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Interprofessional collaboration in college athlete mental health care: Addressing the need for a competency-based framework of integrated care

SPORT PSYCHOLOGY ABSTRACTS

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Abstract

College athletes are susceptible to mental health symptoms and disorders. Many athletes lack knowledge of mental health symptoms, have negative views of mental health and help seeking, and have limited confidence in being able to access professional mental health support. Unfortunately, many athletes will not seek the mental health support they need. With a need to provide mental health support across college sports, strategies are needed to harness the professional competencies of everyone in the arena. This requires the need for integrative approaches that promote interprofessional coordination and collaboration for mental health education and practice. Drawing on the professional experience of

sport social workers and practitioner sport psychologists, the Competency-Based Interprofessional Educational framework designed by the Interprofessional Education Collaborative was adapted to address college athlete mental health needs. The framework identifies four key competencies to help establish and promote coordinated training opportunities and efficient and effective mental health care amongst an interprofessional care team: 1) understanding of the values and ethics of different members with respect to professional cultures, training, and expertise; 2) clearly defined roles and responsibilities of different members delineated by scopes of practice, including limitations in care provisions; 3) interprofessional communication that enhances mental health service availability and access; and 4) continual team development that evolves with the exploration of contemporary challenges faced by athletes. Competency-based interprofessional approaches to mental health care in sport are emerging in the United States and the United Kingdom with future research exploring strategies to strength interprofessional service provisions.