

Holistic Sport Psychology: Investigating the Roles, Operating Standards, and Intervention Goals and Strategies of Holistic Consultants

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Abstract

The holistic development of the athlete has only been briefly addressed in the literature as an element of certain sport psychology interventions (e.g., Bond, 2002; Henschen, 2001). Using the framework of professional philosophy from Poczwadowski, Sherman, and Ravizza (2004), Friesen and Orlick (2010) presented the beliefs, values, theoretical paradigms, and models of practice of holistic sport psychology consultants' professional philosophies. The purpose of this study was to examine the roles, operating standards, intervention goals and techniques of holistic sport psychology consultants' professional philosophies. By interviewing holistic sport psychology consultants a number of themes emerged which characterize a sport psychology service delivery that incorporates the holistic development of the athlete.

Holistic Sport Psychology: Investigation the External Components of Holistic Consultants' Professional Philosophies

Holistic Sport Psychology

As reflective reports of applied sport psychology consulting experiences become more prominent in the literature, a trend has emerged highlighting the need to develop the athlete holistically (e.g., Bond 2002; Henschen, 2001). Supporting this trend are a select number of sport psychology consultants who have incorporated the

holistic growth of the athlete as an intervention goal to ensure not only continued athletic excellence of their athletes, but also to address the psychosocial issues related to their non-performance identity domains. Miller and Kerr (2002) summarized the belief in this position by stating that "performance excellence is attained only through optimal personal development" (p. 141).

Targeting such non-performance domains however, has been suggested to be outside not only the roles and responsibilities of the sport psychology consultant, but beyond their professional abilities as well (Ferraro,

2004). This is due to the fact that many who practice sport psychology do not hold licensure in clinical psychology (Gardner & Moore, 2006). This study will not be a forum for such debate; regardless of the perceived professional boundaries in applied sport psychology, there are in fact sport psychology consultants who have incorporated the holistic growth of the athlete into their intervention services.

Bond (2001) stated that his “experience in the field clearly points to a need for holistic psychological development programs for elite athletes that include lifestyle management, personal development, group and relationship dynamics, clinical interventions, and performance-enhancement training” (p. 218). Bond presented his case in a later article (2002) where he asserted that mental training could be performed by the coach, parent, teacher, or even the athletes themselves. As for the sport psychology consultant, Bond proposed that:

The essence of an effective applied sport psychology program must be an understanding and recognition that the elite athlete or coach is a functioning ‘person’ as well as a sportsperson. In fact it could be argued that the person may be more important than the sportsperson. The person existed before the athlete/coach and will be there long after. Surely the role of the applied sport psychologist is to understand, assist, and support the development of the whole person, not just the athlete? How superficial is it to develop and implement a sport psychology program based around simple performance enhancement strategies? (p. 23).

More recently, a study by Friesen and Orlick (2010) proposed that the holistic approach to sport psychology could be interpreted according to three perspectives. The first was labelled *Environment Effects* whereby the holistic sport psychology consultant aims to manage possible psychological effects to the athlete’s sport performance originating from the athlete’s non-sport domains. For example, an athlete may be in the midst of writing exams in school which could leave the athlete tense or distracted while playing tennis. The second perspective was labelled *Developing the Core Individual* which was used to explain how the holistic psychology consultant directed his or her services to the growth of the athlete’s personal core being. The result is the individuals’ improved functioning across all endeavours including sport. For example, helping the athlete understand that their athletic persona is just one of many which make up who they are as a human being helps relieve some of the stresses while performing because their self-worth is no longer in jeopardy. Finally, Friesen and Orlick proposed that holistic sport psychology could be interpreted as recognizing the athlete’s *Whole Being* whereby sport is a multidimensional phenomenon composed of an athlete’s thoughts, emotions, physiology, and behaviour. Therefore, the consultant strives to deliver a sport psychology intervention which is in collaboration with other sport science practitioners.

Addressing the internal components of professional philosophy introduced by Poczwardowski, Sherman, and Ravizza (2004), Friesen and Orlick (2010) presented some of the beliefs, values, theoretical paradigms regarding behaviour change, and models of practice from five experienced holistic sport psychology consultants. Their beliefs included: seeing athletes as regular

people, recognizing the multiples selves within each athlete, and recognizing that an athlete's core self can be better known by observing them in stressful circumstances. Values that were important to how holistic sport psychology consultants practiced were those of caring, authenticity and professionalism. Their theoretical paradigms were an eclectic composition borrowing mostly from existential and humanistic psychology. Finally their models tended to gravitate around counselling and interdisciplinary sport psychology models.

In order for sport psychology consultants to incorporate the essence of holistic sport psychology into their services, the components of service delivery that characterize the holistic approach must first be identified, examined, and understood. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine external components of holistic consultants' professional philosophies to sport psychology service delivery. This expands upon the previous work by Friesen and Orlick (2010) who studied inner components of holistic consultants' professional philosophies. This study provided an opportunity to develop a more comprehensive understanding of holistic sport psychology service delivery. The focus was on how and what holistic sport psychology consultants actually *do* when they integrate the holistic development of the athlete into their service delivery.

Methodology

Participants

The sport psychology consultant participants in this study were purposely sampled based on the following criteria:

(a) Acknowledgement of their holistic approach to sport psychology service delivery in the academic literature;

(b) a minimum of 10 years applied consulting experience to ensure adequate experience working with athletes and reflection on their services; and

(c) are, or had been, employed at an academic institution (i.e., university) and had taught sport psychology-based courses.

This, along with snowball sampling (Patton, 2002), resulted in the recruitment of five consultant participants: Dr. Cal Botterill, (CAN), 30 years experience; Roger Friesen (CAN), 22 years experience; Dr. Keith Henschen, (USA), 37 years experience; Dr. Tom Patrick (CAN), 15 years experience, Dr. Ken Ravizza, (USA), 29 years experience.

Instrument

Semi-structured interviews intended to engage the consultant in discussion about their professional philosophies were conducted with each of the consultant participants. The guide consisted of standard questions asked to all consultants as well as individualized questions based on topics found in literature authored by the selected consultant participants. Pilot interviews were conducted to help verify the effectiveness of the interview guide for drawing out the kind of responses needed to answer the research questions. Probes and requests for elaboration were utilized by the researcher throughout the interviews to provide more in depth responses on certain topics.

Potential consultant participants were contacted via telephone. They were informed of the general premise of the research and asked if they were interested in participating. If they expressed an interest in participating, they were sent a detailed letter of information specifically outlining the purpose of the research and their role as a

participant within it. Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggest the quality of an interview is dependent on the relationship between interviewer and interviewee. Fortunately, those consultant participants selected were well known by either the researcher or the researcher's supervisor. This resulted in an accommodating relationship between researcher and participant which facilitated the interview process. Interviews took place in person within the homes or offices of the consultants or via telephone. Interview guides were sent to all participants prior to interviews to allow participants an opportunity to reflect in advance about their philosophies.

Data Analysis

Transcripts were read and reread by the researcher and were analyzed using NVivo 7 software. The researcher coded phrases, quotes, and sayings into meaning units (Tesch, 1990). These coded meaning units were then classified into themes, each representing an aspect of the consultant's professional philosophy (roles, operating standards, intervention goals, and intervention strategies). Those units that were thought to be associated with the concept of holistic sport psychology were selected to form the database of this study. Data was predominantly analyzed inductively to allow emergent and unexpected meaning units to develop. There was also a component of deductive analysis as the researcher was particularly attentive to the aforementioned subject matter originating from concepts presented in the literature and prior knowledge of the consultant's professional philosophies.

Trustworthiness

Patton (2002) suggested that triangulation provides credibility to qualitative research analysis. For the purposes of this study, two forms of triangulation were used:

triangulation of sources, and analyst triangulation. This study used triangulation of sources by combining interviews from both consultants and athletes. Additionally, this study used analyst triangulation as the emergent themes and classifications were monitored and reviewed by a supervisory researcher. Establishing credibility can also be achieved through member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, interpretations and conclusions that were made by the researcher throughout the study were continually sent back to the participants to ensure the correctness of the interpretations and conclusions.

Results

The results section is divided into the four targeted components of professional philosophy: (a) roles, (b) operating standards, (c) intervention goals, and (d) intervention techniques and methods.

Roles

The consultants in this study reported that they were willing to fulfill virtually any role needed by their athletes. More specific to the goal of holistic development, there were four roles in particular that these consultants felt helped them achieve their goal:

- (a) friend,
- (b) Jack-of-all-trades,
- (c) educator, and
- (d) observer.

Friend.

Becoming friends with the athlete allowed the consultants to connect to the whole person behind the athlete persona. The most dominant role that emerged from the interviews was that of friend as that role was believed to facilitate the support, caring, and

authenticity that was so valued by the consultants (Friesen & Orlick, 2010). As Ken Ravizza explained:

I always want those people to leave feeling that they've made a friend in the whole situation. Someone they can trust... I think all people need that. They need unbiased types of situations where people will give them straight answers, who are not emotionally involved in their personal life on a daily basis, and also be candid with them.

Being a friend to the athlete placed the consultants in a position where athletes felt they could trust the genuineness of the consultant. Keith Henschen commented:

I offer that I'm there if they need me. That's been very successful for me. And I've been able to balance the friendships with the coaches and the players. I'll go play golf with them if they want to play golf. I bet with them just like everybody else does. I spar with them, you know verbally; they like that. I like that... I treat them just like I would somebody that's a friend. At first, they look and they say, "Ah, I dunno," and then eventually they say, "Hey, he's real." That's the trust. You don't have anything at this level if you don't have their trust.

Jack-of-all-trades

Working with the whole person beyond the athlete acknowledges that there are potential psychological effects to performance coming from all types of different sources (e.g., relationships or school). Holistic consultants never know what types of psychological effects they will be called on to address. Therefore, they must be willing

and somewhat able to fulfill a variety of odd job roles. Roger Friesen explained how playing a variety of odd-job roles helped managed the cohesion within a team he once worked with:

So when I was with my athlete and that whole staff in Athens, then I assumed the role of butler, cook, and housekeeper for them. Simply because if I hadn't then the whole thing would have spiralled out of control. And so it was an intervention tool to keep people from killing each other...You understand that kitchens can be a volatile place when it comes to roommates right? So how that kitchen is managed can determine to a large extent whether a relationship functions or not. And so if you come into a context that is already dysfunctional and then introduce kitchen which seems strange when you just talk about it; but simple things can lead to major catastrophe very quickly. And so it was evident that's where things were going so I stepped in and said, "That's it, I'm cooking, I'm doing the grocery shopping, I'm taking care of the kitchen. You can give me your meal requests and I'll be happy to comply, but I'm managing that space." And that was simply an intervention method to avoid catastrophe. So I'll play any role.

Educator

Another prominent role was that of educator. However, the term is not used in the traditional sense of teaching mental skills. Rather, in order to understand the athlete's core being, holistic consultants act as facilitators who guide the athlete's process of self-knowledge. By doing so, they exhibit their existential influences as

they emphasize the necessity for the athlete to learn from their past experiences. Tom Patrick explained:

My job is to facilitate the learning from experience.... My job really is not so much prior to the event; my job is in the debriefing of what occurred. So that they learn everything they can from it, identify things that they may be able to do a little bit differently, or things that we may need to train a little differently.... So that accentuates my idea that existential for me is having athletes learn from the experience or ensuring that they've optimized the learning from the experience.... So going back to the question you asked, I think that's what it is: it's assisting the athlete learn from their experience. Okay it's not a black and white thing... when I start working with a group, I might do some education just to bring people up to speed a bit and see where they're at but eventually it's getting each athlete on their own journey of discovery.

Observer

One of the roles reported by the consultants was that of observer. At the core of each of the three perspectives of holistic consulting introduced by Friesen and Orlick (2010) was awareness: awareness of how non-sport domains affect the sport performance, awareness of how one is growing as an individual, and awareness of how our cognitive, emotional, and physiological states affect our actions. Therefore the role of observer is important in helping to facilitate awareness. Roger Friesen commented:

So observation for me, I don't know if it was innate or if it developed because I was curious about things but that's a part of me that has gone into everything. So part of my skill, part of my gift that I bring to my role as a consultant is that I'm very intuitive, I'm very perceptive, I'm very observant. There are very few things that I will miss.

Operating Standards

Poczwadowski et al. (2004) suggested that a consultant's operating standards help clarify numerous aspects of the consultant's role within an intervention. Often, these standards or *professional values* (A. Poczwadowski, personal communication, May 1, 2007) define a consultant's practice as they address not so much what the consultant does within his or her practice, but rather *how* they practice. Seven operating standards are believed to be significant to the holistic approach to sport psychology:

- (a) the consultants' relationship to the sport science team,
- (b) the consultant's relationship to the coaching staff,
- (c) the consultant's scope of practice,
- (d) the readiness of the athlete,
- (e) personalizing their services,
- (f) being culturally aware, and
- (g) managing the consultation setting.

Sport psychology consultant – sport science team relationship

Addressing the athlete as a whole being, the holistic consultant considers their mind, emotions, physiology and behaviour. Cal Botterill explained that there must be an understanding and appreciation for the other sport science practitioners (e.g., nutritionists, physiologists) because their work affects the whole athlete.

Every element is important. And so when you get into elite sport, the support team is huge. And the nutritionist is as important as the physiologist, who is as important as the sport psychologist and as the coach etc. And so there are all sorts of situations where the team didn't work as a real team as much as they should. I really believe we've continued to suggest that we provide interdisciplinary support for our athletes, but in reality we often don't. We end up being uni-disciplinary—I give you my best opinion in my area and she gives her best in hers. And you gotta think about how the holistic athlete is trying to interpret this, “Oh my God, I gotta do this, and that.” Whereas if the three people got together and said, “What should we talk about today with this athlete?” and have a collective directive, it would be a lot better than these separate pieces of information. And in fact, your particular advice may be spurious; it may be problematic if you don't understand what's happening in nutrition or physiology or whatever...So the holistic thing is there in that regard as well.

Often the sport science team can provide input into whether the athlete is under-

recovered or injured and therefore how they will function emotionally and mentally. Keith Henschen commented on how it is necessary to be in good standing with the training staff:

I get most of my information from the physiotherapists or the trainers. I spend a lot of time in the locker room and training room, because those are the guys that are with [the athletes] all the time. They can tell who is struggling and who is not struggling and so forth. And I make sure that I'm friends with them.

Sport psychology consultant – coach relationship

Because holistic development is usually beyond the expected service of most sport psychology consultants, often coaches do not expect them to address more encompassing issues. Therefore, it helps when coaches recognize how useful sport psychology can be for the person behind the athlete. As Keith Henschen commented, “Coaches many times are narrow in their perspective of what sport psychology can do and then once they understand what it can do, they open up more and more.” One way this occurs is when the holistic consultant tries to develop the coach holistically themselves. For example, Keith Henschen related a story of how he supported a coach who underwent a surgical operation similar to one that Keith himself once had. “Now to me, that's part of the services because if you do that, you ingrain yourself in them, not only in the performance area, but in the personal area as well.”

Scope of practice

The most controversial aspect of holistic sport psychology may be that because of its wide-ranging perspectives, it could initially be viewed as outside the scope of typical

practice for sport psychology practitioners. This is particularly true when sport psychology consultants are recruited solely to help an athlete with performance enhancement. However, the consultants in this study have learned that because the performer and the holistic self cannot be separated, as soon as the consultant is dealing with the athlete, they are dealing with of the entire person. Nevertheless, this does not imply that holistic consultants are without professional boundaries. Consider a story from Roger Friesen which exemplifies the awareness holistic sport psychology consultants must have for their scope of practice:

If it gets into issues that I'm not equipped to deal with, that's where referrals come in because I'm not qualified or experienced, nor do I want to deal with everything that comes along. For example, in the early days of my consulting, I had an athlete who came to me initially because she was lacking motivation which is pretty typical, pretty common, and in some ways, a simple issue to deal with from a sport psychology perspective. And so she came in to see me once a week; and the fourth week she came in and sat down and started sobbing uncontrollably. And I was completely taken aback because as far as I knew we were talking about motivation and how to rekindle the enthusiasm and inspiration that this person has had in their life as an athlete. It turned out that what was really the issue was that this person had had an abortion a year previous and no single person on earth knew about this; not the partner that she had, not her parents, not her friends, not a single person, nobody but her and

the physician. And it was destroying her. And so the issue wasn't motivation, the issue was something entirely different and so we needed to establish trust, and it took four weeks for her to feel that she could trust me and that's when she talked to me about the abortion. And so, we spent the hour dealing with that whole process. And the end of it was that I referred her to counselling services which was equipped to deal with those kinds of issues. So professional boundaries, you have to be very respectful of that.... Ethical is one thing, but just in terms of maintaining a professional decorum, I mean there are things that I will just not go there with clients but I will make myself vulnerable enough so that they will develop a sense of trust and rapport. And yeah, so I think in my life, I think I have been very good and I have been very aware and very thoughtful of what those parameters look like.

The quote above also addresses the notion of making referrals to clinical psychologists when holistic consultants feel the athlete has issues beyond their competence. Ken Ravizza described:

An athlete I had worked with, I had done everything I could do to help him through what he was going through. And generally if I provide everything I can do and we're not getting anywhere, it's time for a referral.... We took the opportunity to get a clinical person involved just to make sure everything was in check with what was going on there and the [two] of us worked together with this athlete. I wanted to give him every resource.... So a network

support system has been huge for me.

Therefore, even though holistic consultants extend their services to meet the athlete's holistic needs beyond sport, they are not however without professional boundaries. Both Ken Ravizza and Keith Henschen in their interviews discussed their boundaries as being those issues which extend beyond their training and competence. Mostly these issues are viewed as those best suited for clinical psychologists to help resolve such as eating disorders, substance abuse or spousal abuse. To summarize, Tom Patrick explained how a practitioner's scope of practice essentially must reside within a practitioner's competence and their lived experiences:

Scope of practice, I tend to lean towards the existential counselling approach which means I'm not into the behavioural components and I'm not into discriminative stimulus' and reinforcement schedules and those types of things. Again, it's not to suggest that that's a wrong way to practice, it's just not what I've done a lot of. Because it's one thing to study behavioural psychology and it's one thing to know how it's applied to sports and then to practice it. I just wouldn't have a very good experience with it. I also bring my performing artist self to what I do. And a lot of it is lived experience but we gotta be careful with that—that I can still anchor the things I'm trying to help athletes learn about. Between the lived experiences of elite performers, a lot of the theory and research that I continue to read and stay current on, and then my own lived experience as practitioner, and

also as a person myself—I think it's trying to find a blend to those three.

Readiness

Not all athletes that holistic consultants work with are ready or expecting to work on themselves holistically. Keith Henschen suggested athletes may be unaware of how sport psychology can help in other life domains. Ken Ravizza proposed that athletes stereotypically are not the most introspective group of people to begin with; while Roger Friesen offered that some might be uncomfortable with being confronted by their inner core self. As Cal Botterill mentioned, "That's the biggest challenge initially is learning to be comfortable with the fact that not everybody's going to be in love with what you do." Keith Henschen additionally believed it may be a sign of maturity within the athlete:

I've had athletes that feel that way initially but then as I say, as they learn to trust you, as they learn to understand what it's all about instead of just a small picture, then many times they move in another direction or are a little more broad in what they're seeking to learn. [For example,] professional athletes sometimes will come and say, "I want this" but eventually they understand that when they're done, when they retire, they're going to be people in society as well, they need to mould some of these skills into other aspects.

The readiness of the athlete to engage in holistic introspection acts as a prerequisite to the quality of working relationship and subsequent success of the intervention. Roger Friesen explained:

Getting to know their philosophy, their world view, the paradigms from which they function; so it's learning how to uncover all of that. And that for me is non-negotiable. And that also inevitably will be part of the criterion for how I choose to work with someone because not everybody is interested in that. And so if somebody's not interested in that, it doesn't mean I'm not going to work with them, but my work with that somebody will look very different and will likely be short-term. Because if what they want is just tools and skills to do whatever they can to get on the podium then that's fine, but my work with that kind of person will probably be quite limited. But if people are willing to engage and invest, then that's ultimately who my clients end up being. Because that's what's important to me and that's how I understand performance.

Personalization

Earlier, it was highlighted that helping the athlete learn from his or her own experiences is an important role for the holistic sport psychology consultant. This approach to sport psychology implies that the service holistic consultants deliver is personalized because the athlete's own experience is leading each intervention. Ken Ravizza explained:

I value the other person's experience, and the individual is important. And it's going to come from them. It's not necessarily going to come from me giving them the magic answer. I can throw some things out there, but it's gotta resonate and come from their experience and where they're coming from, I think that's important.

Letting the athlete's experience guide the intervention places the responsibility on the consultant to be aware of his or her own biases and beliefs such that they do not interfere with helping the athlete articulate their own experiences. Tom Patrick commented:

I'm helping them reflect about themselves. So again, I think that's a more holistic approach because it allows them to do things on their own terms based on who they are as opposed to me imposing my own beliefs about things because I think we all do that. Like just as an athlete brings themselves to what they do, I think we do as well as practitioners. So I have to monitor that and make sure that it's not on my terms but it's on their terms so just me knowing myself a bit on those things and making sure that it's not what I think, it's what they think.

An implication is that the consultant must be very reflective in their discussions with athletes as to not offer generic advice that fails to recognize the individual needs of the athlete. In that way, as Tom Patrick continued, the holistic consultant's approach is always deliberate and purposeful:

I find a lot of practitioners get into...these kinds of rhythms of similarity.... In other words, they read about something; I'll give an example, let's say they read about biofeedback. They read this great article on biofeedback, and then they start thinking, "You know what, this may have some relevance to this athlete or sport perhaps." The funny thing is that if they don't provide enough distance between stimulus and response, everything becomes

about biofeedback. Everything becomes about the most recent topical thing. You know, it's like everything became about recovery, everything became about biofeedback, and I think we have to be very careful that we're not being very generic about what we're doing. Do I give the same advice to a multiple world champion as I would with a 16 year old up and coming developmental athlete? Even though it's the same sport, they're two very different people with two very different views of themselves and the world they're in at the current time that you're working with them. And I would think that my approach has to be very different.

Cultural awareness

Recognizing the culture within which the athlete is a part of is another operating standard for developing the whole athlete. There are two cultures in which the holistic consultant is aware of: the sport culture, and the ethnic culture. Ken Ravizza addressed the importance of knowing the sport culture of the athlete as the cultural demands from the sport can shape the person's experience with it:

I think one thing that's really helped me is...understanding the team as a sub-culture, understanding what's of value to that team. Golf is a different culture than baseball. It's a different world. Football's a different culture than baseball. I remember my first presentation to [a baseball team], the guys said it was great but I gotta cuss more. I said, "Well I can work on that, that's not an issue." But once again, that's the culture. You cuss with a group of golfers or another group, it may be a problem.

Understanding the culture and what the demands of the culture are and what goes on in individual sports, team sports, team sports like baseball which is an individual sport within a team sport.... All of those cultural differences...dealing with hockey players is different than dealing with figure skaters. Different demands, different situations and you gotta adjust so you're coming from the sport experience instead of applying sport psychology to sport.

Cal Botterill recommended that novice practitioners have a wide range of internship experiences spanning a number of different sports such that they become sensitized to the variety of sport cultures:

As a professional it's important to be aware of the cultural group you're going into; sport, business, whatever. And the more you can learn about that the better it'll go. So the only difference is that you do more prep when you don't know the culture because you need to have the little cues, the little ideas that suggest that you've done your homework and you know something about what they're into. One opinion is when you start your career, you're better to go into fields where you don't know the culture and you have to learn it. Because I think when you go to ones where you know it, you're often sloppy and sometimes you can get drawn into a semi-coaching kind of style rather than being a true performance enhancement consultant. So I think I was lucky; even though my primary sport was hockey I had extensive experience in basketball which initially I knew nothing about and had to learn to appreciate

and sit on the bench and learn all the jargon and cheerlead and support and all the rest.... And the performers love it when you do and they accept that you don't know a lot when you start but if you start to show an interest in them and in those factors, things go well. So yeah, I think it's important to respect the culture, but also to learn it, because sometimes within the culture there are issues.

Understanding the ethnic culture of the athlete also plays a part in understanding the athlete holistically. As Keith Henschen described, in some contexts it could be more important to understand the athlete's ethnic culture than their sport culture:

You gotta understand the culture. But not so much the culture within a team; it's more than less the culture of the individual. Point: I'm big, I'm white; our United States track team in some events is black. Is there a culture within that culture? Absolutely. Do I have to understand that culture? Yes. Is it easy to get accepted by that culture? No, because of the years of discrimination. So yeah, you just can't walk in and do things that you normally would do. NBA: 80% of the players are black. Is that an issue? It could be, but it doesn't have to be if you do it the right way. But you have to be aware of the culture as well.... Adding to that, we have five different international players. Is that a challenge? Yeah, it is. Because in some countries, sport psychology is purely research based. In other countries it is clinical psychology based; very few of them come from an applied base. Does it take a while to get them

to understand what you do and what you don't do? Yeah. But you have to recognize it first, and understand the culture before you can make any inroads.

Consultation setting

The setting of consultation sessions is also an important consideration for the holistic consultant. One of the defining characteristics of the setting is that contrary to a more clinical approach, the holistic consultant prefers to consult outside the office.

Tom Patrick explained:

I never meet with athletes in my office. There's something that's kinda cold about the office environment for me. Plus for me as a practitioner, not having my laptop in front of me, the phone ringing. I like to get away too cause it helps me be present when I'm sitting with the athlete. Whereas if I'm at the office, there are a lot of distractions.

As with most sport psychology consultants, the consultants in this study will hang around the training and competition environments as many teachable moments occur within this context. But sometimes, as Tom Patrick continued, it is good to converse with athletes outside the performance arena as this may help give perspective to their presenting issues:

I really try to keep it relaxed; I try to change the environment.... And just being out in nature is another thing I try to do a lot. I always try to have sessions outside, fresh air, fresh environment. Again, maybe a different self comes forward, maybe more of the person comes forward

and less of the athlete. Maybe they're more open and not as guarded.

An additional feature to the consultation setting is that holistic consultants typically stay away from presentations or lead group meetings. They admit to being more effective in one-on-one situations where they are able to bring out the personal experiences of the each individual athlete. It is difficult to address any other self than the athlete in a group meeting setting. As Roger Friesen described, the consultant is unable to take into account the effects from the athlete's other selves in a group meeting:

Where I'm most effective is one-on-one. I can do presentations and I do them all the time, but I fully understand that I will have limited value. And I'm not interested in limited value. Life is too short. Furthermore there will be people in that room that don't care. But for whatever reason, and there could be a hundred different reasons, there's a barrier and that barrier hasn't come down. And so I also know that when I'm doing presentations or even when in the classroom, there are some students that are just tuned out. Maybe because of some barrier or maybe because of fatigue, or maybe something going on in their personal lives that I have no idea about. But for whatever reason, they're tuned out. And so if people are tuned out then there's no point in expending energy on them. So once we get one on one, we can either remove barriers or we can understand the barriers and that opens things a little bit and maybe at one point, someone else can open the door for them completely.

A final feature of the consultation setting involves the frequency of contact once the athlete has transitioned out of sport. As Tom Patrick described, the role of the holistic consultant is to remain in touch with the athlete to ensure a successful transition:

When the athlete retires from sport, I usually keep working with athletes for at least twelve months. Maybe it's another way of being holistic. I don't view career transition as a separate thing to what I do. So they retire from sport, I keep working with them as close as possible to the frequency of contact. It'll be different usually, although we try to get them involved in the sporting environment anyway. But the idea is let's keep working together for another year....I value working with the person beyond their career.

Intervention Goals

Poczwadowski et al. (2004) suggested that intervention goals may run the gamut from performance enhancement to healthy lifestyles to personal growth and beyond. An underlying presumption of holistic sport psychology may be that personal growth is the primary intervention goal. However, the consultants interviewed were quick to mention that their primary mission is to help the athlete reach their physical potential. The intervention goal of personal growth which characterizes the holistic approach is relegated to being the means by which the athlete reaches their physical potential.

Reaching one's physical potential

In discussing the scope of practice with the consultants, it is interesting that the primary objective mentioned by these holistic consultants was to help the athlete reach their athletic dreams—that they are still in fact *sport* psychology consultants. Tom

Patrick described his purpose in working with the athlete:

I'm here to help people achieve or reach their physical limit.... I wanna help people realize their physical potential. That's it. The reason I think that relates is that in sport, it's all about the physical. And at the end of the day, certainly with the performance enhancement teams that I work with, well we probably have a pretty good idea of where that person's physical limit could be but my job is to not really care about that. My job is just to help that individual get there. Because if you reach your physical potential, you are in a very very small group of people. And it doesn't matter if it's fifth or eighth or fifteenth in the world, that's special stuff. It's beyond anything I've ever been able to do in sport. Ha-ha. So again... why do you work with athletes Tom? Cause I want to help them live their dream. That's it.

Personal Growth.

In their quest to help the athlete reach their physical potential, the holistic consultant works through the whole athlete—the part of them that is not defined by their sport experience. Tom Patrick explained:

But I'm really a member of the coaching team with my job being to help athletes with the psychological aspects of their sport and themselves but that the self work is personal learning based. I'm helping personal growth.

“Does that personal growth reside within the realm of sport psychology?” (R)

I think so.... I think a great athlete is a great person. It's that holistic notion again that you can't separate the personal and the sport self. You can't take the sport out of the athlete. So I think because of that belief, I often find myself having to, and willingly of course, working with the person.

Techniques and Methods

Finally, what may be the most impactful aspects of a consultant's professional philosophy are their preferred techniques and methods. With over 130 years of collective applied experience, the consultant participants reported an abundance of techniques and methods when describing their service delivery. Some of these applied sport psychology strategies were related specifically to developing the athlete holistically. These techniques and methods represent the holistic sport psychology consultant's “tools of the trade.”

Emotional preparation and recovery awareness

The interaction between emotions, cognitions, physiology, and behaviour is a perspective of holistic sport psychology. Traditionally, sport psychology has focused on the relationship between cognitions and performance behaviour. Holistic consultants however, also work with emotions and physiology (such as emotional preparation and recovery awareness) to help develop the whole athlete.

Imagery has long been associated with mental preparation in sport psychology and for good reason, as plenty of research demonstrates its potential value. However, what often gets overlooked in the imagery is the emotion component. Cal Botterill argued that emotions need to be a part of the imagery process as well. He believes that

when an athlete mentally rehearses a response to their expected emotions, the athlete is better prepared for their performance:

I think it's important to periodically review emotions....When you're working with a high performing athlete, part of it is about emotional preparation. "You're going to go to the Olympics. Do you know what to do if you feel afraid, angry, guilty, sad, too happy?" They can all (potentially) hurt you. So you better have rehearsed a response ...so the teams that I work with, I try to ensure that they're emotionally ready for all those feelings because I've seen every one of those feelings cost somebody what they wanted to do at the Olympics.

Recovery awareness represents another mode of monitoring the interaction between an athlete's mental, emotional, and physiological states, and their behaviour. The holistic consultants in this study help monitor their athletes' recovery state. Cal Botterill explained:

One of the most prevalent issues these days is the principle of psychophysiology. After years of watching people pushing athletes to train and work harder, now we have 70% of them that are under-recovered. It's almost always one of my questions - Are you rested? Is there something psychological that will help? Is there a physiology that's required here for you to rebound and do what you want to do?"... I might go in with all these ambitions for them but if I sense they're physically drained, it's a totally new agenda. We've got to get you understanding your state,

accomplishing some recovery, and getting your health back, because the next thing you know you're going to end up with the flu and viruses because your immune system is beaten down and so on. So, another objective is now for me is to try and help performers assess their [physi-cal] state.

Being aware of one's physiological state is holistic not only in the sense that it comes from looking at the athlete as a whole being, but it is also holistic because accomplishing quality recovery comes from synchronizing the athlete's mental, physical and emotional state to achieve recovery. As Cal Botterill stated, once you begin talking about recovery, "you're instantly into personal life." The holistic consultant tries to ensure that the athlete is recovering as a person, and not just physiologically as an athlete.

Foundational questioning

Often, the types of issues with which athletes approach consultants are foundational in nature in that they are rooted more deeply than solely within the athlete's athletic persona. These issues are connected to the identities of the athlete apart from their athletic self. As Ken Ravizza commented:

You're going to get a lot of "I'm not sure why I'm doing this anymore." You're going to get a lot of that at the higher levels and a lot of perfectionism issues. "I'm so hard on myself, I'm so critical, I'm so judgemental." You get a lot of, "Why am I doing this? I've lost my passion." Those would be the big ones. I mean, right off the top of my head, those are the big themes that keep coming up over and over and over again. They're not coming to you

with questions like is it more effective to do internal or external imagery. I've never been asked that, I mean it's not relevant.

Therefore, leading the athlete to reflect upon their foundational being is a key strategy used by the holistic sport psychology consultant. This reflection helps keep the athletic performance in perspective thereby reducing the stress of competition.

Holistic consultants ask athletes specific questions to help them reconnect with their foundational self—the essence of who they are beyond the athlete. Cal Botterill described how this type of questioning came up in his practice:

I don't know how many times in my career I've had an athlete come in burdened or frustrated or stressed or exhausted or whatever, and I just go to those three questions: I mean, one: who are you? We haven't talked about that for a while. Are you just a speed skater? ... So like ten or fifteen minutes later, [the athlete remarks,] "Oh, there's a bit more to me than I thought, there's more to me than my next race." Now, where's your support? Hopefully it's someone's family, but if it isn't, there must be people that you can call anytime and they'll give you the straight goods, you know you can count on. Another deep breath [by the athlete], "Phew, yeah you're right I can always count on them." Well then I said look after those relationships, make sure they're there for you. And then finally, how do you want to live and compete? I mean are you going to have your tail in a knot over every rivalry or are you going to be okay with competition like Tiger Woods

and say, "Bring it on, I'm loving this, this is the joy of life." So that same athlete might walk out half an hour later with a totally different posture and body language because they've unburdened a whole bunch of irrational perceptions and got back to the foundation. And the foundation is: who the heck am I? What do I love doing? Where's my support? And how am I going to approach life?

A similar process of foundational questioning was utilized by Tom Patrick:

I believe in ensuring the athletes are working from a foundation. So the questions I like to ask athletes are: what do you value? What are you all about? What motivates you?' They may answer like, "I like to know that I've laid it on the line," or "I like to know that I was the hardest working athlete." So you start to understand a little bit about what makes them tick and you can use a foundation effectively, especially when we're trying to get athletes to start detaching themselves from outcomes and goals all the time. And you start to bring back their behaviour to a more foundational approach. Getting them excited to give effort, give optimal effort today, and getting them excited just to express themselves in practice today. So I try to ask those questions as a way of getting to know the athlete. So... I'll often ask them things like, 'Why do you do what you do? Like why do you do this? What's this all about for you?' I ask them things like, "What are you prepared to work for?" I'm trying to get a sense of the underlying

ing processes that describes why they do what they do.

Reflection

A prominent component of holistic consulting is reflection. The holistic consultant helps the athlete engage in meaningful reflection to discover things about themselves and their environment. Roger Friesen explained:

People need the ability to be reflective about what they're doing and why. So that means questions have to revolve around that so it get people to start thinking about how they make decisions, why they make decisions, and why they find themselves in certain places—are they there by intention or by default, so what did that look like? It's asking questions to uncover those kinds of things. And if reflection has not been part of their way of operating, then that in itself is a skill and it takes a process to even get the person to a place where they can start becoming aware of how they function.

Helping the athlete engage in reflection for some people is not an easy task. Roger Friesen explains that the consultant must be able to establish an atmosphere of trust within the athlete and also be knowledgeable as to how to lead the reflection process.

The person I'm sitting with, they have to trust me that I in fact have the best for them in mind. They have to trust themselves; they have to be willing to take a look at some things that most people don't want to take a look at. People have a bit of hesitance to really look inside them because they are often afraid of what they might find there. So that's part

of it, but the other part of it is simply learning how to ask those kinds of questions. So that like I mentioned earlier, in our culture, people aren't necessarily taught to be reflective; that's not how our culture is set up. And so it's a skill that is actually being lost. So to be observant of the world around us and to be observant of our own self, that's a skill that is slowly being evolved out of us, and we kinda have to put that skill back into people and so that's how you uncover that stuff.

Acting authentically

Once the consultant helps the athlete gain an understanding of who they are at their core, the consultant's job then is to help the athlete live and perform more authentically with who they are. Tom Patrick explained:

I get a sense of their beliefs and then I look to see when they're acting consistently with their beliefs. And then I look to see when they're not. Then I try to figure out in conversation with them what gets in the way. What is interfering with their ability to just simply act consistent with what they believe and the things they value? So that whole kind of circular ongoing process is kind of something that I really try to work with the athlete on because I think if we get clear about those things then we can start to address their personal side of sport.

Roger Friesen added:

So the things we do are merely an expression of what's inside of use to live. And so if people are living authentically and with integrity, then what they do is an expression of

themselves, and if they truly understand what that looks like, and if somebody really captures the true essence of who they are and how they function then inevitably it's that person who will excel in whatever context they find themselves in. So what we do can only be an expression of what's inside of us.

As holistic consultants help athletes to perform more consistently with who they are, so too must the consultant be authentic themselves within the working relationship. Cal Botterill remarked:

People who have some authenticity within themselves will be incredibly well received. There's a body language difference and your teammates appreciate that you're comfortable with yourself, that you don't have any baggage or manipulative angle on them that they suddenly start to relax and be a bit more okay as well. It's the number one thing that more people could be better at is authenticity. And in our field, if we're not good examples, then that's not a very good indictment for the field. And I think a lot of people haven't been very good at it. They've tried to be Tom Petko or they've tried to be Tom Peters or they're trying to be aggressive or "I got all the answers" or whatever. I think those approaches have a very limited shelf life; they may get some initial surge or energy or focus. But just like motivational speakers, three weeks later, it's long gone.

Social support

Holistic consultants described in their interviews that developing the athlete holistically is an important element in

creating a quality team environment. Cal Botterill commented:

I think along the way we got to help people feel good enough about themselves that they can become good team people. I mean, in a relationship, who wants to go across the ocean with someone whose boat leaks? I mean it's just a matter of time until the relationship breaks down cause you have too many hang ups or too many problems or you have too many dependencies.

As the holistically developed athlete helps improve teamwork, so too does the team environment help develop the athlete holistically. From his interview, Cal Botterill added that connecting with those people “helps you feel whole and then you can be a complete person when you go out.” Practically, Botterill described a number of ways that the sport psychology consultant can help the athlete reflect on their support sources. The first of which is simply showing an interest in the athlete’s support network.

I just start it all the time by showing interest and asking, “What's your girlfriend's name, What's she doing? How many kids you got?” Whatever and you know what, it's the easiest thing in the world, you just have to be genuine. I just talked to very prominent Canadian athlete and asked about his daughter who just started kindergarten, I mean, he wouldn't care whether we talked about anything else in the world, he just lit up.

Sometimes athletes have lost perspective and have drifted away from those that give them that needed unconditional support. In

such cases, Botterill helps the athlete by reflecting on who it is that they need to reconnect with:

And the key question in perspective is, who is it that supports you unconditionally? Sometimes it isn't family, sometimes family is conditional. So it's a teacher you had or a friend you had. And then I say "Have you got in touch with them?" "No I haven't in a long time" I said, "Email them, give them a phone call." I mean we don't need a hundred friends but we need three or four that we can call anytime.... And what that person will do is remind them of the essence of who they are and they're back on track.

Finally, involving the athlete's support team in team functions can help enhance performance. Cal Botterill related the story of how involving the wives and girlfriends of hockey players helped the team throughout the playoffs:

What paved the way for us to have a final four run, was the coach at the time had said at the beginning [to the wives and girlfriends], "It's a long run. When we start and when we get going in playoffs... we need your support. It's huge. You're critical to the guys in terms of their recovery and mindset and everything and Cal's going to talk about some of the strategies that we're using for both preparation and recovery and so you understand what we're doing and teamwork." It was one of the most effective sessions in my whole career. And we had a good run; we went well in the playoffs. And there's no doubt in my mind that the support

from families was a big part of it on occasion.

Balance

Helping athletes organize their lives in order to balance their time and energy between sport and other aspects of their lives is also a goal for holistic consultants. This help athletes to respect and nurture various parts or themselves.

Tom Patrick remarked:

If we're trying to get endurance athletes to recover well and they're in the middle of exams it's just pretty difficult. And I think again going back to understanding the relationship between the person, and this is another great example of why I'm a holistic person, sometimes the answer is just get the training periodized differently so that they're not in high stress sport and high stress life at the same time. Verses again why I tended to stay away from using the word 'skill.' To me, in that situation, there's no skill that can help that athlete train at that high level and have academic demands on them at that high level. It's just too much demand.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the external components of holistic sport psychology consultants' professional philosophies. Interviews with holistic sport psychology consultants about their professional philosophies led to a number of themes which helped characterize a sport psychology service delivery that incorporates the holistic development of the athlete. Friesen and Orlick (2010) presented the internal components of holistic sport psychology consultants' professional

philosophy. The current study presents the corresponding consultant roles, operating standards, intervention goals, and interventional techniques and methods which help to expand the knowledge of holistic sport psychology.

Range of Services

Bond (2002) stated that the range of services that a consultant aims to fulfill in an intervention context should be clarified at the beginning of the consultation. The data from the consultant interviews in this study indicate that holistic sport psychology consultants play a variety of roles in order to cater to a wide range of services (i.e., friend, observer, Jack-of-all-trades, and educator). The role of friend for holistic consultants may be analogous to the role of counsellor (Hardy & Parfitt, 1994) or being socially involved (Dunn & Holt, 2003). As reported in Friesen and Orlick (2010), many of holistic consultants follow a counselling model of practice. It is interesting to note that many of the qualities that characterized the friendship between consultant and athlete are also prominent in a counselling relationship. For example, the consultant qualities of trusting, supporting, and authentic as reported in the friend role are indicative of a good counsellor.

The holistic consultants also discussed the role of educator. Educating athletes on how to choose and use appropriate psychological skills is a common role of the sport psychology consultant and where appropriate, holistic consultants included teaching of such skills in their services (e.g., Danish & Nellen, 1997). However, as shown in the results of this study, holistic consultants are equally concerned with facilitating the athlete's quest to know themselves. This includes helping the athlete to learn and grow from their past experiences. As Ravizza (2002) stated, "I

value the athlete's experience as part of my job is to facilitate that knowledge of that athlete" (p. 5). This is representative of the holistic consultants' influence from existential psychology as reported in Friesen and Orlick (2010). Facilitating the athlete's self-knowledge further emphasizes the important role of observer since the consultant must be perceptive in what experiences may be particularly critical for the athlete.

Finally, the Jack-of-all-trades role was mentioned as an important role for holistic sport psychology consultants. Similar to the role of 'odd-job' person as presented by Hardy and Parfitt (1994), the Jack-of-all-trades role is an important position. "The psychologist (or consultant) must be prepared to be engaged in a range of non psychological activities as part of the overall commitment to the team" (Bond, 2001, p. 227). By embracing such a role, the consultant is able to strengthen the relationship with the athlete because athletes appreciate many of the tasks performed from this role.

Tools of the Trade

Corlett (1996) contrasted the difference between Sophist (technique-driven) consulting and Socratic (personal examination) consulting in sport psychology. He likened Sophist consulting to mental skills training whereby specific techniques are employed in order to produce successful performance results. He likened Socratic consulting to methods of self awareness and personal reflection. Mental skills, Corlett suggests, will always have a place in sport psychology as relaxation or goal setting may often be what the athlete simply needs to take the next step in reaching their goals. However there are often times when sport psychology consultants need to help athletes reflect on

their personal philosophy to take the next step. Corlett stated:

Often, though, problems are presented to sport psychologists that cannot be solved meaningfully by mental training techniques. There are clearly times when a fundamental change in an athlete's relationship to sport is a viable solution. Sometimes, the problem at its fundamental level is not the athlete alone, but interactions of the athlete with coaches, parents, and the sport itself. When such problems arise, all the sophist has to offer is a bandage, a superficial solution that slows the bleeding without determining why the bleeding occurred in the first place or stopping it permanently. It is here where technique alone fails the athlete and the sport itself. It is here where reference to higher philosophical ground is needed. It is here where sport psychology is most difficult in terms of what it is trying to do and how it should do it. (p. 90)

From the results of this study, holistic consulting is in line with Corlett's conception of Socratic consulting as holistic consulting is that which occurs when higher philosophical ground is needed in an intervention. Many of the techniques of holistic consulting (i.e., foundational questioning, reflection, acting authentically) are a means of developing self-knowledge. This includes an awareness of the athlete's own belief system and philosophy, an awareness of the psychological effects from non-sport domains, and an awareness of how their emotional, mental, physiological states are interacting. They are a means of discovering what meaning the athlete attaches to their performance and abilities. This type of practice is in line with the

holistic consultants' existential paradigm as presented in Friesen and Orlick (2010).

Botterill and Patrick (2003) in their discussion on *perspective* highlighted three opportunities in which an individual may become more aware of their core being. They proposed that when an individual has a solid awareness of their own identity, sources of support, and values, they enhance their perspective on life and sport and thus free themselves to perform to potential. Additionally, Botterill (2004) stated the often the first priority of the sport psychology consultant when working with a team is to become aware of the psychological effects which may be affecting the athletes. For example, he suggests observing the interactions between the athlete and his or her sport science staff, coaching staff, teammates, and especially family. Furthermore, Ravizza (2001) also advocated for the importance of awareness in monitoring the whole being. "This awareness is an integral part of the holistic approach. The athlete is not just a body, but also a total functioning human being" (p. 206). As such, Ravizza (2006) encourages athletes to 'check in' as a means of monitoring the effect of their emotional states, thought processes, and physiological states on their performance. Therefore, using awareness and self-knowledge is a critical strategy in holistic consulting in all its variations. It characterizes holistic consulting as part of what Corlett (1996) described as a Socratic method of sport psychology.

Leaving the Setting

Ending an intervention with an athlete or team is usually the last process between consultant and athlete. The circumstances under which the working relationship ends are different for each athlete and team. Ravizza (2001) explains that the most

difficult closures are those that are terminated by third parties such as sport governing bodies or coaches. In such cases, Ravizza explains that leaving the setting is a difficult process as the decision is outside of the consultant's and athlete's control. Termination in this way can be difficult for the holistic consultant not only because the consultant is no longer a part of this athlete's journey to excellence, but also because a genuine friendship may be lost. This emphasizes the importance of a positive consultant – coach relationship as having the coach's support may prevent termination under certain circumstances.

Referrals also represent a manner in which the intervention comes to a close. Holistic consultants are very mindful of their scope of practice—the professional boundaries which they establish. Even though holistic consultants may have a broader range of services, there are still some areas in which they do not feel competent to be professionally involved (e.g., spousal abuse or eating disorders). However, as Andersen and Tod (2006) noted, “referring athletes to mental health practitioners does not mean sport psychologists need to stop working with their clients” (p. 484). This notion was exemplified in Ken Ravizza's story about referring an athlete to a clinical psychologist. Many of the holistic consultants stated in their interviews that they maintain a network of clinical counsellors who in some instances are in a better position to meet the athlete's needs.

Finally, at some point all athletes leave high performance sport simply because they are unable to continue to compete at that level. Tom Patrick mentioned that in such circumstances, he preferred continuing to work with the athlete a year after their transition out of sport. Poczwardowski, Sherman, and Henschen (1998) noted that

appropriate strategies are needed when an athlete leaves sport. This may include “additional sessions, homework assignments, reminder cards, and phone calls” (p. 202). Similarly, Taylor, Ogilvie, and Lavalley (2006) mentioned that coping strategies, social support, and preretirement planning are valuable resources for the transitioning athlete. Meeting the athlete's needs through personalized services which are centered on positive values of caring and professionalism, should help the athletes make a smooth transition out of sport to another meaningful pursuit.

Consultation Goals and Evaluation

Poczwardowski et al. (1998) stated that “evaluation is an essential element to expanding theoretical and practical knowledge of what really works, with whom, and in which context” (p. 200). Holistic consulting like any other intervention is subject to measures of effectiveness to demonstrate its meaningfulness. The novelty of holistic consulting is its focus on the development of the athlete as a human being. Personal growth is a primary intervention goal for holistic consulting. However, measuring personal growth as an indication of consultation effectiveness is rare in sport psychology research. In addressing the issue of how the athlete's well-being may act as a measure of effectiveness, Anderson, Miles, Mahoney, and Robinson (2002) stated that “well-being is a complex multidimensional construct that can involve emotional and physical dimensions. Measurements of subjective well-being may include assessments of happiness, life satisfaction, positive affect, and quality of life” (p. 442). Perhaps the multiple goal format of performance and personal growth is best summarized by Halliwell, Orlick, Ravizza, and Rotella (2003):

Our ultimate goal is to help people reach their personal goals and live a higher quality of life. We guide the development of strong mental and emotional skills, and balance in living. Our quest is to help people excel at the mental game for both

short- and long-term gains, which includes improved performance, health and happiness. If they achieve athletic or performance 'success' and there is no benefit to health or happiness, we don't see that as being truly successful. (p. 11)

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