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8 **"I Wouldn't Want To Operate Without It": The Ethical Challenges Faced by Experienced**
9 **Sport Psychology Consultants and Their Engagement With Supervision**

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Abstract

The first aim of this investigation was to explore the ethical challenges Sport Psychology Consultant's (SPCs) have experienced in their applied practice in elite sport. The second aim was to examine the engagement of experienced SPCs with monitoring and supervision of their applied practice. Ten experienced accredited SPCs (8 male and 2 female; M years consulting experience = 21.67 years) were purposefully sampled to participate in individual semi-structured face-to-face interviews. Following inductive thematic content analysis (Weber, 1990), two categories emerged regarding the ethical challenges these SPCs faced, these included; (a) challenges to boundaries; and (b) communication issues. Additionally, SPCs perceived supervision as being essential for applied practice as it enabled SPCs to monitor their practice, get to know themselves and care for themselves. Four sub-categories emerged regarding the exploration of SPC engagement in monitoring and supervision of their practice: (a) supervision is an essential component of applied practice; (b) supervision enabled SPCs to monitor boundaries of applied practice; (c) supervision helped SPCs to feel supported in their applied practice; and (d) supervision aided SPCs to get to know themselves and care for themselves. The place of supervision and peer support should be considered by practitioners working within applied sport psychology.

Keywords: ethics, supervision, elite sport, applied sport psychology

Lay Summary

This investigation aimed to explore the ethical challenges Sport Psychology Consultants (SPCs) have experienced in their applied practice in elite sport; and to examine the engagement of experienced SPCs with monitoring and supervision of their applied practice. Results highlighted that SPCs faced challenges to boundaries; and communication issues in their applied practice. While also highlighting that supervision was an essential component of applied practice that enabled SPCs to monitor boundaries of applied practice, aided SPCs to get to know themselves and care for themselves, while also feeling supported in their applied practice.

"I Wouldn't Want to Operate Without it": Experienced Sport Psychology Consultants Engagement with Supervision

The elite sport competition environment (e.g., Commonwealth Games, European Championships, summer and winter Olympic Games, Pan American Games, World Championships, World Cups) is viewed as the pinnacle arena for sports performers and their coaches. For those sport psychology consultants (SPCs) providing psychological support for athletes competing in these elite events, the multiple roles, significant time commitments, and emotional highs and lows they may deal with are complex (Anderson, Van Raalte, & Brewer, 2001; McCann, 2000). For example, the four year Olympic cycle brings with it a variety of unique pressures for the athletes competing within the Games, as well as the SPCs supporting them (Hodge & Hermansson, 2009). "No other sporting event combines so many sport competitions at the same time and place, which creates an unmatched sense of size and spectacle that in and of itself can unhinge even the most seasoned internationally competitive athlete" (Haberl & Peterson, 2006, p.28).

The ethical considerations and challenges faced by SPCs working within the elite sport environment can be numerous and diverse given the range of SPC roles and services provided to athletes in a frequently non-traditional consulting setting (Stapleton, Hankes, Hays, & Parham, 2010). Researchers and practitioners have highlighted the need for ethical SPCs to exercise even more caution than psychologists in more traditional practice settings; due to the variety of service delivery structures, the amount of time spent with athletes/clients, and the situational challenges they face (Andersen, Van Raalte & Brewer, 2001; Haberl & Peterson, 2006). Moreover, Haberl and Peterson (2006) highlighted the burden for SPCs to stay consistent and ethical in their applied practice falls to the individual SPC because of the non-traditional setting of the elite sport environment.

Previous research has provided some insight into the range of ethical dilemmas and challenges faced by SPCs in their applied practice. These have included discussions on: multiple

80   relationships (Aoyagi & Portenga, 2010; Brown & Cogan, 2006), boundaries of practice (Andersen

81   et al., 2001), confidentiality (Andersen et al., 2001; Aoyagi & Portenga, 2010), self-regulation

82   (Aoyagi & Portenga, 2010; Haberl & Petersen, 2006), and working with religious and spiritual

83   athletes (Sarkar, Hill, & Parker, 2014). Despite acknowledging the importance of adhering to ethical

84   guidelines, Aoyagi and Portenga (2010) argued that the impact of ethical guidelines are decided upon

85   by the steward of the principles more so than the principles themselves (Aoyagi & Portenga, 2010).

86   One practice to monitor the ethical practice of SPCs is that of supervision or peer support.

87   Andersen (1994) argued that, "The primary focus in sport psychology supervision is (or should be)

88   the appropriate, ethical and, it is hoped, beneficial delivery of psychological services to the client or

89   clients" (p. 155). Aoyagi, Portenga, Poczwardowski, and Cohen (2012) argued that supervision is not

90   just for students, it is an essential experience for ethical effective practice. Supervision is an

91   important element in the continuing education of all SPCs, which will enhance ethical accountability,

92   respectability, and effective quality control (Andersen & Williams-Rice, 1996). In addition, peer

93   supervision has previously been discussed as a valuable resource for practitioners throughout their

94   careers (Borders, 1991). Recently, McCormack, MacIntyre, O'Shea, Campbell, and Igou (2015)

95   reported that frequent use of informal peer supervision provided SPCs with much needed social

96   support while also monitoring their mental health. Viewed as a less threatening approach to self-

97   examination and professional growth than supervision, peer supervision can provide SPCs with

98   support and encouragement when working with difficult clients, when faced with ethical and

99   professional challenges and the isolation of working in applied practice from peers who have had

100   similar experiences (Borders, 1991). Considering the obvious need and benefits gained from

101   continued supervision and peer supervision, it is surprising that there is little published discussion

102   regarding the engagement of SPCs with the supervision process.

103   While there is limited investigation of supervisory processes used by SPCs, there is a

104   growing body knowledge regarding the related issue of effective SP consulting within the elite sports

105   environment. SPCs who had provided psychological support for elite athletes during a minimum of

106   five elite sport competitions discussed the components of effective consulting within the elite sports

107   environment (Sharp, Hodge, & Danish, 2014). These SPCs believed that "the key to consulting

108   effectiveness within the elite sports environment was to build a relationship with clients that had a

109   positive impact and which the client was both happy with and continued to develop" (Sharp et al.,

110   2014; p. 86). Furthermore, these SPCs also discussed that to be effective within the elite sport

111   environment SPCs need to (a) fit in, but not get in the way, (b) demonstrate consistent behaviour, and

112   (c) work closely with coaches. Researchers have previously discussed the unique environment and

113   services provided by SPCs working as part of 'the team around the team', in high performance sport

114   (Haberl & Peterson, 2006). Etzel and Watson (2006) argued that there is 'no typical sport

115   psychologist', due to the unique range of potential clients, the individual relationships with clients,

116   and the non-traditional format of service provision available.

117   The therapeutic relationship between therapist and client has long been of research interest

118   within the counselling and psychotherapy literatures. However, investigations into this relationship,

119   and how it is monitored/supervised, within the sport context has received limited empirical research

120   to date (Andersen, 2000; Andersen & Williams-Rice, 1996; Petitpas, Giges, & Danish, 1999; Sharp

121   & Hodge, 2011, 2013, 2015). Sharp, Hodge, and Danish (2015) reported that the "sport psychology

122   consulting relationship was found to encompass the purposive, collaborative work of the client and

123   SPC toward making a positive impact while also meeting the needs of the client. The qualities of

124   trust, respect, rapport highlight the "human relationship" or bond between the client and the SPC"

125   (2015, p. 368). The components identified by the experienced SPCs within their study were found to

126   have clear links to the common themes identified within counselling and psychotherapy

127   relationships, specifically; (a) the collaborative nature of the relationship; (b) the affective bond

128   between patient and therapist; and (c) the patient's and therapist's agreement on treatment goals and

129   tasks (Bordin, 1979). Despite the variety of education and training backgrounds, and roles of the

130   SPCs involved within Sharp et al's (2015) investigation, the SPCs were clear on the components that

131   they were required to contribute to the consulting relationship, specifically, honesty, commitment,

132   knowledge and expertise, counselling skills and professional ethical behaviour (such as seeking

133   supervision).

134   Accrediting professional organisations for individuals working within sport psychology in

135   the United States of America (USA) and United Kingdom (UK) have developed guidelines that are

136   "intended to provide guidance for psychologists and standards of professional conduct"

137   (http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/). Despite variation in these professional codes (e.g., Association of

138   Applied Sport Psychology 'Ethical Principles and Standards'; American Psychological Association

139   Division 47 'Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct'; British Association of Sport

140   and Exercise Sciences 'Code of Conduct; British Psychological Society Division of Sport and

141   Exercise Psychology 'Code of ethics and Conduct'), their purpose is to assist SPCs in finding the

142   appropriate ethical path that will help them with the challenges they face, in a manner that suitably

143   matches their roles and responsibilities and their client's circumstances and needs (Moore, 2003).

144   Yet Watson, Zizzi, and Etzel (2006) commented that ethical guidelines are only as good as an

145   individual SPC's knowledge of them and their willingness to adhere to them. We argue that the

146   effectiveness of ethical guidelines may also be influenced by the individual SPC's willingness to

147   engage in professional reflection about ethical issues; and their willingness to engage in monitoring

148   and supervision of their practice.

149   The purpose of the current investigation was to; (1) explore the ethical challenges SPCs have

150   experienced in their applied practice in elite sport; and (2) examine the engagement of experienced

151   SPCs with monitoring and supervision of their applied practice. In view of the scant knowledge of

152   the ethical challenges faced by SPCs and their engagement in monitoring and supervision of their

153   practice, this study was deemed best suited to qualitative methods. The most compelling advantage

154   to employing this methodological approach was that it allows a level of depth and complexity when

155 exploring the ethical challenges and supervision that SPCs engage in -- a level of depth that would

156 not be revealed using other methods of investigation (Bryne, 2004).

Method

158   Weed (2009) previously argued that authors have a responsibility to be crystal clear about the

159 methods employed within their research while also demonstrating they fully understand the

160 ontologogical and epistemological assumptions underpinning their research. With this in mind, the

161 current investigation used a constructivist ontology, which considers "reality [to be] neither objective

162 nor singular, but that multiple realities are constructed by individuals" (Weed, 2009; p. 507),

163 whereby SPCs were given the opportunity to discuss the ethical challenges that they had experienced

164 within their applied practice, and their engagement in monitoring and peer supervision of their

165 applied practice. We also adopted an interpretist espistemology, whereby "observations of the world

166 provide indirect indications of phenomena" (Weed, p.507), which allows the reader to interpret the

167 findings in the current investigation and choose which findings to consider within their own practice.

Participants

169   Ten experienced SPCs (8 male and 2 female, M age = 50.44 years, SD = 10.04, M years elite

170 level consulting experience = 21.67 years, SD = 7.33, M number of elite sports events consulted at =

171 7.2 events) who held current sport psychology/psychology accreditation/certification (three SPCs

172 held British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences [BASES]accreditation, five SPCs held

173 British Psychological Society chartered status [BPS], four held Certified Mental Performance

174 Consultant (CMPC) status, and three were American Psychological Association licensed

175 psychologists [APA]). The 10 SPCs were purposefully sampled based on their reputations and

176 having attended at least five elite sport competitions and had provided sport psychology support to

177 elite athletes who were competing at these sport events (e.g., British Premiership [Soccer],

178 Commonwealth Games, European Championships, summer and winter Olympic Games, NASCAR,

179 Pan-American Games, Spanish La Ligua [Soccer], ATP Tennis Tour, World Championships, World

180 Cups). These SPCs had previously been involved in an investigation examining what they believed

181 to be essential for consulting effectiveness at elite sport competitions (citation removed for blind

182 review).

183   With the aim of adding credibility to the sharing of best professional practice, all participants

184 were asked if they would be willing to waive their right to anonymity, while confidentiality was

185 assured through no direct quotes or identifiable information (such as interview quotes) being directly

186 linked to any one participant by name. Nine SPCs agreed to waive their anonymity; with one SPC

187 wishing to remain anonymous. The following experienced SPCs agreed to waive their anonymity:

188 Kate Goodger (U.K. based SPC; BPS and BASES accredited, had consulted at 3 Olympic Games);

189 Dan Gould (U.S. based SPC; consulted at 2 Olympic Games and at NASCAR events); Peter Haberl

190 (U.S. based SPC; APA and AASP certified, attended 6 Olympic Games & 1 Paralympic Games, one

191 Pan-American Games & numerous World Championships); Lew Hardy (U.K. based SPC; BPS and

192 BASES accredited, consulted at numerous World and European Championships, former Chairperson

193 of BOA psychology steering group); Chris Harwood (U.K. based SPC; BPS and BASES accredited,

194 consulted with British Premiership Football Clubs and on the ATP Tennis Tour); Anne-Marte

195 Penssgard (Norway based SPC; worked at 5 Olympic Games & numerous World and European

196 Championships); Ian Maynard (U.K. based SPC; BPS accredited, worked at 2 Olympic Games, 2

197 Commonwealth Games, 18 World Championships); Sean McCann (U.S. based SPC; APA and

198 AASP certified, attended 10 Olympic Games & numerous World Championships); Len Zaichkowsky

199 (Canadian based SPC; AASP certified, worked at World & European Championships, Spanish La

200 Ligua [Soccer]).

201 **Data Collection**

202   Data were collected through individual semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with the

203   primary investigator. A semi-structured interview guide was developed to ensure that the same

204   systematic and comprehensive lines of inquiry were followed with each individual while also

205   allowing some flexibility to allow topics to be approached and explored in a variety of ways (a copy

206   of the interview guide can be obtained on request from the first author). Question topics for the

207   current investigation explored what experienced SPCs perceived to be ethical applied practice

208   (Literature has discussed a number of ethical issues faced by SPCs, what issues do you think are the

209   most important to be aware of in your applied practice?), examined the ethical challenges SPCs have

210   experienced in their applied practice (Any examples of ethical problems you've encountered? How

211   have you addressed these?); and examined the engagement of experienced SPCs in monitoring and

212   supervision of applied practice (When and why do you undertake supervision or peer support?). The

213   interview guide was pilot tested with two experienced SPCs to check participant understanding and

214   flow of the interview questions, resulting in no changes to the structure or content of the interview

215   guide.

216   Following university research board ethical approval, SPCs were identified via purposeful

217   sampling and contacted via email to organize individual face-to-face interviews. Twelve SPCs were

218   originally contacted to participate in the investigation, with 10 agreeing to take part in an interview.

219   Interviews were organized at a time and location suitable to each participant and were conducted by

220   the first author who had considerable experience using qualitative research methodology. Interviews

221   ranged in duration from 70 mins to 90 mins. Each interview was audio-recorded with the

222   participant's written consent. The interviews were later transcribed verbatim by the primary

223   researcher yielding 188 single-spaced pages data in total.

224   **Data Analysis**

225   Data analysis procedures commenced shortly after each interview by the first author to

226 establish if any emergent categories warranted further exploration in the interviews which followed.

227 Considering the aims of the investigation were to explore the ethical challenges SPCs have

228 experienced in their applied practice in elite sport, while also examining the engagement of

229 experienced SPCs with monitoring and supervision of their applied practice, an inductive thematic

230 content analysis approach was employed to search for common themes across all data (Weber,

231 1990). This approach involved inductively analysing and classifying the information from the

232 interviews, reducing it to more relevant and manageable information units to form explanations that

233 reflected the detail, evidence and examples provided by participants during the interviews.

234   A number of coding procedures were utilized during the analysis process, specifically open

235 coding, line-by-line coding, constant comparison methods and, memo writing were employed, until

236 saturation was achieved (i.e., when no new sub-categories, or categories emerge; Corbin & Strauss,

237 2008). Throughout the course of these coding procedures there were no pre-determined categories,

238 or sub-categories, instead these were generated from the interview data as themes emerged to

239 describe and explain what SPCs perceived to be ethical applied practice, the ethical challenges SPCs

240 have experienced in their applied practice, and the engagement of experienced SPCs in supervision

241 and monitoring of applied practice. The analytic procedures used within this investigation were not

242 regarded as rigid or static; as Strauss and Corbin (1998) have argued the need for the qualitative

243 analysis process to remain a "free-flowing and flexible creative process, which allows for analysis to

244 be modified until a satisfactory process has been generated in which analysts move quickly back and

245 forth between types of coding, using analytic techniques and procedures freely and in response to the

246 analytic task before analysts" (p. 58). These coding methods allowed the researcher to interact with

247 the data to produce meaningful pieces of information to develop a set of categories and novel

248 relationships which adequately represented what experiences SPCs believed to be essential for

249 ethical practice in applied sport psychology.

250   **Methodological Rigor**

251   With the goal of enhancing the credibility of the research findings, and based on Tracy's

252   (2010) recommendations, the following steps were included to ensure accurate and rigorous findings

253   are presented to the reader. First, a member reflection checking procedure was employed. Verbatim

254   interview transcripts along with the researcher's preliminary interpretations were then sent to each

255   participant for member reflections. During this process participants had the opportunity to determine

256   if the researcher's interpretations of their words within the transcripts were true, accurate, balanced,

257   and respectful (Sparkes & Smith, 2009). However, Smith and McGannon (2017) have recently

258   argued the rigor of member checking procedures, with Thomas (2017) adding further, "there is no

259   evidence that routine member checks enhance the credibility or trustworthiness of qualitative

260   research". Smith and McGannon (2017) highlighted a number of limitations (e.g., epistemological

261   and ontological problems; no possibility of producing theory-free knowledge; researchers have been

262   unable to show how to make contact with the reality). Considering these recent recommendations, it

263   could be argued that the member reflection checking procedures were used as a tool to simply verify

264   what participants said while also offering the opportunity to add any further reflections on the points

265   raised within the interviews. The second step, thick descriptions of extensive participant quotations

266   were included, with the aim of providing the reader with abundant concrete detail that they may

267   come to their own conclusions (Tracy, 2010). These procedures were used to promote individual

268   judgements on the approaches and challenges SPCs face within the real world context of applied

269   sport psychology consultancy (Tracy, 2010).

270   **Results and Discussion**

271   In an effort to avoid repetition, and guided by the emergent categories, the results and

272   discussion sections have been combined. Each of the emergent categories are presented in Tables 1

273   and 2, and then discussed with supporting participant quotes with the aim of giving detailed insight

274   into the ethical challenges SPCs have experienced in their applied practice in elite sport and their

275   engagement in monitoring and supervision of applied practice. The terms supervision and peer

276   supervision/support have often been used interchangeably; however, Andersen (1994) stated that the

277   "primary focus in sport psychology supervision is (or should be) the appropriate, ethical and, it is

278   hoped, beneficial delivery of psychological services to the client or clients" (p. 155). Our findings

279   regarding continued supervision allowed the SPC to develop respectability, accountability and

280   quality control (Andersen & Williams-Rice, 1996). With the process of peer supervision/support

281   being explained as "Informal discussions with professional colleagues" (Winstone & Gervis, 2006,

282   p. 507). However, the focus of the current investigation was not to provide further support for

283   defining these constructs, but rather to highlight experienced SPCs perceptions of, and engagement

284   with, the constructs. Therefore, within this investigation the term supervision is used throughout to

285   refer to both the formal supervision and informal peer support processes. To ensure anonymity,

286   participants were identified with "SPC" followed by an assigned number 1 to 10 (e.g., SPC3).

287   **Ethical challenges to practice**

288   SPCs discussed the range of ethical challenges they encountered in their applied practice. As

289   SPC6 highlighted, "There's a variety of issues [faced by SPCs]. Serious clinical issues, like

290   reporting issues, abuse issues, physical abuse, sexual abuse, as well as recently drug abuse,

291   performance enhancing drugs, and me becoming aware of issues about performance enhancing

292   drugs". Furthermore, SPC10 highlighted the importance of adhering to, "strong ethical guidelines,

293   that you know the client's safety, health, welfare, comes first… and you don't want to use power

294   inappropriately". SPC1 discussed one such situation, stating;

295   One situation with a [sport] parent who was basically showing indicators of emotional abuse

296   towards the player. I did actually seek advice from the child protection office for the National

297   Governing Body on that basis as a means of disclosing and logging the information, that this

298   is the information that I have here, it's up to them how they take it forward.

299   Two categories emerged within SPC discussions on the ethical challenges they encountered in their

300   practice, these included, (1) Challenges to boundaries; and (2) Communication issues (see Table 1

301   for an overview).

302   **Challenges to boundaries.** Challenges to boundaries were found to be an issue that all SPCs

303   had faced during their careers and included: (1) Who is the client?; (2) Relationship boundaries; and

304   (3) Physical attractiveness and contact with clients.

305   *Who is the client?* SPC discussions highlighted the ethical challenges of identifying who is

306   the client they are working with. SPC2 provided an insight into the complexity of this issue, by

307   commenting:

308   The crucial question in all your work, is the ethical issue of who is the client? And that's not

309   always black and white. But the client is quite definitely not simply the person who pays the

310   cheque, that the person who pays the cheque it doesn't make them the client. So if I am doing

311   organisational work then the client is the organisation. If I am doing one to one work then

312   the client is the person. But sometimes the organisational work involves one to one work, so

313   who is the client then? I think that is always a difficult issue and you just have to address it up

314   front.

315   *Relationship boundaries.* SPCs reported facing numerous challenges in maintaining their

316   boundaries of practice. Research has previously discussed how SPCs working in the relaxed and

317   informal sports environment, face more unique challenges to their professional relationship

318   boundaries than their peers working in more traditional applied psychology practices (Brown &

319   Cogan, 2006). The role of the SPC is complex, and on occasion it is not uncommon for the SPC to be

320   working alone with a team, individuals within that team, the coach, and the management team

321   simultaneously; while also travelling, eating and sharing accommodation (Aoyagi & Portenga, 2010;

322   Stapleton et al., 2010). So whose interests are being served? How may this help the client to achieve

323 their goals? What is the potential for client harm in this situation? (Stapleton et al., 2010). It is the

324 responsibility of the SPC to be self-regulating within their position and ensure that they work to

325 abide by the principles of their ethical guidelines and boundaries of client confidentiality.

326   SPCs commented on the challenges they had experienced with maintaining ethical

327 relationship boundaries within their applied practice. SPC8 stated that, "Being too close to athletes.

328 Especially at the early stage of my career I guess you could easily become a friend with the athletes.

329 You're close in age and you show an interest and at one time we just had to say to one another well

330 we can't be friends". A number of SPCs also commented on unethical behaviour they have observed

331 in the field, "other practitioners that have become too friendly, got too close to athletes… it's so

332 unpleasant" (SPC5), while SPC6 commented,

333   Issues of colleagues that I've seen doing what I think are unethical things, what's my

334   obligation in that situation? Whether it's improper relationships with athletes or serving your

335   own interest as a consultant over the interest of the athlete, either through the way you talk

336   about a situation or not… what do I do in this situation?

337   Despite having clear ethical guidelines from their accrediting/certification bodies, which are

338 in place to offer greater accountability and protection to the client, it is worrying that a number of

339 these experienced SPCs had witnessed instances of unethical practices in the field. What processes

340 are in place to assist SPCs when they see evidence of such practices? How do we ensure ethical

341 standards are being enforced?

342   Furthermore, SPC7 commented that it is unethical to seek professional gains/benefits from

343 consulting relationships: for example, "becoming their friend, using them for personal gain…I work

344 with so and so, here's my book. Or I work with so and so, you should hire me too. I helped so and

345 so win the gold medal, I can help you too… I think you want to be aware of taking claim for the

346 athlete's success, I think that's an ethical issue." Sharp and Hodge (2014) have previously

347 commented on the positive impact of 'friendly, but not friends' behaviour demonstrated by SPCs

348   towards their clients, which aids the development of the consulting relationship. They argued the

349   need for the effective SPC to be personable and non-intrusive, while also setting clear boundaries for

350   the consulting relationship. However, the behaviour described by SPC7 appears to contravene APA

351   Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct standard 3.06 which states, "Psychologists

352   refrain from taking on a professional role when personal, scientific, professional, legal, financial or

353   other interests or relationships could reasonably be expected to (1) impair their objectivity,

354   competence or effectiveness in performing their functions as psychologists or (2) expose the person

355   or organization with whom the professional relationship exists to harm or exploitation"

356   (http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/) . The behaviour also appears to flout AASP's Code of Ethics

357   Principle D – Respect for People's Rights and Dignity. Where specifically the SPC does not appear

358   to respect the rights of individuals to privacy, and confidentiality

359   (https://appliedsportpsych.org/site/assets/files/30025/cmpccandidatehandbook2018-06.pdf).

360   However, SPC6 offered the following advice; "[you need to] have some clarity about where the

361   relationship will go at the front. Going into the relationship with the end in mind in terms of what

362   you hope can happen. Be clear of your own personal boundaries, how the relationship is going to

363   work". In addition, Stapleton et al. (2010) recommended that SPCs maintain professional alertness

364   to the development of interactions and relationships to maintain professional boundaries.

365   *Physical attractiveness and contact with clients.* SPCs discussed physical contact with clients

366   as another ethical boundary concern. As SPC3 stated,

367   Sometimes even a male-female you have to be able to put your arm around your client, you

368   know, when there is tears or whatever else is, and say well done, good effort, you couldn't

369   have done any more, and for that not to be felt inappropriate.

370   Moreover, SPC7 highlighted the need for SPCs to also be aware of potential physical

371   attraction to clients, stating, "when you work with athletes you work with very beautiful people, so

372   certainly I think it's useful to be aware of the physical attraction you might feel towards an athlete."

373   Previous research within the field of psychotherapy has reported that 87% of psychotherapists, have

374   reported being attracted to their clients (Pope, Keith-Speigel, & Tabachnick, 1986). The non-

375   traditional working environment of the SPC might also test the ethical boundaries of any SPC. There

376   is a need to be aware of how we feel about the client when working with on the side of a swimming

377   pool, running track or gymnasium where the appropriate dress attire for the client may be minimal.

378   Haberl and Peterson (2006) argue in the non-traditional environment it is essential for the ethical

379   SPC to develop an awareness and insight into their personal feelings and discuss and process these

380   through the supervision process.

381   **Communication issues**

382   These SPCs reported regularly encountering challenges with respect to maintaining ethical

383   communication between clients and their support networks. SPCs discussed two supporting sub-

384   categories; (1) confidentiality; and (2) maintaining open lines of communication.

385   *Confidentiality.* SPCs were very clear that, "the key bit about confidentiality is whoever you

386   are working with whether they are the client or not has agreed to the release of confidential

387   information. If they don't agree to it, even if they are not the client, you are still on ethically dodgy

388   ground if you release information" (SPC2). "My clear responsibility is to work with athletes, and that

389   they know nothing will be revealed to the coach unless we agree that that would be useful." (SPC8).

390   This provides further context for Gould's (in Fifer et al., 2008) previous discussion on the

391   importance of maintaining confidentiality. He commented that athletes will test their SPCs to see if

392   they will maintain the boundaries of confidentiality, a process that will help the athlete to develop

393   trust in their SPC.

394   Working with both individual athletes and the team in which they are a member can create

395   challenges for the SPC. SPC1 reflected that, "it became crystal clear [early in the relationship] that

396   the coaches wanted me to break confidentiality, which obviously I never did, which pissed them off

397   big style. There was always that implicit pressure even when they knew the score about ethics". In

398   such circumstances having clearly set out their limits for communication of information, knowing

399   who the client is, and boundaries of confidentiality to all involved within the team, enables the SPC

400   to maintain their ethical practice.

401   SPCs provided a number of open and honest reflections into the challenges they faced, as SPC3

402   commented:

403   I remember once, an athlete came back to me and said that 'I'd asked you not to say that!'

404   What had happened was I didn't say to the coach that this person had said, I said as I say

405   anonymously it has been said. But the coach put two and two together and unfortunately had

406   four that time, and then did something that was a bit inappropriate. However, the point being

407   that it was traceable back to me and all you can do is put it on the table and apologise

408   basically. And say look I have your best interests at heart. I'm sorry. And then I obviously

409   talked to the coach that instant and we got it sorted you so we knew for future reference,

410   because obviously it compromised my relationship. And it was a mistake. (SPC 3)

411   SPC5 discussed the reality of maintaining confidentiality, stating that;

412   I have one case which was one athlete was ill, and didn't want to tell their coach that she was

413   ill. I encouraged her to tell the doctor, she didn't want to tell the doctor because if she knew

414   that the doctor would tell the coach, which he's obliged to do. But it ended up that she was so

415   sick that she couldn't perform which was a good thing actually, but that was a problem for

416   me because then it was not any danger for her, but she would have affected the performance

417   of the team so that was hard not to tell. Of course, when the coach knows afterwards that I

418   knew they get very upset and I say "well that's how it is". So that was a bit problematic.

419   *Maintaining open lines of communication.* SPCs offered the following suggestions for

420   maintaining confidentiality, yet enhancing open communication while working within the elite high-

421   performance environment. SPC1 commented, "I'm certainly the kind of person who will always

422   maintain confidentiality and have that confidentiality default, but I'm more akin to information being

423   open and shared with everybody of a performance enhancing nature" (SPC1). "I'm generally fairly

424   transparent [with information]. If it's something that I think that we should take to the coach, I'll ask

425   the athlete for permission first of all… I try and work with them to take it further forward" (SPC5).

426   Whatever approach SPCs decide to adopt towards confidentiality in their practice, it is important that

427   they clearly discuss this issue with their client, and that they gain the client's consent before planning

428   what, if any, information will be shared, how this information will be shared, to whom and for what

429   purpose the information will be shared. SPC10 discussed the process they followed with clients in

430   the sharing of information;

431   With everybody I ask if I can talk to their coach and debrief their coach, if I'm lucky enough

432   to work with their coach. But I'll have a red flag rule. You see a red flag means you don't

433   want anybody to know this. So I'll put [in] a boundary, in that you control our meetings and

434   the information flow that leaves the meeting, as long as it doesn't interfere with your health

435   and well-being (SPC10).

436   However, SPC9 warned that,

437   Even within an organisation I've made the mistake sometimes of just mentioning a name

438   because everybody knows so and so's hurt. Then somebody would [inform me] even within

439   our family [organisation] you can't use names, and it seems so stupid, 'cause everybody

440   knows who the hell we're talking about.

441   The 10 SPCs involved in the current investigation had extensive experience working in elite high

442   performance settings, yet despite this experience they regularly faced challenges around maintaining

443 ethical confidential communication between clients and their support networks. Confidentiality is a

444 vital component for the development of trust within the consulting relationship. It is therefore

445 important that SPCs adhere to their accrediting body's guidelines for maintaining confidentiality,

446 while also regularly reminding the athletes they are working with of their agreed upon boundaries of

447 confidentiality.

448 **Engagement and monitoring of applied practice**

449   Four sub-categories emerged in support of this supervision, these included; (1) Supervision is

450 an essential component of applied practice; (2) Supervision enables SPCs to monitor boundaries of

451 applied practice; (3) Supervision is a support system; and (4) Supervision aids SPCs to get to know

452 themselves and care for themselves.

453   *Supervision is essential.* These 10 SPCs viewed supervision as "tremendously important"

454 (SPC4), and "tremendously useful, it's priceless, a lifesaver" (SPC7). Furthermore, SPC6

455 commented that;

456   I wouldn't want to want to operate without that, because it's too easy to get into trouble if

457   you are completely on your own. Especially I find as I get older, and more experienced in this

458   field it's easy to take the short cut, I'm pretty sure I know exactly what is going on here.

459   Whereas, it's always helpful, when you have to explain it, and someone says "how come you

460   didn't or why not" and those sorts of basic questions that make you stop for a minute and

461   make you go, ok wait a minute maybe I really need to rethink this. And maybe there is a

462   conflict here in terms of my role with the coach, and my role with the athlete. Maybe I need

463   to be careful a little bit about how I am proceeding.

464   In addition, four SPCs commented on the need for regular contact with a supervisor to be

465 made mandatory. "I think it should be mandatory actually that we have this mentor, this supervisor

466 we go to" (SPC1). SPC5 further explained, "I think we don't have a good enough structure here in

467 the UK… It's the regularity of contact and I think that it should be a mandatory requirement with

468 real clear guidelines set down but that escapes us completely". SPC8 highlighted the differences they

469 found between working as a psychologist and within sport psychology, stating;

470   That's the difference between being a psychologist and coming from a sport science

471   background, the psychologists are really trained in that [supervision] and that's really a huge

472   part of their training… So we got it [supervision] there, but not as a sport psychology

473   consultant that's only when I've started cognitive therapy. But we don't have it yet as part of

474   the sport psychology program. I think that's a big deficiency of that program that has to be

475   part of it.

476   Van Raalte and Andersen (2000) have previously argued that, "Supervision is something

477 sport psychologists need to be giving and receiving as long as they practice" (p.154). Despite the

478 extensive knowledge, experience, and flexibility in their approach to their applied practice, the SPCs

479 within the current investigation continued to engage in the supervision process, as they believed it to

480 be an essential component of their applied practice -- highlighting that supervision is a career long

481 process and not simply for those at the early stages of their careers. However, these findings contrast

482 greatly to the findings of Watson, Zizzi, Etzel, and Lubker (2004) and Winstone and Gervis (2006)

483 who reported that more that 75% of AASP professional accredited/certified practitioners were not

484 being formally supervised, and 33% of UK accredited SPCs had never received formal supervision.

485 More recently McEwan and Tod (2015) commented that the SPCs within their investigation had not

486 continued to be supervised formally following the completion of training and certification. Despite

487 the current findings and the fact that supervision is viewed as one of the most important components

488 in the training of SPCs, the continuation of supervision once training is complete warrants further

489 research investigation.

490   *Monitor boundaries.* SPCs within the current investigation believed engaging in supervision

491   enabled them to monitor their boundaries of applied practice. SPC2 discussed the importance of

492   being, "clear [about] your own personal boundaries, how the relationship is going to work… Make

493   that more effective whether that's the confidentiality stuff or how you are going to handle

494   communication with coaches and team mates". SPC3 commented that supervision is beneficial as,

495   "It's usually to straighten my thinking out. To gain some understanding of boundaries, to work out

496   what's important… I'm actually very, very good at taking enormous big complex problems and

497   going that's what you need to do… do that and everything will get sorted".   In addition, SPC6

498   stated, "for me it's very helpful to talk out and supervision gives me a chance to figure out what I

499   actually think". Despite the extensive experience of the SPCs, they noted that, "it's funny even

500   though I've got a lot of experience I still call on my colleagues for verification of my boundaries

501   from my own personal perspective" (SPC9). SPC2 further explained;

502   The issue around your boundaries of expertise [is very important]…You frequently end up in

503   a gray area where you're saying how much do I know about this, and it's you they want to

504   work with, they don't want you to get somebody else in every time you ask a difficult

505   question, they want you to help them solve this problem… It's where you come back to that

506   motive, if your motive is to help people, and naturally even though you know less about this

507   than all of these people you could refer to them, you're confident that they will get more help

508   from you than all those people.

509   Van Raalte and Andersen (2000) have previously argued that the purpose of supervision is to

510   "develop competent and ethical practitioners as well as to ensure the care and welfare of athlete-

511   clients" (p.154). Furthermore, researchers have previously acknowledged that following their initial

512   training, and as their individual careers progress there is reduced external control, increased client

513   experience, and individuation of processes; consequently SPCs become more flexible in their applied

514   practice (Todd, Andersen, & Marchant, 20011). The SPCs within the current investigation believed

515   that engaging in regular supervision helped them to continually monitor their boundaries of practice

516   and ensured that these were remaining consistently ethical.

517   *Support system.* By engaging in the supervision process SPCs felt that they were supported

518   by their supervisor, and discussed how a supervisor, "offered perspective… offers reassurance"

519   (SPC1), while also helping SPCs to "keep my sanity" (SPC5). SPCs observed that "you always find

520   that as a sport psychologist, you can get quite isolated, I think that's often the nature of the role. You

521   are often the link between the management and the athletes" (SPC3); while SPC5 commented that,

522   "you need it [supervision] for the support, because you're absorbing so much but also it's there to

523   challenge you and up skill you and improve your practice". Furthermore, SPC5 discussed how they

524   reached out to their supervisor for support while working away at a training camp;

525   I had [been working with] a coach that would routinely just explode every now and then. He

526   was never exploding at me, he was just really frustrated, needed to explode at somebody and

527   I appeared to be the safest source for that. On this particular occasion he was exploding and it

528   was in a hotel foyer and athletes walked past and I tried to quash it and say "hey look let's

529   take this outside" or "let's talk about this later", but he kept on and it was just unfair on the

530   athletes walking past and it was unfair on me to have that happen. I was absolutely fuming

531   because I had to kind of keep my cool, so I then phoned [supervisor] and had quite an

532   emotional moment with him, but he was really helpful in just giving me that perspective

533   again, remembering what I was there to do, and that was really helpful.

534   While self-reliance is an essential skill for all SPCs, resolving personal and professional

535   problems in isolation can be challenging. SPCs within the current investigation viewed supervision

536   as a support system where their supervisors and peers was able to provide them with advice and

537   reassurance. Hays (2006) has previously argued that it is essential that SPCs develop and maintain a

538   peer culture. She believed it essential that SPCs have a support network of likeminded practitioners

539   involved in similar work who the SPC can turn to for peer support and supervision. In their

540   examination of sport psychologists sources of social support McCormack et al. (2015) reported

541   informal peer social support as being key for SPCs to maintain their well-being. SPCs within the

542   current investigation viewed supervision as a support system to help provide them with reassurance

543   that what they were doing in their applied practice was effective.

544   *Self-care and awareness.* Through the supervision process SPCs reported that they were able

545   "to get to know yourself better to see who you are, why and how you respond, and what you actually

546   do when you are with a client… you get much more self-awareness (SPC8). Self-awareness was

547   believed to be "extremely important to know who you are in that [applied] setting" (SPC5), as one

548   SPC stated;

549   Perhaps on a similar basis to the way you work with the athletes, [supervision] becomes a

550   mirror in which you see yourself. Through that seeing, you also see opportunities for growth

551   and development. It allows you to have someone who understands which gives you this

552   shared unity, which I think is very powerful. It's a helpful tool, to have a consultation with

553   someone who is in the field, who understands what it's like to work at the Olympic Games

554   and how that is so different from working in an office (SPC4).

555   Researchers have previously highlighted that experienced SPCs regularly engage in self-

556   reflection with their colleagues and clients in order to enhance their professional development

557   (Partington & Orlick, 1991; Simons & Andersen, 1995). Yet Winstone and Gervis (2006) have

558   argued that, "There is no evidence to date that has informed us how sport psychologists develop and

559   maintain their self-awareness in practice" (p.495). The experienced SPCs within the current

560   investigation believed that engaging in supervision served as a safe yet challenging system where

561   they felt supported to engage and develop their self-awareness around their applied practice. The

562   comments of the SPCs involved in the current investigation provide further support for Cropley,

563   Hanton, Miles and Niven (2010) who argued that the process of supported reflective learning helps

564   SPCs to construct and reconstruct their knowledge based on the experiences they have gained.

565   **Selection of supervisors**

566   When discussing how they selected their supervisors, these SPCs reported that they self-

567   selected their supervisors from colleagues they trusted and respected, calling on experts as and when

568   required. Three sub-categories emerged in support of this category; (1) Self-selection, (2) Trusted

569   and respected colleagues, and (3) Experts when required.

570   *Self-selection.* SPCs reported that selection of supervisors was, "a little bit self-selection. I

571   trust them, they trust me, they appreciate what I do, I appreciate what they do. But the big one is that

572   they're good (SPC10). One SPC commented that the self-selection is based on the development of a

573   "personal relationship, I think that is part of it. Some colleagues are based internationally and do the

574   same work and seem to share a similar philosophy, in how you view the work, and the ethical nature

575   of just their being" (SPC7). The SPCs were self-selecting supervisors they wished to work with who

576   they believed would help improve their effectiveness. Previous research has highlighted that "those

577   individuals working within the field of psychology typically favour working with others, generating

578   and exchanging new ideas, receiving personal feedback and considering situations from various

579   perspectives" (Tod, 2007, p.103).

580   *Trusted and respected colleagues.* SPCs also reported the need to "trust colleagues" (SPC7),

581   "I trust them or I respect them. You know the trust is important if you're reaching out to a colleague

582   you need to know that they know how it works in terms of confidentiality" (SPC6). The SPCs

583   within the current investigation had a number of people they turned to for support; as SPC9 stated, "I

584   trust the wisdom and experience of a number of people, and call on them". Furthermore, SPC2

585   reported that, "I actually have a lot people who I can talk stuff through, who make very helpful

586   comments and ask very helpful questions … But number one, I have to be able to respect their

587   views; and trust them, number two". These findings supported those previously reported by Tod et

588   al., (2011) who reported that for qualified SPCs supervision and collegial interaction with

589   likeminded colleagues were essential. However, Winstone and Gervis (2006) warned SPCs that

590   unless both the SPC and their trusted colleague had previous experiences of exploring and sharing

591   the personal and professional challenges they were facing, it was unlikely that an effective and

592   supportive supervisory relationship could develop that encouraged open and honest reflective

593   discussions.

594   *Call on experts as and when required.* SPCs reported that they had a number of individuals

595   they could turn to when needed, beyond their trusted peers, who had expertise relevant to their

596   applied practice consulting needs. As SPC10 explained, "I'm looking for somebody smart in that

597   area, approachable, who also knows me well enough". SPC9 commented on working with a, "great

598   group of people who I respect [who] I really like as individuals and I really trust their experiences.

599   Some are diverse in what they've done and not all things are clinical, many are just performance

600   enhancement based".

601   I'm lucky enough now I have some friends that are clinicians. I have some friends, so "hey I

602   think this girl has an eating disorder, how can I find out, how do I approach it, how do I do

603   it?" You know, "I'm not sure with this client if I'm going off into clinical and I'm not trained,

604   or counselling, and here's the situation can you tell me? (SPC10).

605   SPC6 explained how they sought expert support, and stated that;

606   There are some specific cases where somebody has expertise outside of [work place] staff

607   where I have reached out; … I have a good colleague and friend who is a specialist in

608   neuropsychology; so when we are dealing with a lot of concussion issues in one sport and we

609   were talking of doing pretesting for getting baselines for everybody. For specific input,

610   someone who is really good with eating disorders, [I] would reach out and consult based on

611   their expertise.

612   The comments from these SPCs highlights their strategy of self-selecting peer

613   support/supervisors from colleagues and experts they trusted and respected. This finding provided

614   support for the recommendations from Andersen et al. (2000) who commented on the need to

615   "cultivate a rich referral network of expert nutritionists, physical therapists…" (p.17). To date there

616   is limited insight into the supervision process that experienced SPCs engage in post

617   accreditation/certification and training. However, the current results provide support for the

618   comments made by Winstone and Gervis (2006) who commented on the need to consider the skills,

619   training, and personality of any colleague who SPCs are considering engaging with in the

620   supervision process.

621   When asked what if any advice they would give to SPCs about choosing a supervisor, SPCs

622   recommended, "Find the best people you can to supervise you, read the best material, come to APA

623   or AASP depending on your needs. I'm a big believer if you want to be good [then] go work with

624   somebody good… [But] They've got to fit your personality" (SPC10).

625   Have a supervisor who's honest and… able to really pick on your weak spots as well and not

626   only be polite but actually be quite good at doing that because I think you need to handle that

627   as a consultant at the highest level as well. If you want to work with the elite athletes you

628   need to also be able to handle some of these issues in a good way (SPC8).

629   **Structure of supervision**

630   The structure of the supervision undertaken by the experienced SPCs varied greatly and

631   included the following supporting sub-categories; (1) Informal; (2) As and when needed; (3) Regular

632   case base discussions; and (4) Observation of practice.

633   *Informal*. Six SPCs reported that the structure of their work with supervisors was "very

634   informal rather than [in any] formal sense" (SPC1). SPC2 further explained;

635   It's completely informal. It always starts something like this, either I ring them up, or I see

636   them, and I say "can I just pinch half an hour off you at some point?" And then, when we've

637   got it, I say "ok, I just want to get a bit of help with something". Just talk through whatever it

638   is. And it just happens; I guess they coach me, just like I coach them, that's what we do.

639   Despite the unstructured nature of the supervision process, SPC7 noted that;

640   It's on a need basis, but actually it should be structured… because you need your training

641   again when its structured. When you do it on a regular basis it has more of a training factor

642   than when you do it every so often, or just on a needs basis. I think we don't do enough of

643   that, to be quite frank. So yeah it should be structured a little more.

644   These findings supported similar conclusions from McEwan and Tod (2015) who reported that

645   clinical and counselling psychologists found group reflection sessions regarding their current work

646   with colleagues and peers to be invaluable. However, Winstone and Gervis (2006) offered a word of

647   caution, stating that the whole point of supervision is not just to provide a first aid service when an

648   SPC is struggling, but to provide a rigorous support process that both challenges and develops the

649   SPCs to ensure they are truly effective.

650   *As and when needed.* The informal structure of peer supervision/support links with the sub-

651   category of SPCs engaging in supervision 'as and when needed'. SPCs noted that;

652   It's not structured, as in I ring them twice a week but it's, you know they are there when you

653   want them, and when they want you. They are just on the end of a phone and you know

654   probably once every two or three months, we'll have a chat and if there is particular issues or

655   if there is something that I have felt uncomfortable with, I perhaps ask for a different

656   perspective… or that I struggle resolving. Sometimes I reflect on what I have done with

657   people (SPC3).

658   *Regular case-based discussions.* In contrast four SPCs discussed engaging in case-based

659 discussions. However, SPC discussions highlighted flexibility around the frequencies of these case

660 discussions, which included, "you know it's rather frequent… once a week" (SPC9), "Once a

661 month" (SPC8). SPC discussions within supervisions took on, "the structure [of] discussing cases,

662 the good, the bad, and the ugly, so to speak. Sometimes it's obviously when the crisis situation

663 arrives, then it becomes particularly important to have that network of trusted colleagues to get input

664 and advice" (SPC7). SPC8 explained the frequency and structure of supervision stating;

665   We meet as colleagues once a month. Actually I have two different groups that I meet with. I

666   meet with my colleagues at the [place of employment] and then I meet with colleagues I was

667   trained with as a cognitive therapist. We also meet once a month and then we can bring

668   videos of ourselves with a client, we discuss it and then we discuss different cases. They're

669   extremely useful I think to be able to discuss different things you have done and approaches

670   and things you just have experienced in consulting.

671 Along similar lines SPC6 explained;

672   We regularly do peer consultation. Essentially when we come up with one case either that's a

673   serious issue where we need to do due diligence to check in or because we [were] a little

674   shook up by it; 'cos boy this is a tough one', or we just a little bit stumped. I can't imagine

675   doing this work without colleagues I could bounce things off of on a regular basis. And it's

676   not something that we need to do every week.

677   However, SPCs reported that maintaining regular, structured supervision was challenging.

678 "[Supervision] happens every couple of weeks as a minimum... and depends what I've kind of been

679   working on. The challenges are when you are away a lot and trying to make that happen

680   [logistically]" (SPC5). In addition, SPC6 discussed;

681   In terms of the specifics of here's the case, "here's the situation with this athlete -- what

682   would you do?", that's more irregular. We are trying to get that every single time we meet,

683   but we find, we should meet every week, but we travel so much it's hard to coordinate that.

684   These results highlighted that although each of these 10 experienced SPCs engaged with

685   supervision there was a wide range of supervision structures. These SPCs worked at the elite high-

686   performance level and one of the demands of working at the elite level is the requirement for

687   frequent travel with athletes and teams. Finding time to engage in supervision was found to be a

688   challenge for these 10 SPCs. Previous research has reported similar findings highlighting that time

689   can be a challenge for SPC engagement in supervision (e.g., Van Raalte & Andersen, 2000).

690   **General Discussion**

691   These results highlighted that despite the extensive experience of these 10 SPCs, and the elite

692   high-performance level at which they worked, they still encountered regular challenges regarding

693   their professional boundaries and communication. Furthermore, despite the variety of supervision

694   structures and the individuals with whom they engaged in supervision, these experienced SPCs

695   believed that supervision was essential, if not mandatory. To date there is limited discussion in the

696   sport psychology literature regarding the process of supervision for SPCs once they progress to post-

697   training and post-accreditation. The current results highlighted that despite the substantial consulting

698   experience of these 10 SPCs they believed it was essential to engage in supervision to ensure regular

699   monitoring of their applied practice. Within clinical and counselling psychology formal supervision

700   is a mandatory requirement for accreditation/certification and continued practice – so the question to

701   be posed is, should this be the case for those working within applied sport psychology as well? To

702   date the accrediting/certifiying bodies within sport psychology have not provided specific guidelines

703   for supervision post-training and post-accreditation/certification. Does post-

704   accreditation/certification supervision in sport psychology need to be formalised?; since the informal

705   'as and when' supervision process engaged in by these 10 SPCs the appeared to meet their individual

706   SPC needs? Further research is needed to assist in the development of guidelines for the supervision

707   of SPCs post-training and post-accreditation/certification.

708   The small, select sample size of 10 SPCs interviewed can be viewed as both a strength and a

709   limitation. The considerable experience level of these SPCs and the elite high-performance level at

710   which they regularly worked was a real strength. Furthermore, the participant's openness during the

711   interview process highlighted the genuine and authentic responses reported. These SPCs were open

712   about the ethical challenges they had experienced in their applied practice in elite sport, and their

713   engagement in the monitoring and supervision of their applied practice. These honest personal

714   accounts of the ethical challenges faced and the use of supervision to help monitor their practice

715   helps raise the awareness and understanding of supervision for SPCs working at all levels in sport

716   psychology. The majority of SPCs involved were white males, and any future research should

717   investigate any possible gender and ethnicity differences with the ethical challenges faced and

718   potential differences with engagement in the supervision process. However, the results of the current

719   investigation raise awareness for all SPCs working in applied practice of the need to adhere to their

720   ethical guidelines and monitor the effectiveness of their applied practice.

721

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Table 1.	
Ethical challenges to practice emergent categories and sub-categories	
Categories	Sub-categories
Challenges to boundaries	Who is the client?
	Relationship boundaries
	Physical attractiveness and contact with clients
Communication issues	Confidentiality
	Open communication

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Table 2. Supervision emergent categories and sub-categories	
Categories	Sub-categories
Supervision is essential for applied practice as it enabled SPCs to monitor their practice and get to know themselves and care for themselves.	Supervision is essential Monitor boundaries Support system and provides support Self-Care and awareness
Self-select peer support/supervisors from colleagues they trust and respect.	Self-selection Trusted and Respected colleagues Call on experts as and when required
Variety of supervision structures.	Unstructured and informal As and when needed Regular contact case base discussions Observation of practice

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