

# Counseling Approaches and Sports Issues in Athletics

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**Abstract:** A sport counselor teaches an athlete to visualize successfully completing a certain action in sporting activity. This will give the athlete confidence to complete the maneuver as well as prepare the athletes body for the actual maneuver. The purpose of this article is to describe the benefits of sport counseling and provide approaches in handling challenging issues in the field as sport people perform their skills. The essence is to provide a relaxed scenario in sporting career to uphold competencies that would propagate effective performance in a competition. A sport counselor provides a model for sport men and women to have a focus in the job they do and build a career for proficiency and self-actualization. Fear of failure, anxiety and lack of confidence was identified as some of the issues athletes face on the field and inconsistency in performance, social withdrawal were strongly recognized as issues that may require the attention of the sport counselor. Be that as it may, cognitive behavioral approaches and psycho-dynamic approaches were seen as strong indicators in handling athletic issues for a better and functional sport team with formidable skills to tackle opponents and win a competition as the coaches and sport managers triumph.

**Keywords:** Counseling approaches, athletes, sport issues and counseling needs for sport people.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

A sport counselor is one who looks at how sports performance is affected by the athlete's emotional wellbeing as well as how to increase motivation and help an athlete keep focused. The counselor would normally work with athletes individually as well as with the team as a whole, coaches; parents also are required to be incorporated in the counseling services. Previously, counselors were not involved in sports issues rather physical educators assumed these duties. However, in the 1900s, the sport team saw the need for a professional in the helping profession to fill in the gaps in stress management and opt for a skilled psychologist to fill in that vacuum for a balance in the disciplinary approach in the field of sport (Griffith 1998, Poczwardowski 2004).

In sports counseling issues, there are basic questions that require answers. They are: are you a competitive athlete looking to achieve a new level of success but is hampered by confidence or anxiety issues? Or do you just want to hit the trails with your horse or participate in a recreational team sport but fear issues that are holding you back? Whether you are a competitive or recreational athlete, there are some common challenges that may hold you back from enjoying the sport you love or reaching higher levels of competitive success. There are special interests in assisting athletes overcome performance anxiety and enhance competition success to overcome performance anxiety and enhance competitive success (Gordon 1990).

More than ever before, the sport person faces enormous pressures, while coaching enhances individual sporting competence, the assistance provided by a counselor i.e. lifestyle coach provides the individual's emotional competence (Anderson and Williams 1996). An individual's skill in their chosen sport field is vital to performance, improving and assisting the athletes with this is the job of a counselor or a coach manager to manage the confidence of the athletes to build confidence and self-belief to cross that white line or take to course/pool/trace sport ability. This area is where sports counseling and coaching helps. The aim of sport counseling is to provide a confidential, discrete and supportive service to athletes of all abilities.

## 2. ISSUES IN SPORT COUNSELING

Sport is an event that faces enormous pressure on both the athletes and the coaches. Sports men and women face emotional difficulties like:

- Anxiety and fear to overcome bad experience
- Lack of self-confidence
- Unreasonable expectations from managers and fans
- Coaches and managers experience pressure from club committees, fans and players
- How to cope with studies
- Gender issues
- Societal impression about students athletes
- Prospects of the career

## 3. SYMPTOMS TO INDICATE THE NEED FOR SPORTS COUNSELING

All athletes' loss grip of dealing with their performance at varying ways; when this happens, they derail from the consciousness of recognizing their self-esteem and difficulty in adjusting to being a performing sport person increases. (Blocher 2006) opined that athletes suffer in number of psychological issues that need to be addressed for effective performance to win a competition on the field.

There are some basic symptoms to look out for in the athletes for sport counseling. These as opined by (Granito & Wenz 1995):

- Inconsistent athletic performance
- Getting in their own way
- Low self-confidence
- Sense of athletic unfulfillment
- Lack of family support
- Unrealistic dreams within the athletes
- Inability to improve skills or feeling stuck
- Not giving themselves permission to succeed
- Social withdrawal
- Depressive thoughts
- Ineffective goal-setting
- Inability to recognize past successes on the part of the athletes or their coaches or managers
- Health failing process.

## 4. COUNSELING APPROACHES IN HANDLING ATHLETIC ISSUES

Athletes are taught skills to help manage their lives more effectively to cope with the stress they face on the field either at competitions or training. Psychodynamic approach to care for athletes unconscious motivation and family background for mental well being and performance.

Sports counseling deals with the individuals' development on the sporting career and motivate on field performance to record permanent gains on the sport process. The counseling here equipped the athletes to handle the pressure on the field and cope with other human faults in the game of sports. (Blocher 2006). The difficulty of delivering a result-oriented

athletics academy is intense whether on local field or others. There are also other issues like family life, depression and clinical issues must necessarily be part of the burnout issues that require coping approaches. The sport counselors use intervention strategies to develop athletics career across the lifespan. The athletes are informed and educated about the need for awareness of difficulties that may lie ahead and given skills necessary for effective personal problem management in the following ways as posited by Undiyaundeye (2015):

- Ability to create the performance they athletes want.
- Ability to look forward with positive attributes and enjoy competition
- Relax and calm approach to competition
- Improve athletic performance through improving and providing new skills on how to contend the opponents
- Create confidence to counter fear and overcome accidents prone issues or bad experiences.
- Cognitive and behavioral approach to identify thoughts and change behavioural pattern.

All these assist athletes to realize their untapped potentials to progress to the next level and function in the big leagues.

## 5. CONCLUSION

A sport counselor helps the athletes develop ways to relax so that tension and anxiety will not get in the way of performance. The athletes in turn need to make sure that they are not too relaxed and ensure that they are up for the performance.

Counselors are well prepared for the provision of educational and clinical service design for athletes. Effective models and strategies for the implementation of sports counseling are required for career life planning preventing collaboration between physical educators, coaches and personnel managers through reality therapy. The counselors educate athletes about the problems of living association with athletic movement for the psychosocial concerns of the students-athlete which will continue to increase their morals and success story in the field.

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