Sports Psychology

DESCRIPTION OF THE FIELD

Sports Psychology is the study of (a) the psychological and mental factors that influence and are influenced by participation and performance in sport, exercise, and physical activity, and (b) the application of the knowledge gained through this study to everyday settings. Sports Psychology professionals are interested in how participation in sport, exercise, and physical activity may enhance personal development and well-being throughout the lifespan. Sports psychology can even help people off the playing field. The same strategies that Sport Psychologists teach athletes are also useful in the workplace and other settings.

Sport psychologists can also help athletes:

- **Enhance performance.** Various mental strategies, such as visualization, self-talk, and relaxation techniques, can help athletes overcome obstacles and achieve their full potential.
- **Cope with the pressures of competition.** Sport Psychologists can help athletes at all levels deal with pressure from parents, coaches or even their own expectations.
- **Recover from injuries.** After an injury, athletes may need help tolerating pain, adhering to their physical therapy regimens, or adjusting to being sidelined.
- **Keep up an exercise program.** Even those who want to exercise regularly may find themselves unable to fulfill their goal. Sport Psychologists can help these individuals increase their motivation and tackle any related concerns.
- **Enjoy sports.** Sports organizations for young people may hire a Sport Psychologist to educate coaches about how to help kids enjoy sports and how to promote healthy self-esteem in participants.

(Provided by the American Psychological Association)

CAREERS

- Teaching/Research in Sports Sciences or Psychology
- Counseling Services – Athletes, health promotion, organizations

RESOURCES

For more information, please visit the following websites:

- Exercise and Sport Psychology APA 47
- Association for Applied Sports Psychology