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ISSP position stand: competent supervision in sport psychology

Artur Poczwadowski ^a, Mark B. Andersen ^{b,c}, Judy L. Van Raalte ^d,
Chris Harwood ^{e,*}, Gangyan Si ^f, Tshepang Tshube ^g and Franco Noce ^h

^aGraduate School of Professional Psychology, University of Denver, Denver, CO, USA; ^bHalmstad University, Halmstad, Sweden; ^cInstitute for Social Neuroscience, Melbourne, Australia; ^dSpringfield College, Springfield, MA, USA; ^eSchool of Sport, Exercise & Health Sciences, Loughborough University, UK; ^fHong Kong Sports Institute, Hong Kong, People's Republic of China; ^gDepartment of Sport Science, Faculty of Education, University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana; ^hSchool of Physical Education, Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, Brasil

ABSTRACT

Supervision enhances professional functioning, helps ensure quality services, and fills a gatekeeping function for the profession. This International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP) Position Stand synthesises the most pertinent literature on supervision practices relevant to sport psychology (SP), builds on the collective supervision experience of the authors and the present ISSP Managing Council, and offers recommendations for competent, ethical, and culturally safe supervision. Specifically, after defining supervision and describing supervision models and their relational features, we review the scholarly contributions in the areas of supervision content and methods (including tele-supervision), along with cultural, linguistic, ethical, and legal considerations. We conclude with a set of nine postulates that are further operationalised through recommendations for competent supervision practices.



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Supervision is central to the development of professional practitioners in sport psychology (SP) and is intimately linked to the quality of professional training aimed at achieving necessary competencies (Andersen et al., 1994). More specifically, supervision is essential in both enhancing professional functioning and the quality of services, as well as allowing for gatekeeping of the profession. Major focal points of supervision are: (a) the immediate welfare of the clients (e.g., athletes, teams, coaches) the supervisees serve, (b) the growth and development of the supervisee into a competent practitioner, and (c) the welfare interests of the public in the long term. Because professionalisation of SP has expanded globally, the profession entry benchmarks have risen to ensure best practices and ethical conduct. These advancements in professionalisation have also coincided with recently increased mobility and transnational trends in sport, in general, and in the profession of SP, specifically. Thoughtful discussions about intercultural effectiveness (e.g., Ryba

CONTACT Artur Poczwadowski  artur.poczwadowski@du.edu  Graduate School of Professional Psychology, University of Denver, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208, USA

*Present address: Department of Sport Science, Nottingham Trent University, UK

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et al., 2018) and cultural competence in SP (e.g., Ryba et al., 2013) have been initiated but have not yet explored supervision within transnational and intercultural contexts beyond highlighting its obvious importance in the professional training of sport psychologists. What can frequently escape the sharp focus of recommendations for ethical practice is that already qualified SP practitioners should continue with regular supervision throughout their careers.

Concurrently and complementarily to the developments outlined above, well thought-out quantity (hours of supervision) and quality parameters (type/kind) for competent supervision have been mandated by some national, regional, and international credentialing programmes offering certification, registry, or chartering (see the joint position stand of key international organisations on credentialing practices and standards [Schinke et al., 2018]). Schinke and colleagues postulated six directions to guide further discussions about credentialing competent SP practitioners with clear commitment to ethical training and supervision: (a) accreditation systems develop over time; (b) educational opportunities in SP must be offered in different formats; (c) certification and registry systems support ethical training and supervision; (d) cultural competency is necessary; (e) SP competencies should meet scientific, practice, and ethical standards and the needs of SP consumers; and (f) the role of universities in educating SP practitioners is necessary for ongoing development of the field. These postulates aim to integrate and balance localised cultural praxes with global, more universal guidelines. In this ISSP Position Stand, we outline the most pertinent scholarly work on supervision practices in SP. First, we define supervision, review supervision models, and accentuate the role of supervisor-supervisee relationships. Next, we discuss essential contributions in the areas of supervision content, methods, cultural safety, and ethics. Finally, we propose a set of nine postulates of competent supervision and provide specific recommendations for supervision in SP.

Supervision defined

Supervision can be defined as “the action, process, or occupation of supervising, especially a critical watching and directing (as of activities or a course of action)” (Merriam-Webster, 2023). Within the field of SP, supervision is an interpersonal process that extends over time in which a member of the profession (usually an experienced practitioner) provides education and training to support another member of the profession who is delivering services to clients (Van Raalte & Andersen, 2014). A successful supervisory relationship includes self-assessment, observation, evaluation, feedback, acquisition of knowledge and skills, and the support and development of supervisee self-efficacy, which result (one hopes) in supervisees who work in an ethical, legal, and professional manner (Falender & Shafranske, 2021; Van Raalte & Andersen, 2021). One of the defining aspects of quality supervision is that it promotes and protects the well-being of clients, the profession, and society (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019; Falender & Shafranske, 2021).

Supervision is similar to consultation and mentoring, and all three involve: (a) sharing expertise and knowledge, (b) providing advice and counsel, and (c) challenging and supporting a colleague or a person working to become a full member of the profession. Consultants and mentors differ from supervisors in that they do not have monitoring or

gatekeeping responsibilities regarding protecting clients and the public. Unlike consultants and mentors, supervisors take on legal responsibility for their supervisees' work.

Supervision is an applied activity, implemented in different cultures and contexts around the world (Van Raalte & Andersen, 2021). Across cultures and contexts, supervisors and supervisees have individual and joint responsibilities in the supervisory relationship (Van Raalte & Andersen, 2014). The supervisor should be professionally competent, grounded in ethical practice, and guided by current research and knowledge of supervision (Falender & Shafranske, 2021). Academic coursework related to supervision, ongoing continuing education, and peer supervision are ways that supervisors can develop and maintain their supervisory skills. Both supervisors and supervisees engage in ethical practice, bi-directional evaluation of the supervision process, and self-reflection (Van Raalte & Andersen, 2021). Mutual engagement in these tasks occurs as the supervisory relationship is established, maintained, and repaired as necessary. Finally, supervisees have obligations to prepare for supervision, to honestly share their experiences, to not conceal information about their applied work, and to seek to develop as ethical professionals.

Developmental models of supervision

Among the theoretical SP supervision frameworks, developmental models offer some practical and conceptually accessible guidelines for supervision regardless of the supervisors' primary educational backgrounds (e.g., psychology, counselling, sport science). Developmental models are compatible with major models of supervision (e.g., cognitive, behavioural, phenomenological, psychodynamic) as well as systemic, feminist, constructivist, narrative, solution-focused, integrative, and process supervision models (Andersen & Williams-Rice, 1996; Bernard & Goodyear, 2019; Shapiro & Poczwardowski, 2020), incorporating the level or stage of professional development of a supervisee into an individualised approach that reflects the most pronounced learning needs at each level or stage. Further, they are usually derived from the idea that the supervisee has the capability to develop from novice to expert with the guidance of the supervisor. Two important representatives of developmental models of supervision are the integrated developmental model of supervision (IDM; Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010a) and the six-phase developmental model of supervision (Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003). This section focuses on the IDM applied to SP supervision because of its recommended usefulness (Salvador, 2016; Silva et al., 2007) and wide use of IDM in supervision of psychological training (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019).

Additionally, integrated with IDM in this section will be recommendations for supervisor cultural competencies aligned with the multicultural integrated supervision model (MISM; Mitchell & Butler, 2021), which is a multicultural extension of IDM. Two tenets of MISM are relevant to this discussion: (a) "all interactions are multicultural in nature and require consideration and/or discussion" and (b) "supervisee counselling and multicultural efficacy functions along a developmental continuum" (p. 49).

The IDM consists of levels 1, 2, 3, and 3i (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010a). In each of these levels, the supervisees' self-other awareness, motivation, and autonomy are used to assess their professional growth. In level 1, supervisees are characterised as possessing limited skills and experience, having high anxiety and motivation, being usually highly self-focused, and being dependent on the supervisor for directions. A typical supervisee at

level 1 may be a beginning master's student in an applied SP programme. Some common problems at this level involve the applied work not going in the direction the supervisee planned, difficulties in establishing a working relationship with the athlete (or client), and how to enhance the coach-athlete relationships within the team. Supervisors for this level could provide structure to alleviate supervisees' anxiety (e.g., through a didactic approach and brainstorming of case conceptualisations and interventions), actively support the supervisees through the initial stages of their SP services, and initiate conversations regarding ethnicity and gender identity (or other cultural differences) as relevant to their clients and themselves, and their supervisor-supervisee relationships. One way to competently support supervisees at this level is to build a good working relationship with them and engage them in multiple discussions of relevant SP concepts and multicultural considerations (in addition to the listed above) as directly applicable to their current SP practice experiences.

In level 2, supervisees demonstrate more experience in applied practice and are in transition toward developing their own autonomy (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010a). The distinctive characteristic of this level is the vacillation of supervisees' self-other awareness, motivation, and autonomy. A typical supervisee at this level may be an advanced master's student (i.e., 2nd year student in a two-year programme, entry level practitioner with a master's degree) or a doctoral student. It is difficult, if not impossible, to incorporate all nuances and differences in the level of emerging or achieved competencies across countries. Nonetheless, the common issues a supervisee confronts at level 2 are often around questions such as suitability of their theoretical approaches and intervention skills, professional ethics, or athlete mental health status. Stoltenberg and McNeill suggested that at this level supervisors use more facilitative and less didactic strategies to further develop supervisee competence and independence. Supervisors should still be supportive, appreciative, and prescriptive at this stage (Salvador, 2016). One helpful strategy is to assist in reviewing various SP models of performance enhancement and service delivery when discussing the supervisee's current case. Additionally, supervisors' use of self-disclosure, such as sharing their previous working experience with these SP models, may further facilitate supervisee progress to the next level. Finally, building on the initial introduction of cultural issues at level 1 (e.g., developing working alliance with a client of different race, religion, socio-economic status) and expected competencies (e.g., cultural sensitivity), exploring in greater depth the multicultural context is another recommended supervisory practice. For example, a client (e.g., a young female soccer player in a small club) might be the only non-native speaker on the team. Understanding the club's history and resources (e.g., pairing international players with more advanced athletes) could be an important step forward in guiding the client to meaningful sources of support. Other areas of explorations in level 2 are, for example, supervisee's professional growth, client experience in sport and in the relationship with the supervisee, initial multicultural insights into case conceptualisation, supervisor-supervisee relationships as intersection of cultural identities, suggesting culturally attuned interventions, and introducing the parallel processes (as surfaced in the content and process in supervisee's work with their clients).

In level 3 (e.g., early professional or a post-doctoral intern in an athletic department in the US), supervisees start to develop their unique (personalised) approach to SP service delivery, while more competently exploring and integrating multicultural variables in

case conceptualisation and SP programmes implementation and evaluation. Also, a good balance of self-other awareness emerges, motivation remains consistent, and supervisees act more autonomously as they increase their confidence in their professional judgments (Stoltenberg & McNeill). If supervisees are able to reach level 3 in multiple domains, such as theoretical orientation, intervention competence, cultural sensitivity, and professional ethics, then supervisees are regarded as having reached level 3i (independently practicing professionals). Because supervisees in level 3i are becoming seasoned SP professionals, supervision often shifts to a collaboration between peers with an emphasis on integrating cultural competence within supervisee's practice (e.g., engaging in culturally safe conversations). As another example, an established professional with experience using a cognitive-behavioural framework may seek out a peer who operates from a different orientation (e.g., existential) with the intention to expand on an already substantial knowledge base by seeing clients through a different theoretical lens.

Supervisory relationships

A foundational purpose of supervisory relationships is to create an interpersonal space where supervisees feel safe and supported to deeply reflect on, and discuss, their experiences in service to their clients. This relationship can be a kind of professional parenting to help SP students grow into competent, ethical journeypersons, as well as engaging in collegial, peer-to-peer relationships with experienced colleagues to ensure ongoing quality practice. Some central questions concerning the quality of the supervisory relationship are: (a) What competencies and skills should supervisors have? and (b) What are responsibilities and duties of both supervisors and supervisees within that professional relationship?

Competencies

Andersen et al. (1994) used the Sport Psychology Supervisory Skills Inventory (pp. 246–247) to assess the quality of supervision from the viewpoint of both supervisees and supervisors. The five broad areas of competencies and skills were: (a) providing information and technical support (e.g., supervisor demonstrates sufficient SP expertise with the presenting concerns of athletes), (b) fulfilling supervisory responsibilities (see next section below), (c) facilitating interpersonal communication (e.g., supervisor demonstrates empathy and respect toward supervisees), (d) fostering supervisee autonomy (e.g., supervisor encourages supervisees to become increasingly more independent and autonomous professionals), and (e) providing a model of professional practice (e.g., maintains confidentiality regarding supervisee's performance). The ability to form strong, secure, collaborative, professional (even therapeutic) supervisory alliances or working relationships with supervisees is an attribute of supervisors that is particularly valued (see Watson et al., 2014).

Responsibilities

In an effective supervisor-supervisee relationship both the supervisor and the supervisee have responsibilities (Van Raalte & Andersen, 2021). The role of the supervisor is to: (a)

provide clear delineations of the trainees' and supervisors' roles; (b) remain current with trainees' cases and provide an adequate amount of direct supervision; (c) convey opinions regarding trainees' weaknesses and strengths; (d) appropriately discuss nonfulfillment of practicum requirements when necessary; (e) display empathy, listen attentively, and encourage trainees' expressions of feelings and opinions; (f) encourage trainee feedback regarding the supervisory process; (g) foster trainee autonomy and independence; (h) maintain ethical responsibility to trainees and to the athletes served; (i) keep information about trainees' progress confidential; and (j) provide appropriate models of professional behaviour. The supervisees also have responsibilities. They include: (a) prepare for supervision sessions; (b) keep up-to-date progress notes on individual athlete meetings and group presentations; (c) critically examine their strengths and weaknesses as sport psychologists; (d) continually seek clarification of roles and expectations; (e) do not conceal any information about athlete sessions or group meetings from supervisors; (f) provide feedback to supervisors on the supervisory process; (g) maintain ethical responsibilities to their athlete-clients; and (h) seek to emulate a model of ethical and professional behaviour in interactions with athletes and supervisors. These lists of SP supervisor and supervisee duties and responsibilities are not exhaustive. For example, sometimes supervision may involve studying a new model of practice or an advanced technique (e.g., autogenic training). Both supervisor and supervisee need to be up-to-date with the material that will be discussed in supervision. Both supervisor and supervisee should have the opportunity to reflect on and evaluate the supervisory relationship and experience.

Supervision content

The content of SP supervision involves SP knowledge and practice discussions. Supervision content is influenced by the quality of the supervisory relationship, the supervisor's and supervisee's responsibilities, and the trainee's developmental level. Generally, supervision content involves the SP service delivery process (e.g., client-focused and practice-focused topics) and is balanced with supervisee-focused issues and progress. These content areas in SP supervision, SP knowledge, service delivery processes, and supervisor-supervisee relationship issues often overlap extensively, which is a reflection of their interdependence.

Client-focused and practice-focused content of supervision

One essential type of content in SP supervision involves case formulations conceptualisation of the client's issues as considered through the lens of relevant theory. The supervisee's knowledge and experience are critical to the depth and breadth of case formulation. Three additional fundamental considerations are critical in SP practice. They are the supervisee's theoretical orientation to performance and athlete development, the supervisee's competence in attending to athlete mental health and well-being, and the supervisee's multicultural competencies.

The theoretical orientation to performance (e.g., from slumps to personal bests) starts with psychological paradigms and expands understanding of performance behaviour through knowledge of motor learning, motor control, physiological

adaptations and incorporating models of psychological, team, organisational, and cultural variables that influence performance (Aoyagi & Poczwadowski, 2012). Holistic, humanistic, and existential approaches to the athlete as a whole and not just as a sport performer extend to issues of athlete mental health and well-being. Athlete mental health has been advocated as a core component of any responsible culture of excellence (Henriksen et al., 2019). For example, in a multi-societal consensus statement on mental health in the Olympic/Paralympic quadrennium, Henriksen et al. (2020) described the interdependent nature of mental health and elite athletic performance and proposed practical guidelines for pre-, during-, and post-Games phases of athlete engagement. An additional consideration in client-focused content in SP supervision includes the client's intersectional identity that is derived from multiple dimensions, with race, gender identity, socio-economic status, ethnicity, and language being just a few of the relevant dimensions.

One example of a comprehensive model that can guide both client- and practice-focused supervisory content (as well as supervisee-related considerations) is the SP service delivery heuristic (Poczwadowski & Sherman, 2011) that comprises the following elements: adequate education, training, and professional experience; professional ethics; professional philosophy; making contact (or gaining entry); working alliance (practitioner-client relationship); practitioner variables (including person-focused values); client variables; assessment; conceptualising athletes' concerns and potential interventions; range, types, and organisation of service; programme implementation; immersion in client training and competitive environments; goodness of fit between the client needs and the practitioner's competencies; managing the self as an intervention instrument; programme and practitioner evaluation; conclusions about the services provided and implications for future practices; and leaving the setting through consolidation of services in a manner that clients gain confidence in their achieved behaviour changes and develop appreciation for SP services. Multiple comprehensive heuristics to address mental health issues are well represented in the counselling, psychology, and mental health consulting literature (e.g., Brown et al., 2011).

Supervisee-related content of supervision

The content of SP supervision sessions will vary considerably depending on supervisees' needs. It can be helpful to start the supervision relationship with a discussion of the theoretical and intervention approaches supervisees are using to guide their practice and inform their service. For example, supervisees may state that they are using a cognitive-behavioural or acceptance and commitment framework. Students just starting out on first practica or internship may have limited understanding or experience, and supervisees' reading about the model of choice and subsequent discussions with their supervisor will become a critical part of the supervision process.

Foltz et al. (2015) identified five supervision domains for supervisors and supervisees to be aware of and consider. They include: (a) boundaries and roles; (b) ethical and clinical competencies; (c) operating within sport environments; (d) performance and mental health issues; and, (e) multiculturally relevant supervision. Other supervisee-related content can include: supervisee anxiety; core shame (e.g., not being a good-enough practitioner); the supervisees' countertransferences to their clients (and their

transferences to their supervisors); their past traumas (not necessarily to treat the traumas but to explore how they may influence supervisee-client relationships); supervisee self-presentational styles (e.g., impression management); counselling skills (e.g., supervisee conducts an intake interview with the supervisor in the role of the athlete/client); and supervisee self-reflection on strengths and weaknesses (e.g., potential awareness of blind spots, resistances in supervision). When the supervisor has psychotherapeutic qualifications and credentials, sometimes the boundaries between the supervisory process and psychotherapy can get blurry because supervisee mental health issues are topics for discussion in supervision. It is how those topics are treated (discussed in reference to their influences on the quality of SP service delivery to clients) that distinguishes supervision from psychotherapy. Supervision is not therapy, but one hopes it is *therapeutic*.

Supervision methods

A well-designed and effective supervision programme is an essential quality control mechanism in SP practice (Foltz et al., 2015; Sharp et al., 2021) and the development of novice SP practitioners (Martin et al., 2021; Morgan et al., 2016). It is, therefore, important for the supervisor and supervisee to employ a supervision method that meets their needs and ensures supervisee development (Fogaca et al., 2018a; Sharp et al., 2021). In the SP literature, practitioners have suggested using multiple methods in supervision including: self-report, audio visual recording, group supervision, individual supervision, direct/indirect supervision, and multi-layered supervision (Fogaca et al., 2018a; Morgan et al., 2016; Silva et al., 2007).

Although the practice and amount of supervision varies across institutions, cultures, countries, and programmes, the first supervision meeting is almost universally used to discuss supervisor and supervisee expectations, roles, boundaries, and the supervisee's programme plan (Parker-Jenkins, 2018). In addition, a contract of rights and responsibilities between the supervisors and supervisees may be discussed at the first meeting for the parties to agree on how often they will meet, the supervision model to be used, and, if relevant, the intellectual ownership of joint publications (Parker-Jenkins, 2018). The structure and the supervision model guide subsequent meetings to allow the supervisees to update supervisors on their work followed by supervisees presenting cases for supervisor feedback (Morgan et al., 2016).

Group supervision

The group supervision method consists of meetings of a designated supervisor with a group of supervisees (Fogaca et al., 2018a; Mastoras & Andrews, 2011). There is considerable variability in the duration, frequency, techniques, and group size in group supervision. For example, some studies have observed groups of four to six students meeting twice a semester (Fogaca et al., 2018a), while in other cases, one supervisor may mentor up to 15 students. Group supervision provides conducive learning environments for novice professionals through obtaining unique multiple perspectives and exposure to a greater number of clients, feedback, and enhanced peer learning (Kemer et al., 2021; Mastoras & Andrews, 2011).

Individual supervision

The individual supervision approach (one-to-one) is one of the most widely used methods across master, doctoral, internship programmes, and peer supervision among qualified professionals, although it is a supervision myth that individual supervision is best (Fogaca et al., 2018a; Goodyear & Nelson, 1997). The schedule of meetings/sessions varies depending on the amount of applied work (Fogaca et al., 2018a), but most supervisees meet with their supervisors weekly or bi-weekly for about one hour, given the supervision quantity requirements (per certification, registry, or licensure standards) and the resources provided (e.g., space, supervisor remuneration). Intended frequency of supervision can be based on a ratio of direct service with clients to hours of supervision per currently implemented requirements. For instance, for ISSP-Registry it is 40 h of supervision for 250 direct contact hours, thus approximately one hour of supervision for six hours of services and would lead to one one-hour supervision session per week for 40 weeks assuming six hours of a SP trainee's direct services per week.

Tele-supervision

Services to athletes and teams outside the traditional environments of the club or office, via technology such as videoconferencing, are widely used (Van Raalte et al., 2016). Technological advances allow tele-supervision (such as phone, email, and videoconferencing) that can increase convenience and provide SP supervision in places where, geographically, the presence of the supervisor is not possible (e.g., Van Raalte et al., 2016; Watson et al., 2004). Tele-supervision essentially follows the same conceptual pattern as face-to-face supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019), ensuring quality customer service (Van Raalte & Andersen, 2014). There are several approaches to tele-supervision such as individual, group, and multi-level. SP supervisors must consider the ethical aspects and potential barriers for these approaches to be properly implemented (Fogaca et al., 2018a).

Benefits of implementing a tele-supervision system successfully (skilfully and ethically) add to achieving higher level of inclusion and diversity and may include: greater flexibility of days/times for supervision sessions; the possibility of seeing the student in different locations virtually (with no travel or space renting costs); easy access to numerous digital resources for supervision (videos, articles and other instructional materials); the availability of asynchronous access materials for student training; accommodating for transportation barriers encountered by supervisees with some physical disabilities; and the ease of session recording tools for future training. Alternatively, there are limitations to both the quantity and quality of distance supervision. For example, beyond the technical know-how of the supervisor and the supervisee to access and successfully use the platforms, the technological realities faced in some countries involve the quality of the connections and stability of the internet signals, the financial cost of certain telecommunication platforms, and time zone differences. Compared with in-person supervision, some nonverbal behaviours of supervisees are missed, and live tele-supervision can be difficult to conduct when experiencing internet or phone connections problems. APA Guidelines for the Practice of Telepsychology recommend that supervisors become familiar with the current literature on tele-psychology, make an effort to be proficient in the

use of technology as a platform for treatment and supervision, and use in-person supervision as the primary modality. See the American Psychological Association (APA) Guidelines for the Practice of Telepsychology [<https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/features/amp-a0035001.pdf>]. Similar guidelines for tele-supervision should be developed for sport psychology.

Direct/Indirect supervision

Direct supervision involves the supervisor's presence (physical or via tele-supervision) in SP sessions (Fogaca et al., 2018a). Direct supervision accords the supervisor an opportunity to observe and immediately give feedback to supervisees in real time or following the session. Supervisors are encouraged to use video recordings for feedback. Alternatively, indirect supervision, involves providing feedback to supervisees based on their verbal (e.g., during an individual meeting or group supervision) or written self-reports (e.g., on the case notes composed after each session with a client).

Didactic methods

Didactic approaches are valuable supplementary methods for supervision aimed at increasing both the knowledge and skills of supervisees (Fogaca et al., 2018b; Harwood, 2021; Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010b). Didactic approaches may fit supervision needs in countries where SP programmes are shorter (e.g., one- vs. two-year programmes) or where less structured formats of applied SP education and training are practiced. Didactic activities include teaching (presenting knowledge), explaining and modelling decision-making, role playing, discussing readings, and using additional tasks and assignments such as: self-reflective journaling about decision-making and the self as a SP practitioner, discussing ethical issues, and using different theories in case conceptualisations and interventions. Didactic methods in supervision can be used to direct attention to the issues and challenges that supervisees are facing in their work (or internship as a student). According to Hutter et al. (2015), these concerns are often related to the trainees' know-how (e.g., intake interview skills, developing intervention plans) and supervisees' professional development (e.g., engaging in self-reflection, coping with and resolving ethical dilemmas).

Role of self-reflection in supervision

Much of what happens in the supervision of SP practitioners and graduate students could be called *assisted self-reflection*. A main goal of supervision, beyond the primary concerns for the performance, health, safety, and well-being of the athlete or coach client, is to help in the development of competent, ethical, compassionate, and self-reflective professionals (see Knowles et al., 2007).

In ancient Greece, at the Temple of Apollo in Delphi, the maxim "know thyself" was, literally, set in stone. Another maxim from Delphi was "certainty brings insanity." This *knowing* command, and this *certainty* warning, both speak to central issues in self-reflective practice in supervision. Supervisors are there to help supervisees get to know themselves better and to understand their strengths, weaknesses, thinking patterns, emotional responses,

limitations, behaviours, avoidances, relationships, past histories, and a whole host of other self-related material. The warning “certainty brings insanity” reminds one that certainty is the ossification of knowledge and the stunting of growth. Students and practitioners, who are “certain” in their views, and believe they know what is best, are at risk of becoming dangerous, self-important practitioners. Supervisors want supervisees to doubt their actions, feelings, thinking, interpretations, and competencies in a way that supports learning and growth per Aristotle who wrote, “Doubt is the beginning of wisdom.”

Supervisors can help supervisees to reflect deeply on their experiences by asking things like: What was happening for you when the client told you that story (reflections on internal states of thinking, desires, emotions, somatic changes)? What do you like or admire about your client? Does your client remind you of anyone you know (countertransference)? Who do you think you might represent for your client (transference)? If you could redo that part of the conversation with your client, what might you do differently and why? Please, tell me more about your frustrations with your client. In what ways do your client’s problems resonate with your experiences? How do you think your salvation needs might be operating in your interactions with your clients? How might your need to be a good sport psychologist be interfering in your service delivery? In what ways is your core shame (e.g., not good enough, not smart enough, being a fraud) manifesting in how you evaluate your work? This list is far from exhaustive, but such questions sit at the heart of doing assisted self-reflection.

Ongoing supervision

The requirement of ongoing supervision for trainees and early-, mid-, and late-career practitioners is an integral part of most helping professions, and SP practitioners and academics have been making this point since the 1990s (e.g., Andersen & Williams-Rice, 1996). Ongoing supervision (by experts or peers) has a clear potential to help manage the risks involved in professional practice (e.g., dealing with ethically and professionally challenges cases) and to be a vehicle for practitioner professional growth (Knowles et al., 2012; McEwan et al., 2019; Poczwardowski, 2019; Winstone & Gervis, 2006; Wylleman et al., 2009). Regardless of the level of experience of a sport psychologist, ongoing peer supervision (e.g., collegial consultations) can provide similar benefits (e.g., nurturing critical self-reflection, Knowles et al., 2012; attending to issues of transference and countertransference, Winstone & Gervis, 2006) although more research in this area is needed (McEwan et al., 2019).

Training in supervision, and layered and meta-supervision

Reflections on possible models and training routes for sport psychologists to become skilled supervisors have been ongoing for the past three decades (e.g., Barney et al., 1996; Winstone & Gervis, 2006). Formal courses in supervision are typically provided on a doctoral level in psychology departments. These courses often include meta-supervision, that is, the supervision of supervision to increase supervisory competence (Barney & Andersen, 2014; Power, 2013; Rhodius & Park, 2016; Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003). Barney et al. (1996) proposed a model of supervisor training for SP that is common in clinical psychology, where (usually) a doctoral student in applied SP undergoes training in

supervision models and processes and then supervises master-level students in their early placements or practica. The doctoral student then receives meta-supervision from a faculty member who has expertise in training supervisors (a layered supervision arrangement). Barney et al.'s article was aspirational in that, to date, discussion of meta-supervision in SP practice remains limited, but there are a few models and case studies available (e.g., Andersen et al., 2016; Barney & Andersen, 2014; Marsh et al., 2017; Rhodius & Park, 2016; Vosloo et al., 2014). Such meta-supervision arrangements can only be based on increasing numbers of qualified practitioners and for this reason they are not common beyond larger SP academic programmes or private practice groups (multiple practitioners organised in a practicing firm). Specifically, layered supervision can add individualised attention and guidance from an advanced student and the benefits of being mentored by someone who was recently in their shoes (Marsh et al., 2017).

Academic courses on supervision would be valuable for all SP trainees but have been limited or non-existent for those trained in sport and exercise sciences. A joint position statement on professional accreditation from four international SP associations (i.e., ISSP, FEPSAC, ASPASP, AASP), noted that supervision should be provided by *approved* supervisors and that approved supervisors should meet additional criteria beyond the usual credentials for SP professional practice via formal coursework, informal self-study, peer group education, ongoing supervision, and continued education (Schinke et al., 2018).

Ethical, culturally competent, and lawful supervision

Competent SP supervision involves ethical and lawful practices. Additionally, in the increasingly multicultural contexts of both applied practice and supervision, cultural competence complements a supervisors' services.

Ethical supervision

The importance of ethics in SP supervision has been underscored by researchers and practitioners (e.g., Lubker & Andersen, 2014) as well as by the credentialing organisations that now require specific ethical practice coursework and continuing education to become approved supervisors (e.g., AASP [2011, 2020]; European Federation of Sport Psychology [2011]; Quartiroli et al., [2021]; see <https://www.issponline.org/index.php/registry/issp-r-supervisors>). *The ISSP Ethical Code for Sport Psychology Practice* (Quartiroli et al., 2021) includes specific ethical standards that pertain to supervision including Standard #4: Multiple Role Relationships and Standard #13: Supervision in Professional Practice, which offers 12 guidelines for supervisors (e.g., engaging in peer- and meta-supervision, not delegating to supervisees tasks outside their competencies, avoiding any harm to supervisees or minimising it when it's unavoidable, enabling supervisees' ethical conduct). This emphasis on ethics is appropriate because legally and ethically, the client's welfare is, ultimately, the supervisor's responsibility.

Culturally competent supervision

In keeping with professional standards, SP supervisors should develop culturally (or *multiculturally* as an interchangeable term) competent supervision. A widely accepted standard to treat each supervisee with the same compassion, care, and attention regardless of the

supervisee's gender, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity, age, ability, socioeconomic status, and religion and to not discriminate against supervisees based on various characteristics. Supervisors' competencies should extend to supervising cases in which their supervisees' clients represent a diverse population (as relevant to supervisees' self-identifications on the characteristics listed above). As noted in the counselling literature on supervision (e.g., Welfel, 2015), and what can be extrapolated from the ISSP position statement on culturally competent practice (Ryba et al., 2013), culturally savvy supervisors recognise the cultural aspects in human experience, manage biases and stereotyping inclinations, individualise their approaches, and aspire to engage in socially just and culturally safe supervision. By contrast, culturally insensitive and unsafe practices would diminish, dismiss, silence, or disempower the cultural identity and well-being of a supervisee (and would be one example of harmful supervision).

Research and practical recommendations for integrating cultural competence into SP supervision are developing (Tibbetts & Parks Smith, 2023; Yee, 2018). Openness and authentic commitment to active learning about the supervisee (i.e., cultural broaching [Jones & Welfare, 2017]) is an approach that can inform supervisory practices across all levels and is a counselling psychology tool used to build the multicultural supervisory alliance (Mitchell & Butler, 2021; Tohidian & Quek, 2017). For example, supervisors and supervisees can acknowledge and discuss their intersecting identities (e.g., a Black American married cisgender male in his mid-sixties [supervisor] and an British Asian lesbian single woman in her mid-thirties [supervisee]) and their impact on their supervisory relationship, communication patterns, and other aspects of their work. The supervisor and supervisee can discuss some of the most prevalent forms of discrimination and inequality encountered in sports (e.g., on the base of race, gender, nationality, religion) and how they may have an impact on the supervisees' clients and their applied work. Using multicultural examples from the counselling supervision literature (e.g., Lee, 2018; Tohidian & Quek, 2017); encouraging and guiding supervisees' cultural knowledge, skills, and abilities; holding multiculturally focused discussions; collaborating on culturally attuned interventions and skills to be delivered to the supervisee's clients; and seeking consultations (on multicultural practices) are additional valuable approaches to multiculturally competent supervisory practices.

Linguistic challenges

Inherent in culturally competent supervision is the issue of language, especially when some or all parties in the supervision (supervisee, client, and supervisor) do not use the same native language. Issues pertaining to linguistic competency in international supervisees (e.g., Lee, 2018) and supervision dynamics may arise (e.g., Gonzalez et al., 2015; Lopez & Torres-Fernandez, 2019). One reflective report of a supervisee's experience in SP that addressed linguistic concerns was offered by Van Raalte and a group of her supervisees (see Maaranen-Hincks et al., 2017), in which an example of language-specific considerations (which were additionally nested in the cross-cultural differences) was the trainee's hesitancy to make comments and ask questions.

There are limited specific guidelines on how to navigate linguistic challenges even in mainstream counselling psychology (Lee, 2018). Nevertheless, aligned with the general supervisor's role, both the SP supervisor and supervisee need to attend to the linguistic

dynamics of the supervisory process in a collaborative and culturally competent manner. Such issues may involve concerns and barriers around the client's, supervisee's, and supervisor's comfort and abilities related to speaking and writing, differences regarding terminology, communicating the core and nuanced meanings about the clients' stories as reported by supervisees, transcripts (translations) from recorded sessions for the purpose of direct supervision, and supervisor-supervisee communication issues (e.g., online video platforms for meetings).

Legal issues

SP supervisors need to be cognizant of legal aspects and consequences involved in their supervisory roles as well as the specific supervisee legal and ethical regulations in the country of practice, which, naturally, become additional tasks in transnational supervision arrangements. According to Shapiro and Poczwardowski (2020), supervisors can be subject to both direct and vicarious liability. Direct liability involves negligent or harmful supervision practices (e.g., delegating to supervisees tasks outside their competency, breaking confidentiality). Alternatively, vicarious liability refers to the situation in which the supervisor is engaged in adequate, legally sound, ethical, and culturally safe supervision, but the supervisee's actions in SP services were unethical and potentially harmed the client. Supervisor competencies usually protect against direct liability, and vicarious liability can mostly be prevented through open, collaborative supervisor-supervisee relationships. These relationships, when built on trust, transparency, encouragement, and support, enable detecting and managing possible supervisees' impairments as contrasted with supervisees' incompetencies (see Andersen et al., 2001).

One of the main challenges of supervision within SP qualifications (e.g., professional doctoral programmes and national association supervised experience programmes that lead to credentialing, accreditation or registration) is the degree to which a potentially new supervisor is drawn into continued teaching of neophyte practitioners beyond what their formal postgraduate education offered in terms of applied competencies. In other words, the degree to which supervisees are ready for supervision because of possessing sufficient knowledge and know-how as opposed to being reliant on being taught new techniques or processes as neophyte practitioners. In the United Kingdom, for example, with one-year MSc degrees, it is important for new supervisors privately recruited by supervisees post-MSc to ascertain how competent the practitioner-supervisee is for independent supervised practice on the national qualification route. Vicarious liability requires a supervisor to be vigilant about assessing the readiness to practice in supervisees according to prior levels of training and competency development, and is not simply mitigated by having a collaborative relationship. Decisions around the amount of supervisory and training-based support to ensure minimum competencies are important personal, ethical, and financial matters for both the supervisor and supervisee.

Postulates

We acknowledge that the standards for SP supervision are still developing and are linked to the local, national, and regional practices as afforded by the respective educational and training models (or lack of), resources, and barriers. Nonetheless, supervision is an

essential and irreplaceable process in growing the practice of SP globally. Based on the most relevant literature that we synthesised, our (the authors') collective supervision experience, and the feedback from the present ISSP Managing Council, we offer several key postulates to guide competent, ethical, and culturally safe supervision. We recommend that these postulates need careful and thoughtful multicultural reflection and consideration. More likely than not, these recommendations will require adaptations to allow for cross-cultural effectiveness.

- (1) Competent, ethical, culturally sensitive, and safe supervision is essential for professional education and training in SP and for SP practitioners throughout their careers.
- (2) Supervision protects clients and the public and provides a vital gatekeeping for the profession of SP.
- (3) SP professionals, who seek to become approved supervisors, should be competent in providing supervision, should closely observe ethical standards, should be guided by current research and knowledge of supervision, and should develop and hone their supervisory skills throughout their careers. Formal coursework, self-study, supervision-focused continuing education, meta-supervision (supervision of one's supervision), and ongoing peer supervision (collegial consultations) are ways supervisors can develop and maintain their supervisory skills, competencies, and fitness for this role. Competent SP supervisors accept and expect that multiple, advanced, and interdependent supervisory competencies need to be acquired, successfully demonstrated, and evaluated.
- (4) We envision that sport psychology supervision becomes, in the near future, a normative professional and job-market practice, an expected activity of practitioners, and a widely accepted expectation from those who hire sport psychology professionals (e.g., sport clubs, teams, individuals). Because of the increased number of younger sport psychology professionals who can develop their supervision competencies more readily and easily in the present world (often outside the country of their origin), we suggest that they may be in an equally warranted position to fulfil the role of a supervisor (*pro bono* or for pay) for chronologically older sport psychology practitioners who seek professional advancement.
- (5) Competent supervisors develop and maintain mutually respectful supervisory relationships. We assert that it is the supervisor's responsibility to create an interpersonal space where supervisees feel safe and supported to deeply reflect on, and discuss, their experiences in service to their clients. Supervisors and supervisees need to exert their best professional efforts, grounded in high ethical standards, to fulfil and regularly reflect on their respective individual and joint responsibilities in the supervisory relationship, and to evaluate the supervision experience.
- (6) Competent SP supervisors address most of the topic areas that supervisees encounter in their service delivery. SP supervisors use diverse methods including direct (e.g., live supervision or via video recording), and indirect supervision (e.g., self-report) while offering additional opportunities for expanding knowledge and skills (e.g., didactic methods). Supervision can be conducted in an individual and group format, and may include multi-layered supervision.

- (7) Self-reflection is foundational for SP supervision. SP supervisors are in both the privileged and obligated position to ask questions, offer insights, and appropriately self-disclose their own professional practice experiences that promote, grow, and consolidate the supervisee's ability to self-reflect on their current service delivery.
- (8) SP graduate programmes should offer *supervisor coursework* (and practica) and consider layered-supervision for ensuring quality service delivery to the clients on the part of the students in the programme, while offering a path for more advanced trainees to receive supervision of their supervisory experiences with less advanced students.
- (9) The recommendations in all these postulates come from a group of authors who collectively represent supervision, scholarship, and professional practices as experienced in the continents of Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America. Nonetheless, these recommendations largely reflect (general) supervision principles of Western intellectual traditions and practices that were almost exclusively published in the English language. Notably, and clearly, given the obvious cross-cultural and, increasingly, transnational contexts of SP supervision, we advocate for a careful appreciation, examination, and utilisation of the local contexts, in which both the supervisors and supervisees operate. These contexts are saturated with the unique cultural, linguistic, ethical, and legal considerations, challenges, and opportunities. Therefore, beyond the need to be reasonably knowledgeable about the legal regulations around both direct and vicarious liability that are relevant to SP practice in a given consultation location, we believe that SP supervisors are obligated to develop culturally competent supervision that is inclusive of various characteristics of human diversity (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity, age, ability, socioeconomic status, religion). In other words, culturally competent supervisors recognise the cultural aspects in human experience, manage their own and the supervisees' biases and assorted internalised "isms", and aspire to engage in socially just and culturally safe supervision.

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ORCID

Artur Poczwardowski  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9805-6616>

Mark B. Andersen  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7609-4096>

Judy L. Van Raalte  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4870-6980>

Chris Harwood  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9862-824X>

Gangyan Si  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0318-9681>

Tshepang Tshube  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1167-8610>

Franco Noce  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6751-0871>

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