performance enhancement/performance restoration services to athletes and non-athletes, I consult as well as provide individual and group therapy to athletes, coaches, and athletic department personnel. Individual and group therapy tends to focus on mental health and clinical issues (e.g. depression, anxiety, eating disorders, substance abuse, relationship issues, transitions). I have also spent time teaching and presenting on performance enhancement/performance restoration as well as mental health and clinical issues impacting athletes. These lectures and presentations have been provided to athletes, coaches, and athletic department personnel.

Sport psychology is still a growing field, what tips would you give undergraduate students interested in sport psychology?

I would encourage undergraduate students to speak to graduate students and professionals in the field. Specifically, I would encourage undergraduate students to learn more about areas of interest within sport psychology and the career paths of these individuals. There are numerous paths to a career in sport psychology. Talking to other students and professionals is critical to carving a path for yourself!

What tips would you give graduate (MA & Doctoral level) students interested in sport psychology?

Similar to undergraduate students, I would encourage graduate students to connect with other graduate students as well as professionals. More specifically, find a mentor in your area of interest. Buy them a cup of coffee and learn as much you can from them!

From your experience, what are some of the most common concerns athletes present with? Are they normally performance enhancement or do they concern more clinical issues (i.e., depression, anxiety, eating disorders, etc.)?

In my experience, athletes tend to present with performance enhancement/performance restoration more. Although these athletes will present with performance enhancement/performance restoration, the underlying issue is often related to a more clinical issue. Since I have worked in an eating disorder treatment facility, I tend to be referred the athletes with eating disorders, but I have also worked with athletes presenting with anxiety, depression, substance abuse, relationship issues, transitions (post-injury, post-career). In addition, I have worked with athletes on goal setting, mental skills (imagery, relaxation, etc.), team building and group dynamics.

From your perspective, what have you discovered about working with athletes that you would want to share with a psychologist before they work with athletes (Both strengths and challenges)?

Athletics is a culture with its own set of norms and values. This can be a strength and a challenge. I would encourage psychologists working with athletes to learn more about the culture before starting with the population!

What clinical orientation are most sport psychology techniques derived from? What orientation do you use for case conceptualization?

I do not know if there is one clinical orientation that more sport psychology techniques are derived from, but I tend to use Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) as well as Dialectical Behavior Therapy and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

What setting do you see sport psychology growing the most (e.g., universities, private practice, etc.)?

I have been working with athletes in university settings. I think sport psychology in the university setting (e.g. athletic departments as well as college counseling centers) will continue to grow. But I think that sport psychology with adolescent athletes and youth athletes will start to grow the most.

Sneak Peek Into the Internship and Practicum Experience Database Manual

As you may have heard, students within AASP and APA Division 47 have been working hard to create an Internship and Practicum Experience Database Manual (IPED). Currently, finishing touches are being put on a few sections with the goal of gaining board approval and having this manual published for student use within the next several months. This manual will be designed to help students and early professionals gain experience and progress through the field of sport psychology. This has been a project that has spanned two years and countless hours. Below is a sneak peak (i.e., two articles from the manual) into some of the content from the manual. Look for the rest of the manual on the AASP IPED webpage soon!

Tips for Undergraduate Students Interested in a Career in Sport and Exercise Psychology

Nick Galli

University of Utah

Original Source: Association for Applied Sport Psychology http://appliedsportpsych.org/resource-center/professionals

Major Point: Undergraduate students who are interested in pursuing a career in sport and exercise psychology can broaden their understanding of the field by taking courses in psychology and exercise science, assisting with research, volunteer coaching, and communicating with current sport and exercise psychology (SEP) professionals.

"How do I begin my career in sport psychology?" Due to the increasing visibility of the field of sport and exercise psychology, questions such as this from undergraduate students are becoming more common (McCullagh & Noble, 1993). Unfortunately, the field of sport and exercise psychology (SEP) has not developed to the point where answers to these questions are readily available. Most universities still do not offer graduate programs in SEP, and undergraduate students studying SEP may be hard pressed to locate a faculty member in their department that is knowledgeable about graduate training and career options in SEP.

"… undergraduate students studying SEP may be hard pressed to locate a faculty member in their department that is knowledgeable about graduate training and career options in SEP."

As an undergraduate student with an interest in SEP, I frequently asked questions such as the one above. Luckily I was able to get the answers that I needed to embark on a path toward a career in SEP. Now, as I near the end of my graduate training, I would like to share some tips that I believe will provide you with the direction you need to embark on your own SEP journey.

Double Dip

SEP is a multidisciplinary field of study. That is, sport and exercise psychologists must have a large base of knowledge in both psychology and exercise science/kinesiology (McCullagh & Noble, 1993). Unfortunately, very few universities currently offer an undergraduate program in SEP. The best alternatives to a SEP-specific degree are to either double major in psychology and exercise science, or to major in one discipline, and minor in the other discipline. Important psychology courses to consider include cognitive psychology, abnormal psychology, and social psychology. Exercise science courses to consider include motor behavior, exercise physiology, and sport sociology. If possible, take an introductory SEP class (typically offered through the exercise science/kinesiology department). Although SEP graduate programs are usually housed in either psychology or exercise science, having a background in both disciplines will show that you have a genuine interest in both the sport/exercise and the psychology components of the field.

Get Experience

Besides coursework, practical experiences are valuable for introducing you to SEP. Even if you can't work directly in the SEP field, there are options available for you to 'get your feet wet' by assisting with projects at your university and in the community. One way to gain experience is to volunteer to assist a faculty member at your university who is conducting research related to the psychology of sport or exercise. Faculty members are usually more than happy to have an undergraduate research assistant to help with tasks such as data collection and data entry. Although research may not first come to mind when you think of SEP, it is an important part of the field. Knowledge created through research is used by sport and exercise psychologists to improve individuals' sport and physical activity experiences. Having research experience will make you more attractive to graduate programs, and prepare you for graduate-level work. Another way to gain practical experience in SEP is to volunteer as a coach or assistant coach in a local youth league. Although coursework and research are vital activities for learning about the field, there is nothing quite like actually working with athletes in the sport environment.

IPED Cont'd

Make Connections

Suggestions for undergraduates:

1. **Double Dip**
2. **Get Experience**
3. **Make Connections**

As previously discussed, it is often difficult to locate individuals at your university with knowledge about SEP. Therefore, one of the most important things you can do as an aspiring SEP professional is to establish contact with current SEP professionals in other geographic locations. Obtain a copy of the Directory of Graduate Programs in Applied Sport Psychology (Sachs, Burke, & Loughren, 2006), and e-mail or call faculty members who seem interesting based on their profiles. Ask them questions about graduate school, career opportunities, and what they look for in a graduate applicant. An even more effective way to make connections with SEP professionals is to attend a professional conference. The Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP), The North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity (NASPSPA), and the American Psychological Association (APA) all hold annual conferences attended by SEP professionals. Not only do conferences expose you to the kind of research done in SEP, but they provide great opportunities to network with other students and SEP professionals from around the world. If possible, search the conference program for SEP professionals who will be attending, and e-mail one or two of them to find out if they would be willing to meet with you for 15-20 minutes at some point during the conference. I was fortunate as an undergraduate to have a meeting with noted sport psychologist Dan Gould at a conference. This was an invaluable experience for me, as I learned more about the field than I ever could have from a book or a website.

Summary

Despite the fact that it is a growing field with much to offer physically active individuals, information regarding graduate training and career options in SEP is not yet readily available. Based on my personal experience as an undergraduate student who was interested in SEP, and as a graduate student in SEP, I believe that taking undergraduate coursework in psychology and exercise science, gaining practical experience in the form of research or coaching, and making connections with SEP professionals are three valuable strategies for learning about and gaining entry into the field as an undergraduate student. Although implementing these strategies will require a high level of commitment and dedication on your part, in the end I'm sure you'll find that it was a journey worth taking.

Additional Peek into IPED

Suggestions For Graduate Students

Bridget Beachy[1], David Bauman[1], & William V. Massey[2]

The School of Professional Psychology at Forest Institute[1], University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Locating and assessing practicum sites can be a frustrating process for students and early professionals seeking the necessary supervised hours to earn the CC-AASP credential. Although the field of sport and exercise psychology is diverse in professional membership, locating a practicum site that fits one's individual needs can seem like a daunting task. As such, we assessed the process of completing the necessary hours for AASP certification with a group of current CC-AASPs. In the spring of 2011, 33 CC-AASPs responded to a survey regarding their practicum experiences, and offered guidance and reassurance to novice professionals interested in starting a career in the field of sport and exercise psychology.

The practicum experiences of those responding to the survey parallel the diversity seen in the AASP professional membership. Specifically, the CC-AASPs held a variety of employment positions, including: university faculty member and/or researcher, private consultant, director of a sport psychology center, and clinical or counseling psychologist. Thus, there is a breadth of opportunities for those entering the field of applied sport and exercise psychology.

IPED Cont'd

When examining practicum placement of respondents, three common sites emerged: university athletic departments (5 of 33), formal internships (i.e. clinical or counseling psychology, and sport sciences) (5 of 33), and various independent teams/clients (12 of 33). Moreover, an additional seven individuals reported a combination of the aforementioned sites. In regards to formal internships, athletic departments, marriage and family centers, and counseling centers were the most frequently reported sites. Overall, it appeared the majority of sites were linked with a university or charter school athletic department. Furthermore, a large portion of CC-AASPs (12 out of 33) worked with independent teams/ clients.

CC-AASPs were also asked about the process of identifying a mentored practicum experience. Seventy-five percent reported receiving mentorship from someone other than their primary advisor. Specifically, the respondents identified locating mentorship through the following avenues: formal internship (6 of 25), another professional/mentor at their academic institution (6 of 25), a hired mentor from the CC-AASP list (http://appliedsportpsych.org/Consultants/Find-a-Consultant) located on the AASP website (4 of 25), and a colleague of their primary advisor (4 of 25). Thus, while most individuals received mentorship from an internship or mentor at their current institution, there are also mentors on the CC-AASP list willing to supervise student hours.

Although finding a practicum site and mentorship can be a challenge, most of the respondents listed their practicum experience as "positive." To help you in your search for supervised practicum experiences, a list of available mentors and sites are provided in this manual. We encourage you to use the resources available here to get your career off to a productive start!

To review, the following are common places to look for mentorship:

- Primary advisor or other advisor at your academic or work-related institution
- Formal internships
- AASP-CC mentor list

In addition, the following are common places to gain practicum experience:

- University Athletic Departments
- Formal Internships (i.e., clinical or counseling psychology, sport science)
- Independent teams/clients (local semi-professional, amateur, adolescence sport teams)

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Current AASP Student Initiatives

Below are current student initiatives that AASP Regional Representatives are involved in. As fellow students, we hope these initiatives serve specific student needs and promote involvement within the organization. If interested in any of the initiatives or have questions regarding them, please email the respective student leader!

Across Land and Sea: International Promotion of AASP (ALAS)

The mission of ALAS is to increase the visibility of AASP globally. The more involvement, the better! ALAS has worked to increase the visibility of AASP in the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and Asia by encouraging individuals and organizations to proactively network. ALAS is also creating a database of universities around the world that offer courses in sport and exercise psychology.

To become involved with ALAS, please contact Morgan Hall at morgan.hall@utah.edu, Jordan Schaeffer at jws407@uowmail.edu.au, Hamish Cox at hacox@cardiffmet.ac.uk, Adisa Haznadar at adishaznadar@hotmail.com or Rachel Walker at rwalker2@sprinfieldcollege.edu.

Internship and Practicum Experience Database (IPED)

As students progress through their Master's and Doctoral programs, many are interested in seeking out experiences that will allow them to gain hands-on applied sport psychology experiences and help them to complete the required internship hours for becoming a certified AASP consultant. A list of internships is currently being created and will soon be available on the website.

If you would like to submit an internship experience, receive the current list of internship sites, or become involved with IPED, please contact Daniel Palac at dpalac@my.adler.edu, Bill Way at wway1@ithaca.edu, or Brian Souza at souzabr@onid.orst.edu.

Graduate Program Fair

The Graduate Program Fair provides a friendly environment for prospective students to learn more about the schools they are interested in by interacting with students and faculty members. For prospective graduate students, it is a great time to learn more about several programs in one "hands-on" evening, saving them hours of surfing the net. Additionally, prospective students are able to receive application and program information. Since current graduate students are in attendance, prospective students have the opportunity to not only ask questions about the program, but also gain the perspectives of current graduate students. The fair is attended by graduate programs around the world!

To become involved with the Graduate Program Fair, please contact Kathleen Carter at kathleencarter@gmail.com, Eric Watson at eric.watson@mnsu.edu, Weston Durham at weston.durham@lcu.edu, or Brain Avila at brian_3819@yahoo.com.

Mentorship Match Program (MMP)

The primary purpose of the Mentorship Match Program (MMP) is to facilitate effective mentorships such that AASP's students have the opportunity to gain the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to take on professional leadership within AASP in the future. Mentees and mentors are matched based on factors which may include professional interests, work/supervision style, preferred mode of communication, and geographic location. Mentees and mentors work together to identify individual goals and action plans. They are invited and encouraged to share their experiences, as well as ideas for improving MMP, at the annual national conference.

To become involved with MMP, please contact Morgan Hall at morgan.hall@utah.edu or Ursa Dobersek at ud09@my.fsu.edu.

Student Initiatives Cont'd

Proactive Peer Undergraduate Mentoring Program (PPUMP)

The purpose of the Proactive Peer Undergraduate Mentoring Program (PPUMP) is to provide an AASP student mentoring database. PPUMP is comprised of graduate students who are competent and willing to serve as mentors for their peers and prospective students as they search for graduate programs that best fit their needs. Members of this initiative give outreach presentations to undergraduate classes to promote the field of sport and exercise psychology, the AASP organization, and the PPUMP initiative. Additionally, PPUMP mentors share their research and applied interests, which provides a useful tool to identify fellow students who have similar interests.

To become involved with PPUMP, please contact Anna-Marie Jaeschke at amc.jaeschke@gmail.com, Chelsea Pierotti at Chelsea.pierottie@unco.edu, Angel Brutus at synergistic_solutions@comcast.net or Elena Holler at eholler90@gmail.com.

Student Website Committee

The purpose of the Student Website Committee is to increase the online presence of student-run initiatives and student contributions to AASP. Members will work towards making the student section useful, informative, and helpful to all current and potential AASP student members. A major function will be to update and maintain the student section of the AASP website. This includes working with other student-run initiatives to ensure that all information on the website is accurate and logically organized.

To become involved with the Student Website Committee, please contact Dolores Christensen at da_christensen@yahoo.com or Bob Hoople at tugrad282@yahoo.com.

Student Facebook Group

Similar to the Student Website Committee, the purpose of the Student Facebook Group is to keep students updated with AASP initiatives, topics and events. Be sure to join the facebook group to receive the most up to date information regarding AASP and student initiatives!

To become more involved with the Student Facebook Group, please contact Leigh Bryant at lbryant1@mix.wvu.edu or Bob Hoople at tugrad282@yahoo.com.

References for Gabana

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PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE MOVEMENT

Association for Applied Sport Psychology

Interested in writing a student article?

Have ideas to share for the future?

CONTACT US

We will point you in the right direction!

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A note from the editors

Dear Readers,

As editors of this year's PEM Newsletter, we first want to thank the students that have contributed their experience to this year's newsletter. Additionally, we would also like to thank all others that have made the final product possible. These include the AASP Executive Board and Student Representatives, former PEM Initiative Leaders, and the individuals in the performance field who so willingly participated in this effort. The PEM Newsletter would not have been possible without your helpful contributions, guidance, and support, and for this we are grateful. We would also like to thank the AASP Executive Board and Student Representatives for the opportunity to serve as the editors of the PEM Newsletter. This has been a learning experience for us, beginning with the initial development and design phases and continuing on through the process of recruitment and editing.

We would also like to reinforce the thoughts shared by the past two years' editing teams. The current team of editors also believes that the PEM Newsletter is an excellent student publication that can increase student, practitioner, and public awareness of the application of sport and exercise psychology skills. Additionally, the PEM Newsletter has the potential to spread knowledge of the possible impact that the field of sport and exercise psychology can have on both sport and non-sport domains. We also believe it is essential that AASP student members have a venue through which they may publish articles regarding applied sport and exercise psychology. These articles help to create a newsletter that provides readers with information about sport and exercise psychology techniques and best practices. As your editors, we have tried to create a final product that reaches these goals.

Please submit any comments, concerns, or questions regarding the newsletter by using the online feedback form available on the PEM Student Initiative page on the AASP Website (http://www.appliedsportpsych.org/Students/PEM). *Looking to the future, we invite AASP student members to become more involved in the PEM Newsletter and to help this initiative grow!*

Thank you,
- The PEM Team