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Implementing Psychosocial Competencies in Strength and Conditioning Coach Education: A Participatory Action Research Approach

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Psychosocial coaching competencies such as philosophical, pedagogical, psychological, and sociocultural aspects are essential to develop effective athlete-centred coaching practice. However, strength and conditioning (S&C) coach educators like the United Kingdom Strength and Conditioning Association (UKSCA) have so far neglected to include these in their curriculum. Researchers suggest that organizational change requires the engagement and collaboration from stakeholders, who are responsible for curriculum development (Stringer & Aragón, 2020). Thus, the aim of this presentation is to outline how our participatory action research approach with the UKSCA enabled us to start implementing psychosocial coaching competencies within the curriculum. In the first phase, we analysed perceptions of 95% of the UKSCA's stakeholders regarding psychosocial competencies. Our findings highlighted that stakeholders perceived psychosocial competencies to be important and integral to S&C coaching practice (Callary et al., 2022). Furthermore, we identified sociocultural considerations, where current accepted coaching practices (i.e., behaviours, language, attitudes) are impacted by the dominance of hegemonic masculinity and focus on performance. Following on, we explored stakeholders' perception of how learning should be encouraged. Although stakeholders lacked an understanding of how to implement psychosocial coaching competencies, they suggested that a new module could be integrated within the accreditation process. Therefore, we developed an initial workshop that introduced psychosocial coaching competencies. Using the value creation framework, we evaluated stakeholders' responses to the workshop. The results enabled us to collaboratively plan a more comprehensive implementation phase, which focuses in more detail on specific psychosocial coaching competencies.

References

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Presenter Biography

Dr Christoph Szedlak is a lecturer (research) in S&C at Hartpury University. He is the programme lead for the MSc in S&C. His research focuses on the psychosocial aspects of coaching using innovative qualitative methods to enhance data collection and to disseminate research findings. His applied experiences span over thirteen

years of working with a variety of different level athletes including Olympic and World champions.