

42 Sport and Exercise Psychology— UK Professional Structure and Applied Case Study

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLETED THIS CHAPTER, YOU
SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

1. Be aware of existing training structures currently available for becoming an applied sport and exercise psychologist in the UK.
2. Be cognisant of the need to establish training needs early in undergraduate studies to maximise continued professional development.
3. Be aware of the importance of using theory to underpin and evaluate applied interventions.

Source: Tracey Devonport.

KEY TERMS

Applied Sport and Exercise Psychology • British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences • British Psychological Society • Division of Sport and Exercise Psychology • Health and Care Professions Council • Qualification in Sport and Exercise Psychology • Sport and Exercise Psychology Accreditation Route

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ROUTE MAP OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter will present an overview of the current training structure of sport and exercise psychology in the United Kingdom. By delimiting to the UK, it is hoped that readers interested in investigating training structures in other parts of the world have a framework to follow. Throughout the chapter, there will be a range of activity boxes intended to help you explore and apply the information presented. In concluding the chapter, a case study will be presented to provide evidence of the work of an Applied Sport and Exercise Psychology practitioner, demonstrating the utility of published literature in the development and evaluation of applied interventions.

42.1 TRAINING STRUCTURE OF APPLIED SPORT AND EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY

The modern development of sport psychology can be associated with establishment of the International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP) at a conference held in Italy in 1965 (Morris, Hackfort *et al.*, 2003). Since this time, with the development of exercise psychology, the number of applied practitioners in the field of sport and exercise psychology has increased (Roper, 2002; Terry, 2011; Weinberg & Gould, 2019; Khoo *et al.*, 2021). This profession is now established or currently being

applied sport and exercise psychology involves the study and application of psychological factors that help individuals achieve goals associated with participation and performance in sport, exercise and other types of physical activity.

established in many nations around the world. As the discipline continues to evolve, so too do the challenges posed. Anderson and Lavalley (2005) suggested that **Applied Sport and Exercise Psychology (ASEP)** has three key overarching challenges that offer a structure for building evidence supportive of training and professional development:

1. Clearly defining itself and its practitioners.
2. Clarifying and quality assuring the pathways that prepare individuals for applied practice.
3. Enhancing the ongoing professional development of applied professionals with a view to ensure and maintain competence in applied work.

The ISSP has highlighted a need to examine the development of sport and exercise psychology around the world and to state its position with regard to the way sport psychologists are trained and selected to offer services (Morris, Alfermann *et al.*, 2003). Since the 1970s, various registration and certification schemes have been created around the globe. For example, Australia, Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States have developed schemes to ensure that individuals practising ASEP have

minimum standards of training and experience. However, there is a lack of consistency throughout the world regarding the education and experience necessary for practice (Morris, Alfermann *et al.*, 2003; Terry, 2011). While it is not the intention of this chapter to champion one approach or offer any form of quality assurance, the training structures currently available in the UK will be outlined.

42.1.1 Training in Sport and Exercise Psychology: United Kingdom

Students wishing to embark on a career in sport and exercise psychology should invest time during their undergraduate training to identify and become familiar with current training requirements. There are a number of postgraduate programmes in ASEP offered by UK-based educational institutions. However, developments by the **Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)** in 2009 impacted on the extent to which many postgraduate programmes contribute to the training of aspiring ASEP. Psychologists offering services to the public are required to be registered with the HCPC to meet statutory regulations, which came into effect in July 2009. The terms 'Sport and Exercise Psychologist', 'Sport Psychologist', and 'Exercise Psychologist' are protected titles, and only HCPC members are able to use them.

At the time of writing, there are three routes towards HCPC certified practitioner status, which then enables individuals to become applied practitioners and to use the title 'Sport and Exercise Psychologist'.

The **British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES)** and the **British Psychological Society (BPS)** both provide a competency based (see Table 42.1) pathway towards HCPC registration as a sport and exercise psychologist. A third option is to complete a Professional Doctorate.

Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) the professional regulatory body for practitioner psychology in the United Kingdom, which sets and enforces standards for ethics, proficiency, and training of practitioner psychologists, including counselling psychologists.

British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences is the professional body for sport and exercise sciences in the UK.

British Psychological Society (BPS) the professional society for psychologists in the UK.

TABLE 42.1 Core competencies addressed by BPS and BASES training.

BPS: QSEP Stage 2	BASES: SEPAR
Competencies cover four key areas and include:	Competencies cover four key areas and include:
1. <i>Ethical competence</i>, e.g., respond to unpredictable contexts and events professionally and ethically. 2. <i>Consultancy competence</i>, e.g., establish, develop, and maintain working relationships with clients. 3. <i>Research competence</i>, e.g., conduct psychological research activities. 4. <i>Communication competence</i>, e.g., promote psychological principles, practices, services, and benefits.	1. <i>Knowledge</i>, e.g., issues in professional practice. 2. <i>Skills</i>, e.g., understanding and use of research. 3. <i>Self-development and management</i>, e.g., ensuring professional compliance and duty of care. 4. <i>Experience</i>, e.g., working as a practitioner with a range of age groups, genders, and special populations.

42.1.2 The British Association of Sport and Exercise Science Route

sport and exercise psychology accreditation route an HCPC-approved training route for sport and exercise psychologists provided by BASES that facilitates professional and skill development underpinned by supervised practice.

The BASES **Sport and Exercise Psychology Accreditation Route** (SEPAR) was launched in February 2020. The SEPAR is an HCPC-approved training route for sport and exercise psychologists and facilitates professional and skill development underpinned by supervised practice. Registrants may use the title

‘Sport and Exercise Psychologist in Training (SEPiT)’ whilst they acquire knowledge, skills, self-development, and experience to a competency that confers eligibility for registration with the HCPC as a practitioner psychologist.

In order to apply to SEPAR, registrants must hold graduate membership of BASES and must also evidence sufficient ‘underpinning psychology’ knowledge, and an MSc in sport and/or exercise psychology. Underpinning psychology knowledge can be evidenced by:

1. Successful completion of an accredited psychology course (undergraduate or conversion) that provides graduate basis for chartered membership (GBC) with the BPS;
2. Completion of the 60-credit Open University module offered exclusively for potential SEPAR candidates;

3. Prior recognition of underpinning ‘core’ psychology knowledge from a learned society/professional body.

For the Master’s level qualification, most candidates provide evidence of a successfully completed MSc Sport and/or Exercise Psychology course, but equivalent courses successfully mapped against the relevant HCPC Standards of Proficiency are accepted. Finally, registrants must confirm their supervisory arrangements, professional indemnity insurance, and, where appropriate, evidence English language to IELTS grade 7.

The duration of SEPAR is between two and four years, with the intended duration stated at the application stage and dependent on (a) the time that registrants are able to dedicate to the qualification and (b) the competencies that require development. In exceptional circumstances, Accreditation of Prior Experiential Competence can be sought where registrants complete SEPAR in a one-year period. The SEPiT must secure an approved supervisor for SEPAR. SEPAR supervisors must be BASES professional members, registered with the HCPC, and have completed all mandatory training prior to becoming a SEPAR approved supervisor.

Following admission to the SEPAR, with the support of a supervisor, and guidance of a candidate handbook (see https://www.bases.org.uk/spage-professional_development-separ.html), the SEPiT completes an initial SEPAR submission that is assessed by two reviewers. SEPAR reviewers must be BASES professional members, registered with the HCPC, and have completed all mandatory training prior to becoming a SEPAR Approved Reviewer.

The initial submission contains:

1. A brief video to introduce the portfolio and detail planned actions over the next six to nine months for competency development.
2. An initial competence profile covering 65 competencies spread across four key areas: knowledge, skills, self-development, and management, and experience. The SEPiT rates their current level of competence on a scale of 0–5 (ratings criteria provided) providing an action plan to enhance competencies with a target rating.
3. A portfolio of evidence to support claimed competency ratings.
4. A practice log, detailing applied practice (even if zero activity).
5. A ‘CPD and supervisor-activity’ log (even if zero activity).
6. A ‘dissemination and citizenship’ log (even if zero activity).

7. A supervisor observation log (even if zero activity).
8. A supervisor report form.

Reviewers provide feedback on competency ratings and the competency development action plan to endorse (or not) this and/or suggest revisions or focussed activities.

A second mid-point competency profile, which occurs at 12, 18, or 24 months depending on the length of registration, mirrors the initial submission and also includes the following:

1. A brief video to introduce the portfolio and reflect on the key learning and development that has taken place since the initial submission.
2. A cover letter highlighting key areas of progress and development since the initial submission, as well as key goals towards final submission.
3. One case study of applied work.
4. At least one formal client reference.

The same two reviewers evaluate the submission and provide mid-point feedback. This is followed up with an eMeeting between the two reviewers and the SEPiT to discuss process-related aspects of future development.

After a minimum of two years (depending on registration period), the SEPiT submits a final competency profile. The final submission requires similar documents as the initial submission, as well as:

1. A brief video to introduce the portfolio and to provide meta-reflection on the key SEPAR reflections.
2. A cover letter to highlight the key areas of progress and development since the mid-point submission, as well as goals for ongoing development post-SEPAR.
3. Two formal case studies.
4. At least two formal client references.

Within the final submission, SEPiTs will need to evidence at least the threshold rating of four for all 65 competencies to meet the HCPC Standards of Proficiency. If the review team is in agreement that the minimum level of competency has been achieved across all areas, then subject to confirmation at the next SEPAR committee meeting, the candidate will be deemed as SEPAR completed and eligible to apply for registration with the HCPC.

The SEPiT must complete nine core workshops during SEPAR (Photo 42.1): (a) Introduction to SEPAR webinar, (b) BASES Safeguarding workshop, (c) BASES Ethics in Professional Practice workshop, (d) BASES Reflective Practice workshop, (e) BASES Case Study workshop, (f) BASES Practice Philosophy workshop, (g) BASES Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity in Sport and Exercise



PHOTO 42.1 UK training pathways incorporate core workshops endorsed by each relevant professional body.

Source: Tracey Devonport.

TABLE 42.2 Minimum expected hours of SEPAR.

Activity type	Minimum hours	Minimum days
Application/consulting	2,700 (900 actual hours)	338
Dissemination and citizenship	225 (75 actual hours)	28
CPD and supervisor-led activity*	275	34
	3,200	400

* A minimum of 50 hours to be with the supervisor with at least 20 hours of the 50 being observed work of the candidate.

Source: Reproduced from the *Sport and Exercise Scientist*, issue 63, with permission of BASES.

Psychology workshop, (h) BASES Mental Health in Sport and Exercise units, and (i) BASES Counselling Skills workshop.

SEPiT must also engage in at least 3,200 hours of activity (see Table 42.2) that includes 2,700 of application/consulting, 225 of dissemination and citizenship, and 275 of continued professional development, and supervisor-led activity. The SEPAR programme makes greater use of technology. This includes candidates filming themselves working, submitting this for assessors, supervisor, and candidate evaluate and reflect on the quality of their work. It also includes the use of online means to provide face-to-face feedback.

Being a reflective practitioner is fundamental to identifying current skill and capability and aiding future

development. Applicants must demonstrate that they have good self-awareness, a good awareness of others, and the ability to translate reflection into behaviours that could enable better practice. The support work provided must demonstrate intellectual rigour and clear scientific underpinnings, as well as the ability to translate scientific knowledge into effective practice. Finally, applicants evidence of collaboration with recognised sports organisations or exercise and health client groups.

42.1.3 The British Psychological Society Route

qualification in sport and exercise psychology is a HCPC training route to training as a sport and exercise psychologist provided by the BPS.

division of sport and exercise psychology is a division of the British Psychological Society for practitioner psychologists who seek to apply psychological knowledge, skills and expertise within the context of sport and exercise.

The BPS **Qualification in Sport and Exercise Psychology** (QSEP) launched in 2008 (termed the Stage 2 Qualification). This was designed to accommodate HCPC regulations from inception in July 2009. The QSEP (Stage 2) is an HCPC-approved qualification, which if awarded provides eligibility to apply for registration with the HCPC as a sport and exercise psychologist. It also conveys eligibility for full membership of the BPS **Division of Sport and Exercise Psychology**.

In order to access Stage 2, an individual must attain a psychology-accredited undergraduate degree or equivalent that provides GBC with the BPS. They must then successfully complete a one-year MSc programme in sport and exercise psychology (termed the Stage 1 Qualification).

The Stage 1 Qualification is undertaken by examination and is divided into two core syllabus areas plus six optional areas. Candidates must undertake examination in both core areas which are Paper 1: Research Methods and Paper 2: Professional Skills/Counselling. There are six optional areas, of which candidates must complete four. These are:

- Paper 3: Performance—The Theoretical Basis;
- Paper 4: Psychological Skills and Approaches;
- Paper 5: Lifespan Issues;
- Paper 6: Social Processes;
- Paper 7: Exercise and Physical Activity;
- Paper 8: Individual Differences.

Candidates also undertake a research portfolio in sport and exercise psychology, which is a core requirement of the Stage 1 Qualification. This requires candidates to be able to critique relevant areas of knowledge and also demonstrate an awareness of ethical practice and issues

of diversity. Only when these criteria are met can an individual undertake Stage 2.

The QSEP (Stage 2) involves supervised practice over two years full-time or three to four years part-time (460 days). This includes at least 160 days of applied work with clients and up to 300 days of training activities, independent study, undertaking and writing up research, and any other self-identified training activities. The Stage 2 Qualification is not a course of study; as with BASES, it is a competency-based framework of evidence requirements and assessments around which trainees create their own training programme. Individuals rate themselves against four key roles relating to national occupational standards in psychology, which are broken down into competencies required for chartered status. These key roles are:

1. Develop, implement, and maintain personal and professional standards and ethical practice. This comprises four core ethical competency units.
2. Apply psychological and related methods, concepts, models, theories, and knowledge derived from reproducible findings. This comprises six core consultancy units.
3. Research and develop new and existing psychological methods, concepts, models, theories, and instruments in psychology. This comprises five core research competency units.
4. Communicate psychological knowledge, principles, methods, needs, and policy requirements. This comprises five core communication units.

The evidence submitted across QSEP is presented in Table 42.3.

A supervisee's self-directed plan of supervisor-supported training is segmented into these four key roles and is intended to enhance expertise in consulting, teaching/educational and research-related activities. Trainees are also required to complete a research project as part of the qualification programme.

Assessments of the trainee psychologist are based on three consecutive portfolio submissions and final viva examination. The first two submissions are formative, and the final submission and viva are summative. The first submission is comprised of (a) reflective diary, (b) practice log, (c) first case study, (d) evaluation of professional competence form, and (e) reflection on potential research topics and associated literature.

The second submission is comprised of (a) reflective diary, (b) practice log, (c) second case study, (d) evaluation of professional competence form, and (e) reflection plan outline (and ethics if appropriate).

The third submission is comprised of (a) reflective diary, (b) practice log, (c) third and fourth case studies, (d) evaluation of professional competence form,

TABLE 42.3 Evidence submitted during QSEP stage 2.

Key Roles 1, 2, and 4	Key Role 3	Viva
- Practice diary - Reflective log - Consultancy case studies - Evaluation of Professional Competence form - Supporting evidence.	OPTION 1 Either: A report of an empirical research investigation. Or: A scientifically grounded case study (each totalling no more than 25–35 pages; 9,000–12,000 words). OPTION 2 A report of a systematic literature review (no more than 20 pages; 7,000 words). Plus Either: A report of an empirical research study. Or: A scientifically grounded case study (each totalling no more than 12 pages; 4,000 words). And Evaluation of Professional Competence form and Reflective Diary.	A 2-hour long, D-level assessment on the submitted portfolio as a whole.

(e) research submission and research supervisor report, and (f) ethical approval (if appropriate).

42.1.3.1 Case studies

The four consultancy case studies should represent a diversity of client groups and/or issues, and should also reflect an understanding and application of at least two different consulting philosophies or approaches. Case studies 1 and 2 should evidence post masters level work, whilst case studies 3 and 4 should evidence doctoral-level work.

42.1.3.2 Practice log

Supervisees are required to maintain a practice log throughout the entire period of training. This details attendance settings and evidences contact time in gaining experience.

42.1.3.3 Reflective diary

Supervisees are expected to engage in ongoing practice reflections throughout Stage 2. This includes documenting reflection on how professional standards and ethical practice (Key Role 1) have informed the application (Key Role 2) and communication (Key Role 4) of sport and exercise psychology knowledge and methods developed, implemented, and/or maintained during supervised practice. Also, reflections on research activities completed should be documented (Key Role 3). The candidate handbook advises that five reflections across Key Role 1 sub-competencies, 10 across Key Role 2, five across Key Role 3, and five across Key Role 4, for each assessment submission would be deemed sufficient.

42.1.3.4 Evaluation of Professional competency

The evaluation of professional competence that include comments from supervisee and supervisor must be included with each assessment submission and should cover the competencies required for Key Roles 1, 2, and 4.

42.1.3.5 Supporting evidence

Supporting evidence relevant to each key role should be provided with each assessment submission.

42.1.3.6 Research submission (Key Role 3)

As part of the evidence for this key role, a research outline should be submitted with the first competency submission (two-year enrolment track) or second competency submission (three- and four-year enrolment track). Specific guidance is offered within the QSEP candidate handbook for the different options available in addressing Key Role 3.

42.1.3.7 Viva

The viva is organised following receipt of the final submission. The purpose of the viva is to confirm achievement all required competencies, and involved questions focused on any aspect of the submissions or supervised practice pertinent to the demonstration of competencies.

On attaining GBC, passing Stage 1 and Stage 2, an individual becomes eligible to apply for registration as a chartered sport and exercise psychologist. On gaining chartered status, individuals are then eligible to enter the HCPC register of sport and exercise psychologists.



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN SPORT AND EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY

ACTIVITY BOX 42.1

The excerpt below is taken from Wylleman *et al.* (2009, p. 436). Read it and then consider these questions:

1. To what extent are health and well-being overtly described in the training pathways described?
2. To what extent do you feel that well-being contributes to performance-related outcomes in sport and exercise?
3. Should athlete well-being be addressed as part of the services offered by applied practitioners?

Another step forward in outlining the aim of applied sport psychology (ASP) was taken in the wake of sport psychologists using a more holistic perspective on the development of athletes (e.g., Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004).

For example, Anderson *et al.* (2002) elaborated that the aim of ASP should include athletes' development when describing it as 'principally concerned with the application of theories, principles, and techniques from psychology to induce psycho-behavioural change in athletes to enhance performance, the quality of the sport experience, and the personal growth of the athlete' (p. 434). Thus, beyond psychological skills training and use of mental skills (McCann, 2005), ASP also focused on lifestyle development and use of life skills amongst athletes.

In order to answer the questions, re-read the information on training routes provided within this chapter. You are encouraged to follow the web links provided to complete further research.

42.1.4 The Professional Doctorate Route

The professional doctorate is designed to meet BPS Stage 2 training requirements in sport and exercise psychology and eligibility for registration as a sport and exercise psychologist with the HCPC. In addition, the professional doctorate also provides a DProf meaning acquisition of the title Doctor following successful completion. At the time of writing (May 2022), professional doctorates approved by the HCPC are offered by Glasgow Caledonian University, Liverpool John Moores University, and the University of Portsmouth. Each University has slight variations in their offer, including whether the course is offered full-time, part-time, or both. The programme details can be found on each respective institutions webpages.

Applicants must possess an undergraduate degree or conversion course in psychology or sport and exercise psychology, which confers GBC status, and a BPS-accredited Master's degree, which confers Stage 1 of the BPS QSEP. Supervision is provided by HCPC registered psychologists who are also BPS-chartered sport and exercise psychologists and/or BASES-accredited sport and exercise scientists.

Now you have read information pertaining to the three different training routes in the UK please read the information presented in Activity Box 42.1. You are encouraged to consider the extent to which athlete well-being is highlighted or addressed in the training routes that have been outlined. You are then encouraged to consider whether you feel athlete well-being should be

addressed by applied practitioners, providing a rationale for your decision.

42.2 CASE STUDY: SPORT PSYCHOLOGY IN PRACTICE

In concluding the five chapters that explore sport and exercise psychology, the following case study is presented to exemplify the work of an ASEP practitioner. This is intended to offer evidence of issues addressed throughout the chapters, including needs analysis, ethics, reflective practice, and the use of published literature to inform interventions. While reading this case study, the reader is encouraged to consider ethical issues, the benefits of reflective practice, and the utility of literature in informing interventions.

The following offers a sample of the support work completed by Tracey Devonport with a junior female tennis player. Throughout this case study, the reader will be signposted back to key materials in the previous four chapters addressing ASEP.

Aged 17, Venuka (a pseudonym) had a top ten under-18 national ranking and was also national champion in the girls' under-18 doubles. She was in full-time education and her aspirations were to become a professional tennis player. To provide context to this case study, we will focus on the initial contact and assessment, a sample of psychological strategies utilised in responding to the needs of the client,

and, finally, an evaluation and reflections concerning the intervention process. Throughout this case study, we will utilise direct quotes recorded from Venuka when reflecting on the interventions used. Further information on this intervention work can be found in (Lane *et al.*, 2007).

42.2.1 Initial Contact and Assessment

The ASEP was approached by the head club coach and the client shortly after Venuka arrived as a new club member. She had transferred from another regional club after experiencing decreasing self-efficacy which she attributed to the coaching climate. In addition to her self-efficacy, an issue Venuka wished to address from the outset was the impact that her emotions, in particular anger, were having on her tennis performance.

Venuka was able to describe vividly the relationship between her thoughts, emotions, self-efficacy, and performance prior to the completion of any intervention work (see Chapter 29 for more information on self-efficacy). The following excerpts taken from reflective interviews with Venuka identify the thoughts and emotions she experienced, their manifestation in terms of body language and self-efficacy, and the situations in which these emotions arise.

I used to go mad and bang my racquet, I used to get really p****d off, every time I lost a point literally, whether it was a good point I just played I wouldn't see that it was a good point, I'd just see I lost a point, it wasn't good enough. I used to be really negative on myself and that always got me down even more. I always used to have a lot of pressure on me; I put a lot of pressure on myself.

In the description provided by Venuka, she indicated that she assessed her performance with the use of outcome goals. In addition to the need to win points, she explained how she was also heavily influenced by other outcome measures.

I used to focus on ratings and rankings, so if I was playing a girl who was lower ranking than me, I used to put pressure on myself thinking, I shouldn't lose to this girl, she's not the same rating.

Research indicates that failure to attain personally important goals may foster negative feelings such as depression, and also detract from self-efficacy (Klein *et al.*, 1999; Jones *et al.*, 2013). A study by Fritsch *et al.* (2022) examined self-talk and emotions during competitive tennis matches and found that self-talk influenced the emotions experienced and expressed, and that task-oriented self-talk (focussed on solving problems and making progress

with a task) reduced the intensity of emotions, or even prevented their occurrence. Venuka wanted to win points, win matches, and improve her ranking and clearly makes reference to negative self-statements associated with depressed mood, and a reduced sense of self-efficacy when her objective was not achieved. She demonstrates an ego orientation when setting goals, and emotional and behaviourally focused coping strategies when these are threatened. Research suggests that task-orientated goals are more controllable, and as such task orientation is associated with less negative thinking in sport (Hatzigeorgiadis & Biddle, 1999; Lochbaum *et al.*, 2016). Task orientation is linked to problem-focused coping strategies and, consequently, is more likely to lead to the mastery of adverse situations and self-efficacy gains. The efficacy of such a goal orientation has been evidenced in tennis (Harwood & Swain, 1998, 2001; Cowden *et al.*, 2021; Fritsch *et al.*, 2022).

Regulating emotions is not purely about personal consequences, there are also the potential effects on opponents to consider. For example, research indicates that a decrease in positive outward emotional expressions accompanied by an increase in outward emotional expressions increases the self-confidence of an opponent (Furley *et al.*, 2015). When Venuka was asked if she was aware of the impact her emotions were having on her performance, and also opponents, she replied, 'I was aware of it but I didn't know how to control it'. When then asked which emotion had the most noticeable effect on her performance, she replied 'anger'. In trying to manage her anger, she sometimes tried to use behaviourally based coping strategies, but found that these had limited impact.

I used to throw my racquet all the time, stamp my feet like a spoilt child, walk round like a loser basically with my shoulders down, dragging my feet. I used to scream so bad, scream everything like 'oh this is not good enough', sometimes I used to scream at my Dad as well, tell him to go away. I think because all of it was bottled up inside I needed to get rid of it, but it was after every point so it was tiring.

When exploring how effective these strategies were in managing anger, Venuka explained:

It got rid of the anger for then, but sometimes it would get even worse my anger did. I would get heated even more because I've just tried to get myself out of the situation by whacking the ball into the back fence, but when I whacked the ball I was still aroused in that anger area, so I was like aaaargh.

The intervention that followed this preliminary assessment facilitated ongoing profiling by systematically assessing pre-competition emotions, cognitions, and self-efficacy longitudinally.

42.2.2 Psychological Strategies Utilised in Responding to the Needs of the Client

Prior to embarking on any intervention work, limits of confidentiality were discussed (see Chapter 28 for more information on confidentiality). The athlete expressed a desire to share information and ideas with her coach, whom she wished to involve. The ASEP was happy to work as a Coach–Athlete–ASEP Triad in order to stimulate discussion and reflection. However, consent for information sharing was always sought before this occurred. Having agreed procedures regarding confidentiality, an overview of the ways in which the ASEP would assess psychological states, the types of psychological skills that could be used, behavioural changes that could be made, and how effectiveness of work completed would be assessed were then discussed. The client agreed that a preferred starting point would be to develop her ability to recognise different emotions, those factors that elicited them and their symptomology. Enhancing self-awareness and metacognition is fundamental to acquiring psychological skills (Latinjak & Hatzigeorgiadis, 2021). In tennis, this may involve physical aspects of the game such as becoming more aware of appropriate focal points on which to lock concentration (Ravizza, 2001) or mental aspects such as being more aware of negative thoughts, emotions, comments, or acts prior to or during matches (Mamassis & Doganis, 2004). Such activities will help ensure that the athlete is focused on the task at hand (or processes) rather than the outcome (Ravizza, 2001).

In order to develop her self-awareness, Venuka kept a diary of emotional episodes for three months. This was adapted from the work of Hanin (2000). It has previously been utilised successfully by sport psychologists in applied practice (Robazza & Bortoli, 2003; Devonport *et al.*, 2005; Ruiz *et al.*, 2017). This ideographic approach allows athletes to select their own terminology to describe emotional experiences, allowing them to offer a narrative description of pre-competition and post-competition thoughts and feelings. Venuka also provided insightful comments in a tennis diary. While this could be seen as over-using self-report measures as a means to gather data, this process should be seen against the process through which the support programme was explained to and agreed by the athlete (see Chapter 22 for further information regarding measurement issues relevant to conducting a needs analysis).

Subsequent meetings were arranged to provide feedback to Venuka regarding the data collected. Mood profiles associated with successful and unsuccessful performance were discussed, along with the associated

cognitions and relationship with self-efficacy (see Chapter 24 for more information on emotions and their consequences). What emerged from these discussions were profiles of emotions associated with success. This is an important process, as the athlete begins to recognise those emotional states that tend to be associated with successful performance, and that strategies that seek to maintain these psychological states are worth pursuing.

Increasing Venuka's awareness of her emotions and their impact on performance directly addressed, and sought to enhance, her emotional intelligence, specifically awareness of her own emotions (see Chapter 25 for more information on emotional intelligence). The influence that emotional intelligence can have on sports performance is acknowledged in sports domains (Laborde *et al.*, 2016; Kopp & Jekauc, 2018; Magrum *et al.*, 2019) and was reinforced by Venuka's personal experiences. Once Venuka was better able to identify emotions, the next stage was to address her ability to manage these emotions. Self-regulatory techniques are essential in that they enable an athlete to control and direct emotions, thoughts, and attention (Singer, 2002; Lane *et al.*, 2012). The ability to regulate one's own emotions forms a second component of emotional intelligence, and enhancing this aspect offers a number of benefits for Venuka's tennis performance. When exploring mood states and performance, emotionally intelligent athletes appear more capable of attaining desirable emotional states before competition (Lane *et al.*, 2005; Lane *et al.*, 2010). In such challenging situations, emotional intelligence competencies influence the selection and control of coping strategies directed towards the immediate situation (Matthews & Zeidner, 2000; Mayer *et al.*, 2000; Cowden, 2016). Furthermore, significant relationships have also emerged between emotional intelligence and psychological skills usage, including imagery, goal-setting, and positive self-talk (Lane & Lowther, 2005; Lane *et al.*, 2009). Theoretically, developing Venuka's emotional intelligence would enhance her ability to apply interventions intended to help manage her emotions and self-efficacy.

A review of her self-set goals showed they all related to outcomes such as winning and Lawn Tennis Association rankings. Venuka agreed that establishing task-oriented goals would result in goals that were more controllable. Goal-setting is a popular technique used by tennis players to enhance motivation and self-efficacy (Harwood & Swain, 1998, 2001; Mamassis & Doganis, 2004), and the use of appropriate goals can help engender self-belief (Jones *et al.*, 2002; Healy *et al.*, 2018). Bull *et al.* (2005) proposed that self-belief is related to robust self-confidence, which leads to the ability to overcome self-doubts and maintain self-focus. As Venuka set outcome goals, modifying these to task-oriented goals could exert

a positive influence on her motivation and self-efficacy. A further advantage is that task-oriented goals make available problem-focused coping strategies and reduce negative thinking (Hatzigeorgiadis & Biddle, 1999; Ntoumanis *et al.*, 1999; Fritsch *et al.*, 2022). Goals were established according to present priorities and included technical, physical, tactical, and psychological goals. As part of the goal-setting process, enhancing her ability to manage her emotional state was identified as a key goal. As such, a number of interventions intended to manage her emotional states were introduced. These included pre-serve and return of serve routines, breathing techniques, imagery, positive self-talk, attentional control, use of music, and developing social support.

Venuka makes reference to a number of these interventions when describing those actions that she perceived to be of value in managing emotions and developing her self-efficacy. First, when describing routines, she explains how she believed her breathing and attentional control strategies to be of value:

Try and relax by taking time in between points and using deep belly breathing which really helps. It helps 'cause you're thinking about breathing and relaxing, and then when you let the breath out, you just let everything go and everything just feels so relaxed. Plus you're taking time to recover as well and not thinking about 'I just played a point and lost it'. For example, after a serve I'd think 'okay forget about it', breathe, then everything's gone, and then walk up to the service line and think about the next point in a positive way, forget about the last one. It takes your mind off things.

In terms of those actions she would take in order to attain her 'peak state', as she described it, she found a number of strategies introduced by the ASEP to be effective:

When I used to go to tournaments I used to hate being on certain courts, so I used to imagine being on those courts in bad situations, and I used to imagine playing my shots like Federer or Justine Henin, and you'd be like wow, and go out and try it and it was a really good feeling actually. It relaxed me more, now I've been to more or less every place in country so I can imagine myself on every court. I get myself into a state where I can imagine myself playing on any court I know I might be playing on. It makes me happy and its inspirational imagining myself playing tennis. It's a good thing but in a way it's really bad because I'll be in school and my teacher is talking about something and I'll be seeing myself playing tennis, I can multitask [laughs].

Imagery can be used as a self-modelling technique to image successful performance. To reinforce good play or correct an error, the tennis player can preview a performance feeling energised and powerful. These benefits are

clearly described by Venuka. Callow *et al.* (2001) used a successful motivational general mastery imagery (Hall *et al.*, 1998) intervention to increase feelings of self-confidence with badminton players. Two objectives in utilising imagery with Venuka were to enhance her self-efficacy expectations to cope with competition and to maintain a positive emotional profile. She was encouraged to use imagery to strengthen strategies utilised during training. For example, she was encouraged to imagine herself coping successfully with tough rallies or periods of poor play. She was encouraged to try to anticipate a difficult situation and see herself coping with it successfully.

An important part of this process is to imagine successfully tackling a number of the factors that make the task difficult, never underestimating the difficulty of the task as this can create a false sense of self-confidence. For example, she imagined herself coping successfully when feelings of anger and depression started to build up in situations where she was unable to attain the standard of performance set as a goal. During imagery sessions, she rehearsed the psyching up strategies that would be used to raise her vigour, confidence, motivation, and determination. This developed effective coping strategies for successfully dealing with unpleasant emotions experienced during competition. In addition to imagery, music and singing (internally) formed a strategy that Venuka used as part of a consistent pre-match routine. Three folders of music were set up on her iPod: (a) her chillout tracks, (b) her psych-up tracks, and (c) her random play list. A great deal of time was invested exploring the where, when, and why of iPod use.

I sing to myself, that song search for a hero inside yourself, I sing that when I'm on court now, or something inside so strong, that one, and I always listen to my iPod. I have a relaxing play list which I have on, on the way to a tournament in the car, then half an hour before I play I have my pump up play list which has got all my upbeat songs, and then after my match I go back to my relaxing play list again. If I'm just walking around at a tournament I have a random play list on to get myself in a good mood.

Previous research has indicated that music may be an effective regulator of negative mood as it can have a stimulating or sedative effect (Karageorghis, 2008; Cook *et al.*, 2017). Given that the influence of music appears to be dependent on individual factors (such as age and musical preferences), allowing Venuka to select her own music is a strategy endorsed by previous research (Karageorghis *et al.*, 1999; Karageorghis *et al.*, 2012). Venuka was able to select music to manipulate her mood according to the stage of her pre-match routine. In the car, she was looking to relax and chose music accordingly; between games, she wanted to be in a good mood and chose

music accordingly. Having a selection of music available on her iPod enabled her to select music easily.

When reviewing the efficacy of her pre-match routine, Venuka utilised a number of different interventions, including music, self-talk, controlled breathing, performance goals, and imagery. Consistent with previous research, this multimodal intervention was effective in identifying and manipulating debilitating perceptions of pre-competitive emotions to more facilitative ones (Hanton & Jones, 1999). During competition, her pre-serve, pre-return, or serve routines facilitated decision-making, positive thinking, attentional control, and physical preparation (Hanton & Jones, 1999).

The final example of a strategy utilised by Venuka to manage her emotions and self-efficacy was the use of social support. In the following description, Venuka outlines developments in her interpersonal skills. She explains how she is better able to identify and utilise social support and also appreciates the importance of giving something back. This is evidenced when she describes her improved relationship with other players.

I used to keep things inside, I never used to talk about things, but when I was on court what I learned was when you keep things inside it just makes you even more mad. Like I use Team Venuka [refers to social support network]. I don't know what I'd do without my friends, 'cause I speak to them a lot, and like my coach, if I'm having an off day I tell him and he understands. We have a really good relationship and that's really important. I get on well with the other players as well. I'm better than the other girls and I used to hate going on court with them, when they missed I used to get really p****d off and angry, I used to want to hit with somebody better, but now, it's not about who's better or not, it's what you get out of the session, and I've realised now that I can hit against a brick wall and get out of it what I want.

When describing her use of social support in managing mood and self-efficacy, Venuka describes good interpersonal skills. This component of emotional intelligence was described by Bar-On (2002, p. 16) as being 'able to establish cooperative, constructive, and satisfying interpersonal relationships'. Having initially been frustrated with the technical competencies of her training partners, she reappraised the situation, in order to establish satisfying, confidence-building relationships. This ultimately enhances her ability to manage her moods and confidence via the use of social support. The ASEP spent a great deal of time identifying and discussing the role of 'Team Venuka' members, in particular ways of nurturing these relationships by returning support, or giving thanks for support. This enhanced the satisfaction of all members of Team Venuka and enhanced communication among its members.

In summary, having identified a need to equip Venuka with strategies to better manage her moods and enhance her self-efficacy, consideration was given to emotional intelligence as a factor mediating the success of interventions. A longitudinal intervention programme sought to enhance her ability to recognise emotions and their impact, and to develop strategies to manipulate her mood. It also sought to enhance her ability to communicate emotions and utilise social support. This intervention ultimately conditioned a different mindset, helping Venuka manage emotions and self-efficacy via enhanced emotional intelligence.

42.2.3 Evaluation and Reflections Concerning the Intervention Process

When assessing an athlete, introducing, developing, and refining interventions, the ASEP continually engages in self-reflection and encourages the client to engage in the same reflective process (see Chapter 23 for more information on reflective practice). It is for this reason that a wealth of qualitative data are available from the client, enabling their perceptions regarding the intervention and consultancy process to be explored. This enables the early identification of interventions that are not functioning optimally, and their refinement as necessary. The ASEP in this case study introduced herself to the client as a facilitator of mental skills development, explaining that the client has the primary responsibility for change. Venuka demonstrates the efficacy of this approach, by engaging with the process of behavioural change and clearly understanding the rationale for it. Venuka demonstrates an increased awareness of intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, and enhanced competencies in utilising these appropriately.

Now complete Activity Box 42.2.

42.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed UK training routes available for becoming a professional ASEP. We then presented a case study to exemplify many of the issues highlighted throughout the five chapters addressing sport and exercise psychology. It is hoped that this chapter will encourage you to consider your own professional development irrespective of the domain of psychology in which you practise. It is important that aspiring practitioners clearly identify their training needs and engage with professional bodies that may facilitate their development.

Table 42.4 provides answers to some frequently asked questions about sport and exercise psychology.



USE OF LITERATURE IN DEVELOPING AND REVIEWING INTERVENTIONS

ACTIVITY BOX 42.2

Identify the literature used to underpin and evaluate the applied interventions presented in the case study example provided. Specifically, identify the key implications for intervention development and application.

Identify the literature used	Identify key aspects of the literature	Identify how the literature informed interventions

TABLE 42.4 Frequently asked questions about sport and exercise psychology.

What Income can I expect while 1 am training?	Few people earn an income while training. It is possible to charge clients as a trainee sport and/or exercise psychologist, and BASES offer some tentative guidelines. However, it would be misleading to suggest that people could earn a living during training, as most supervisors charge trainees.
What salary can I expect when I am fully trained?	A very difficult question to answer as there is a huge variation. However, your qualification has taken several years to obtain and so do not undervalue yourself. There is not a clearly defined career structure or salary, and therefore, many sport and exercise psychologists operate as independent consultants and charge varying fees. Many sport and exercise psychologists combine consultancy with lecturing, therefore the usual salary for lecturers would be applicable. Salaries for lecturers at FE and HE institutions when we looked at pay spines in 2022 were: College lecturers’ salaries range from: Lecturer from £25,000 Senior lecturer from £36,000 Leadership and management from £38,000 University lecturers’ salaries range from: Lecturer from £34,000 Senior lecturer from £44,000 Principal lecturer from £51,000 Professorial from £65,000. We note that there is a huge variation in salary for UK professors and it is not unusual to see a salary over £100k. However, a professor title requires achieving a body of publication, income generation, doctoral completions, editorial work, and to be well known in your academic area. Aspirations toward becoming a professor represent a long-term goal. For up-to-date information, visit the Universities and Colleges Union website (https://www.ucu.org.uk/).

TABLE 42.4 (Continued)

What job opportunities are there?	UK jobs are advertised on the BASES website, www.bases.org.uk . Most positions are based in universities as lecturers in sport and exercise psychology and, therefore, can also be found on www.jobs.ac.uk .
What are the training pathways?	In order to use the title Sport and Exercise Psychologist, you will need to be registered with the HCPC. At present, this is achieved via the BPS, BASES or Professional Doctorate training routes. See the BPS and BASES websites for further information.
What unique skills will I learn?	Some of these have been described within this chapter
What further training and development can I do once I have qualified?	BASES and BPS both run workshops to ensure continuing professional development. For a list of these workshops, please visit the respective websites: www.bases.org.uk www.bps.org.uk
What particular qualities will employers look for?	1. The ability to demonstrate good interpersonal skills 2. Evidence of appropriate training (BPS, BASES, Professional Doctorate) 3. Evidence of successful applied work 4. Evidence of ongoing professional development
What career progression opportunities are there?	Sport and exercise psychologists working in academia can follow the well-established career progression route. Sport psychologists working as consultants develop careers based on previous successes and recommendations. Sport psychologists working with the English Institute of Sport (EIS) can progress to Regional lead for psychology and the National lead.
Will my training make me an attractive proposition for other careers? If so, which careers?	Sport psychologists tend to work in business psychology, as both involve addressing psychological states associated with performance. Exercise psychologists can work in the National Health or other health-focused organisations.
What are the hours of work?	Working with professional sport often involves working flexible hours and being available for consultation on demand. Sport psychologists working in organisations such as the EIS are contracted to a number of hours per week, but a caveat to this contract is to work hours as required.
What are the working conditions like?	Sport and exercise psychology can be very rewarding. However, a practitioner must be prepared to travel and immerse themselves in the culture of the sport or exercise.
Will I have a job for life?	Possibly, but sport and exercise psychologists typically operate in performance-enhancement climates (including outcomes such as performance, adherence, well-being, and so on). If performance deteriorates, their position is questioned. The decision to use a sport or exercise psychologist can depend on a number of factors that are beyond the control of either the practitioner or the client (in the case of a practitioner working in an Olympic sport, for example).
Where can I go for further information?	www.bases.org.uk www.bps.org.uk

SELF-TEST QUESTIONS

- According to Anderson and Lavalley (2005), what are the three key challenges faced by the profession of ASEP?
- What are the main differences in the training routes offered by the BPS and BASES?
- What are the four key competency areas addressed during SEPAR and how are they evidenced in submissions?
- What are the four key roles addressed during Stage 2 of the BPS training pathway and how are they evidenced during submissions?
- How does reflective practice feature in SEPAR and QSEP and why is this considered important?

ESSAY QUESTIONS

- Describe existing training pathways in the UK that prepare individuals for applied practice.
- Why is the use of published literature in informing ASEP interventions strongly advocated and incorporated in training pathways?
- Describe the key roles of ASEP practitioners and outline the way in which existing training pathways facilitate these roles.

TEXTS FOR FURTHER READING

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RELEVANT WEB LINKS

British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences, www.bases.org.uk
 British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences Sport and Exercise Psychology Accreditation Route, https://www.bases.org.uk/spage-professional_development-separ.html
 Division of Sport and Exercise Psychology (within the British Psychological Society), <https://www.bps.org.uk/member-microsites/division-sport-exercise-psychology>
 SEPAR candidate handbook, https://www.bases.org.uk/spage-professional_development-separ.html
 The British Psychological Society, www.bps.org.uk
 The British Psychological Society Qualification in Sport and Exercise Psychology (stage 2), <https://www.bps.org.uk/qualifications/sport-exercise-psychology>
 The health and Care Professions Council, <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/>
 QSEP candidate handbook, <https://www.bps.org.uk/qualifications/sport-exercise-psychology/outline>

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