



40 International Perspectives

Training and Supervision in the United Kingdom and Australia

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Training to become a sport and exercise psychologist in both the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia was traditionally housed in departments of sport and exercise science, where the focus was often on the completion of research theses, with little, if any, formalized supervised applied experience offered. In both countries, however, within the last 20 years there has been a “psychologicalization” of applied training, and professional organizations have established formal training routes and national chartering and registration schemes. The first and second sections of this chapter address the formal training and supervision routes to chartered status and registration (as psychologists and supervisors of psychologists) in both countries. Perhaps due to the similarities in training and supervision, parallels exist across both countries in the ways trainees change with supervision experience, and some of these are presented in the third section.

TRAINING AND SUPERVISION PATHWAYS IN AUSTRALIA

Prior to 2009, the Australian Psychological Society (APS) accredited higher degree programs in psychology, and individual state and territory boards (e.g., Psychologist Registration Board of Victoria) controlled registration (chartering, licensing). In 2009, the training, supervision, and registration landscape changed substantially with the establishment of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), whose task was to regulate the mainstream allied health services through nationwide registration boards. Under the aegis of AHPRA, nationwide registration boards (e.g., medicine, nursing, physiotherapy) were formed, and the Psychology Board of Australia (PBA) took over psychologist registration.

In 2009, the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) took over (from the APS) the approval of university psychology degrees nationwide. The APS still assesses overseas degrees for eligibility for registration and entry into tertiary programs in Australia. At the time of writing this chapter, APAC policies, procedures, and standards for psychologist training, education, and supervision are undergoing review, and any changes will come into effect in 2014. To their credit, APS, AHPRA, PBA, and APAC are working together to be consistent with policies, procedures, and standards across what has become an increasingly bureaucratic (and Byzantine) and multi-layered system of regulation. The focus of this chapter is on the mandated supervision of psychologists completing university degrees leading to registration, the developing standards for supervisor training, and the requirements (training and continuing education) for registration as a supervisor of psychologists.

Supervision in Master’s and Doctoral Degree Programs

Supervisors of master’s and doctoral students’ practica and internships in applied psychology programs need to be registered with the PBA as general psychologists and as supervisors of



psychologists. Registered supervisors with the former state and territory boards were rolled over to become registered supervisors with the PBA. Additionally, APAC's (2010) current standards state that:

supervisors should be members or hold qualifications which make them eligible for membership of the appropriate APS College [e.g., College of Sport and Exercise Psychologists], . . . and additionally, should have at least two years relevant full-time experience as a psychologist, following the award of their postgraduate psychology degree. All field supervisors must also hold current full registration as a psychologist with the Registration Board in the supervisor's country of principal residence. (p. 59)

Master's-level training requires 1,000 hours of supervised practice. In the two sport and exercise psychology master's-level programs (at Victoria University and the University of Queensland), this 1,000 hours consists of a generalist placement (33% of hours) and two specialist placements (67% of hours). APAC (2010) has suggested that:

Supervision of all placements must involve one hour of direct contact for each full day of placement (7.5 hrs). Direct contact supervision may include telephone, video conference or other electronic forms of real-time interaction, as long as the total percentage of supervision conducted by such electronic means across all casework units is never greater than 40% for any given student. (p. 59)

This ratio results in close to 130 hours of supervision for the 1,000 hours of placement.

Standards for Supervisor Training

The PBA (2013) has finalized the standards for supervisor training and training providers, and some programs already have approval (e.g., Supervisor Training and Accreditation Program, 2012). The PBA has recently outlined seven competencies that Board-approved supervisors must have, including: 1) Knowledge and understanding of the profession, 2) Knowledge of and skills in effective supervision practices, 3) Knowledge of and ability to develop and manage the supervisory alliance, 4) The ability to assess the psychological competencies of the supervisee, 5) The capacity to evaluate the supervisory process, 6) Awareness and attention to diversity, and 7) The ability to address the legal and ethical considerations related to the professional practice of psychology (p. 2).

And that training programs for supervisors should consist of:

- Approximately seven hours of preparatory work (e.g. reading relevant material, reflection on practice) and passing of self-study modules related to knowledge of relevant Board guidelines and general supervisor readings. This component may be assessed by a multiple-choice test online (or similar) prior to the face-to-face instruction.
- A minimum of 14 hours of direct face-to-face instruction (e.g., workshop participation).
- Systematic assessments after a period of time has elapsed following the direct instruction that are focused on competency attainment (e.g., supervision of supervision including direct observation and critical feedback, submission of a videotape of a supervision session, a short test).

Registration as a Psychologist Supervisor

Supervisors who are currently registered with the PBA (or who become registered by June, 30, 2013) will have until July, 2018 to complete a Board-approved supervisor training program.

Potential supervisors seeking registration after June 30, 2013, will have to provide evidence that they have completed a Board-approved supervisor training program (e.g., Supervisor Training and Accreditation Program, 2012) before registration will be granted.

TRAINING AND SUPERVISION PATHWAYS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

The Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) is the regulator of practitioner psychologists in the UK, and retains a register of professionals who meet their standards of education and training. Professions regulated by HCPC have at least one title protected by law. Anyone using a protected title must be on the HCPC register or is liable to prosecution. The generic titles of *Practitioner Psychologist* and *Registered Psychologist*, and the domain specific title of *Sport and Exercise Psychologist* (or any derivative there-of) are subject to such protection.

HCPC Standards of Proficiency and Standards of Education and Training

Registered Sport and Exercise Psychologists will have completed a HCPC-approved professional training program that meets the Council's Standards of Proficiency (SoP) and Standards of Education and Training (SET) for Practitioner Psychologists. The SoPs represent the thresholds necessary for safe and effective practice in the context of public protection. They are arranged in six areas, each of which houses a list of generic elements relevant to all practitioner psychologists, and profession-specific elements, including those unique to the Sport and Exercise Psychologist: (a) professional autonomy and accountability; (b) professional relationships; (c) identification of health and social care needs; (d) formulation and delivery of plans and strategies for meeting health and social care needs; (e) critical evaluation of the impact of, or response to, the registrant's actions; and (f) knowledge, understanding, and skills. The SETs (there are 6 SET areas with 57 specific SETs in total!) guide the development of programs seeking HCPC approval (Eubank & Cain, 2012) and address the: (a) level of qualification for entry to the Register, (b) program admissions, (c) program management and resources, (d) curriculum, (e) practice placements, and (f) assessment.

The BPS is *the* UK training provider. Their qualification in sport and exercise psychology (QSEP) is currently the *only* HCPC-approved program that trainee sport and exercise psychologists can undertake to become HCPC registered (Eubank, Niven, & Cain, 2009). Although the stated threshold standards for registration allow for alternative qualifications equivalent to the QSEP (e.g., a professional doctorate in a Higher Education Institution), no such program has been developed to date.

The key aims of the QSEP are to produce practitioner psychologists who will:

- Be competent, reflective, ethically sound, resourceful, and informed sport and exercise psychology practitioners who will be able to work in a variety of sport and/or exercise contexts.
- Value the imaginative, interpretive, personal, and innovative aspects of sport and exercise psychology practice.
- Commit themselves to ongoing personal and professional development and inquiry.
- Understand, develop, and apply models of psychological inquiry for the creation of new knowledge that is appropriate to the multidimensional nature of relationships between people.
- Appreciate the significance of wider social, cultural, and political domains within which sport and exercise psychology operates.
- Adopt a questioning and evaluative approach to the philosophy, practice, research, and theory that constitutes sport and exercise psychology.

Following completion of a BPS accredited master's degree in sport and exercise psychology (Stage 1), Stage 2 of the QSEP requires trainees to engage in a minimum of two years full time

supervised practice (or its part-time equivalent). Stage 2 involves both a research and a practice dimension, where the trainee develops approaches, skills, and qualities relating to four key role competences, which are identified by the BPS Occupational Standards as being common to all practicing psychologists: (a) develop, implement, and maintain personal and professional standards and ethical practice; (b) apply psychological and related methods, concepts, models, theories, and knowledge derived from reproducible findings; (c) research and develop new and existing psychological methods, concepts, models, theories, and instruments in psychology; and (d) communicate psychological knowledge, principles, methods, needs, and policy requirements.

These key roles essentially represent trainees' abilities to consult, research, and educate within an appropriate ethical framework, and to evidence their competencies at the doctoral level. The supervised practice activity is planned and documented across the four key roles during the trainees' enrolment period. Supervised practice totals approximately 460 days of activity, including at least 160 days of applied work with clients—which in turn includes preparatory work, data collection, needs analysis, observation work, design of evidence-based interventions, and evaluation/reflection on practice—and up to 300 days of planning training activities and research, independent study, and Continued Professional Development activity. This is evidenced in the trainees' portfolios, which are assessed periodically to evaluate their progress and competence through case studies and the research submission.

Supervision of the Qualification in Sport and Exercise Psychology

The quality of the supervisor community represents a key part of training provision, and the importance of professional supervision for professional training is paramount. Part of this professionalism lies in the qualifications and experience of the supervisor. To take responsibility for trainees' entire supervision process and the coordination of their training, supervisors must be a BPS-chartered psychologist, full member of the Division of Sport and Exercise Psychology, and a HCPC registered sport and exercise psychologist. The QSEP also expects the supervisor to undertake the following activities, which requires them to have a good knowledge and understanding of the QSEP (i.e., what you need to know) and the process of supervision (i.e., how to do what you know and how to do it well):

- Undertake a needs analysis at the outset of training.
- Hold and record compulsory quarterly face-to-face meetings each year.
- Oversee the preparation and review of the Plan of Training.
- Provide information relevant to the training process (e.g., academic, ethical, organizational, professional).
- Provide guidance on necessary opportunities relevant to the satisfactory completion of the key roles.
- Observe the trainee working in a practitioner situation.
- Encourage the trainee to reflect on their learning and practice and to engage in creativity, problem-solving, and the integration of theory into practice.
- Listen to the trainee's views and concerns regarding their work in progress and offer appropriate advice.
- Review, offer feedback, and countersign the documentation submitted as part of the Trainee's Portfolio of Competence.

Registered Supervisor Status and Supervisor Training

Co-coordinating supervisors must be on the BPS Register of Applied Psychology Practice Supervisors (RAPPS). To be eligible for the register, supervisors must undertake the Society's approved training program. This involves the completion of online training that requires supervisors to reflect upon the generic and sport and exercise psychology specific principles

of supervision, followed by a face-to-face workshop to discuss the QSEP structure and process (see www.bps.org.uk/what-we-do/developing-profession/register-applied-psychology-practice-supervisors-rapps/register-app). Following this training, it is expected that approved supervisors attend refresher trainings to receive qualification updates, but also, and perhaps more importantly, to share their supervision experiences, challenges, and elements of good and bad practice, which will ultimately inform the development and quality of their own supervision.

It is perhaps at this stage of supervision training where some of the more interesting and impactful “how to do what you know and how to do it well” dialogue occurs. In particular, one of the key areas of interest for the QSEP community has been the approach taken to supervision and the nature of the relationships formed with trainees. One of the key directions for ongoing supervisor training is to critically examine and discuss (properly and openly) different models of supervision and their effectiveness and influence on trainees (Eubank & Hudson, 2013). Second, supervisors commonly “battle and grapple” with how they can help trainees to understand and adopt particular models of approach in their practice, the philosophical and theoretical orientation that underpins it, and the personal core values, beliefs, and qualities that ground it (e.g., Keegan, 2010). Trainee uncertainty, confusion, and doubt about these important underpinning issues of applied practice, which potentially lead to incongruence and lack of authenticity, provide a legitimate and healthy opportunity for development and improvement. It is important therefore that supervisors also “know enough” about such values, qualities, philosophies, orientations, and models to have considered them in their own work, to then be able to empathize with their trainees’ journeys and advise accordingly. Some of these issues (and many others besides) are “opened up” in the next section, in which some of the ways trainees develop are explored.

TRAINEE DEVELOPMENT

Initially, trainees may operate in rigid ways and try to adapt clients’ issues to fit the interventions available to them (trainees). Related to this observation, mental skills training books are popular among supervisees, because they often provide *recipes* about how to use specific interventions. Trying to fit athletes’ issues into a predetermined structure may yield suboptimal outcomes. Although the judicious application of these books can be helpful, their value to clients’ is most likely enhanced when practitioners mold them to suit clients and their situations. The ability to tailor interventions and resources to athletes is a skill that is normally developed with experience (Tod, Andersen, & Marchant, 2011).

Related to the use of applied books is a tendency for trainees to attempt to solve client’s problems and offer expert advice. Such behaviors seem to be motivated by a crisis of competence, where trainees question whether they have anything valuable to offer clients. One supervisee, for example, felt guilty for being paid by athletes, because she believed she had not given her clients anything “real.” Giving out photocopied worksheets and training diaries helped the trainee feel that she was offering a concrete service. When the athletes she worked with gave her positive feedback about the value of talking through their concerns and learning new ways to interpret and manage their issues, the trainee began to appreciate how she helped clients, and her negative feelings subsided.

Trainees may be anxious about being client led because athletes may raise issues beyond the scope of their competencies. One example often heard from sport psychologists and inexperienced supervisees, is that they help with performance and not personal issues. With experience, practitioners appreciate that every issue is a personal one, including performance difficulties. Such a realization may help fuel desires to expand their repertoires of skills.

Many of the changes noted above result from an increase in anxiety and self-doubt. These anxieties range from mild discomfort to a debilitating fear of sitting down with athletes.

Trainees' anxieties may be compounded by knowing that they are being evaluated by their mentors and supervisors (who are oftentimes held in high regard and from whom trainees seek approval). Supervisees' anxieties are also influenced by the recognition that they are working with real people who may have deep-seated issues with meaningful consequences to resolve, and trainees readily take too much responsibility for being caped crusaders. Helping trainees learn to manage anxieties, and their responsibilities to clients, is one way to help them develop. For example, some individuals have found comfort in learning the following story of one person whose anxieties held her back from gaining supervised experience, and delayed the completion of her degree (see Tod, et al., 2011). When she worked through her anxieties and realized that they stemmed from a belief she did not have adequate communication skills, she undertook additional counseling training and was then able to undertake supervised experience and complete her qualification. Since then she has obtained full-time work, has helped clients with life-threatening medical issues, and has coped with a client suicide.

Anxieties may help trainees identify areas for improvement when they stimulate reflective attitudes. A common situation involves supervisees experiencing self-doubt after they have run out of quick interventions, such as self-talk cues or relaxation techniques. Then, they question whether they have anything else to offer the athlete. Such feelings may indicate uncertainty about their roles, desires to be seen as the experts, and inability to adopt a more client-led approach. Helping trainees to follow their clients' leads more, and inviting athletes to offer solutions to issues, contributes to supervisees developing skills for the establishment and maintenance of collaborative relationships.

When first working with athletes, trainees may find it difficult if clients stray from performance enhancement to other issues less readily amendable to traditional sport psychology interventions. As an example, one inexperienced practitioner was shocked when the first three athletes at a training camp had wanted help with: (a) overbearing parents who were forcing the client to participate in the sport, (b) a poor relationship with a dictatorial coach, and (c) feelings of worthlessness stemming from a variety of sources. The practitioner was relieved when the fourth athlete came in with *just* pre-competition nerves, because he finally believed it was an issue with which he could assist. He found the experience unnerving, because he had not had a counseling skill module as part of his applied sport psychology training and had not been exposed to cognitive-behavioral theory (CBT) underpinning mental skills training. Upon the recommendation that he read works by CBT leaders such as Aaron Beck, Judith Beck, Albert Ellis, and Windy Dryden, he started to develop a deeper understanding of cognitive-behavior therapy and learn ways he might be more effective with a greater range of clients than he had been previously.

CONCLUSION

Historically, applied sport psychology has been the bastard child of a liaison between sport science and psychology, and who has been raised, for the most part, by a poor single mother (sport science), and despite a few alimony payments, has been ignored by the wealthier father (psychology). In recent years, however, sport psychology has been maturing into a desirable daughter with many suitors knocking on the door. In the UK and Australia, Daddy has returned to assert his authority. Sometimes Mummy has felt threatened by Daddy's return, because she has invested much in her daughter and he carries considerable social and legal clout. In the UK and Australia, Mummy and Daddy have somewhat reconciled their differences and are working together to train their daughter and supervise her development so she can obey the law of the land (i.e., the HCPC and PBA). In this chapter, we have attempted to explain how Mum and Dad discharge their responsibilities and ways in which the daughter has changed with their parenting. We hope the parental relationship continues, because both individuals have a role to play to ensure that the child becomes a productive member of the community and leads a meaningful fulfilling life.

TAKE-HOME MESSAGES

- In both the UK and Australia, titles practitioners might wish to use to market themselves (e.g., psychologist, sport and exercise psychologist) are protected by law.
- Formalized training and supervision pathways have been established in both countries and are overseen by nationally recognized professional bodies.
- There are regulations in Australia and the UK governing the training and suitability of supervisors to ensure trainees obtain high-quality supervision.
- Given the similarities between both countries, there are several parallels in the way trainees develop, including a shift from being rigid problem solvers to being flexible collaborators.

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