SPORT SOCIAL WORK FACT SHEET

What is Sport Social Work?

- Sport Social Work focuses on the unique individual and environmental needs of athletes and promotes social justice and social change across sports.

What is the role of a Sport Social Worker in College Sports?

- Provide clinical services and performance enhancing services to student-athletes. Sport Social Workers are equipped to address depression, anxiety, bipolar, substance abuse, and eating disorders as well as a litany of other mental health challenges that can be exacerbated by sports.

- Offer program development services to athletic departments in areas such as sports performance, transitions, career development, substance use, post traumatic growth and other programs for student-athlete groups.

- Participate in multi-disciplinary behavioral teams that include athletic trainers, sports psychologists, and team physicians to promote the health and well-being of student-athletes.

- Some Sport Social Workers are athletic department staff members while others may be employed by an outside vendor or university counseling department to work exclusively with student-athletes.

How are we unique?

- Sport Social Workers are equipped to help student-athletes and athletic departments navigate systems including criminal justice, foster care, communal, familial, and peer networks that some student-athletes continue to interact with upon their arrival to college campuses.

- Sport Social Workers use strength-based and biopsychosocial approaches in their work with student-athletes and athletic departments.

- Values and ethics established by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) guide Sport Social Workers.
ADDRESSING NCAA’S MENTAL HEALTH BEST PRACTICES THROUGH SPORT SOCIAL WORK

1. Clinical Licensure of Practitioners Providing Mental Health Crisis
   - Nearly 300,000 licensed social workers in US
   - Utilize person-in-environment framework to understand social, psychological, biological, cultural, and spiritual dimensions
   - Address behavioral and emotional issues
   - Offer various therapeutic techniques

2. Procedures for Identification & Referral of Student-Athletes to Qualified Practitioners
   - Develop and review referral protocols
   - Provide case management and crisis intervention to athletes, teams, and departments
   - Communicate with medical and mental health professionals inside and outside the university
   - Advise Athletic Trainers on identifying mental health and referring to appropriate resources

3. Pre-Participation Mental Health Screening
   - Assess student-athlete’s strengths, risks, needs and systems prior to collegiate sport participation
   - Conduct various screening tools
   - Develop and oversee mental health referral plans

4. Health Promoting Environments that Support Mental Well-Being and Resilience
   - Collaborate with NCAA Committees
   - Develop and evaluate interventions & prevention
   - Partner with campus resources to promote health and well-being of student-athletes
   - Advocate for the best interests of student-athletes, coaches and athletic departments

EXAMPLES OF COLLEGES UTILIZING SPORT SOCIAL WORKERS

- George Mason University
- Lamar University
- Lindenwood University
- Louisiana State University
- North Carolina Central University
- University of Connecticut
- University of Georgia
- University of Iowa
- University of Louisville
- University of Massachusetts Amherst
- University of Michigan
- University of North Dakota
- University of Pittsburgh
- University of Tennessee
- University of Texas
- Utah State University

Helping athletes win at life!

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