

Clinical Sport Psychology vs Psychology: What is the difference and what do they do?

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The logo for SMART SERIES. The word "SMART" is in large, bold, blue capital letters. To the left of the "S" is a stylized graphic of a hand with fingers pointing upwards. To the right of "SMART" is the word "SERIES" in smaller, blue capital letters, oriented vertically.



Financial Disclosures

- I have no relevant financial disclosures



Objectives

- Clarify the specialty of clinical sport psychology relative to general psychology and mental performance coaching.
- Increase understanding of the broad areas of intervention in clinical sport psychology.
- Increase comfort in discussing the need for sport psychology with student athletes.

Sport Psychology

“study and application of psychological principles of sport performance in helping athletes consistently perform in the upper range of their capabilities and more thoroughly enjoy the sport performance process.”

Hays, 2006



Problems?

- Professional contamination (not well defined)
 - Working with athletes
 - Mental coaches
 - Motivational gurus
- Questions should become:
 - Who can or *should* student athletes?
 - What are their areas of competency in working with student athletes?

General Mental Health Provider



General psychology

- Examples: PhD, PsyD, LPC, MSW (Counseling/Clinical)
 - "therapists, counselors, psychologists"
- Competency areas: mental health/life stress
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
 - ADHD/conduct disorder/oppositional defiant disorder
 - Substance use
 - Academic stress
 - Family relations
- "Licensed Professionals" indicating that state board has approved their level of training.

General psychology

- Providers define themselves as “sport psychologist” if they work with athletes



Problems 1

- Disregards the uniqueness of the athletes.
- Athletes pose unique challenges
 - Time constraints (practice, strength/conditioning programs, travel)
 - Performance demands, competition stress, training demands
 - Injuries and injury recovery
 - Less access to time for friends, relationships, other activities, etc.
 - Stigma of being “mentally tough”
- Providers need an understanding of sport culture to best meet the needs of student athletes.

Problem 2

- Disregards the unique interventions and techniques that make sport psychology a distinct field.
- Tend to focus on "problems" (mental health and life stressors.)
- May be beneficial for performance restoration (return to baseline)
- Not fully trained in helping people perform in the upper range of their capabilities.

Mental Performance Coaches



Mental Performance Coaches

- Examples: preferred CMPC certification
 - Backgrounds: athletic training, coaching, physical therapy, non-licensed psychologist
 - Competency areas: performance enhancement
 - Motivation
 - Imagery
 - Confidence building
 - Team building
- "Sport" should denote a competency in training (academic preparation, training, supervision)

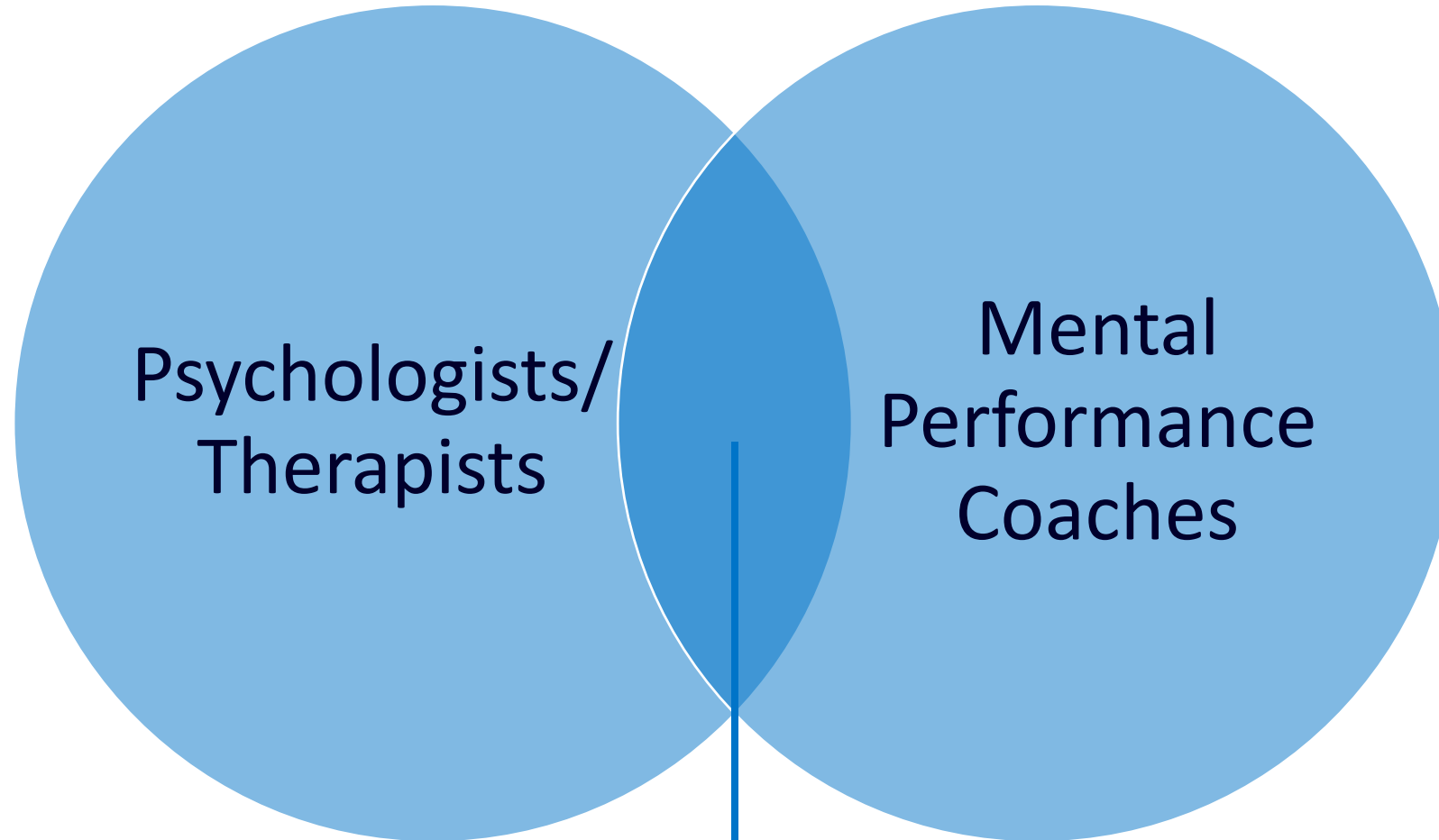


What about mental health and life stress?

- Athletes do not live in vacuums, performance can decline for a variety of reasons including:
 - Mental health
 - Eating disorders
 - Substance use
 - Family relations
- Not all athletes want to focus on performance
- Sole mental performance coaches are:
 - Not trained to provide mental health interventions.
 - Not licensed mental health providers.
- Not designed to treat athletes as a whole



Clinical Sport Psychology



Clinical Sport Psychologist

SMART
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 Children's
Wisconsin

Clinical Sport Psychology

- Requires:
 - Licensed mental health provider (not necessarily a psychologist)
 - CMPC certification
- Possess competencies in treating mental health and performance enhancement providing the greatest level of care to the student athlete regardless of the problem.
- Look for:
 - Mental health credentials (PhD, PsyD, LPC, MSW)
 - Look for licensed as mental health provider
 - CMPC credentials



What does a Clinical Sport Psychologist do?



Individual Performance



Performance Improvement?

- **Performance Restoration**

- Remove obstacles impeding performance to return to baseline performance

- May include addressing:

- Mental health
- Performance anxiety
- Life stressors

- **Performance Enhancement**

- Improve performance to maximum potential
- May include:
 - Not *developing* knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA)
 - Not *executing* KSAs

Individual Performance

- Psychological Skills Training (PST)

“Systematic and consistent practice of mental or psychological skills for the purpose of enhancing performance, increasing enjoyment, or achieving greater sport self-satisfaction.”

Education Phase → Acquisition Phase → Practice Phase

Weinberg & Gould, 2014



Psychological Skills Training

- Intensity Regulation
 - Understanding role of intensity and performance
 - Learning physiologic anxiety reduction techniques
 - Learning cognitive anxiety reduction techniques
 - Learning arousal inducing strategies
- Imagery
 - Teach and refine skill of imagery
 - Incorporate imagery for use as intensity regulation, skill acquisition, utilization of strategy/skill in performance, or performance outcome.

Weinberg & Gould, 2014



Psychological Skills Training

- Self-confidence
 - Identify sources of self-confidence (often uncontrollable sources)
 - Implement strategies to build self-confidence (controllable factors)
- Goal setting
 - Outcome goal (you vs. something/someone) = least control/success
 - Performance goal (you vs. you) = more control/success
 - Process goal (you) = most control/success
- Concentration
 - Education on types/need of focus (broad/narrow and external/internal)
 - Develop strategies to improve focus

Team Performance



Team Performance

- Group and team dynamics
 - Understanding group roles
 - Create effective team climate
 - Maximizing individual performance in team sports
- Group cohesion
 - Assessing needs of group/team needed for cohesion
 - Developing team processes/goals/culture

Brewer, 2009



Team Performance

- Leadership
 - Assess coaches or captain leadership style and effectiveness
 - Provide education on various leadership styles, needs of team, and perceived effectiveness within team.
- Communication
 - Sending messages effectively (verbal/non-verbal)
 - Receiving messages effectively
 - Assessing and improving breakdowns in team/leadership communication

Individual Health and Well-Being



Individual Health and Well-being

- Athletic Injuries
 - Aiding in adjusting to injury (mood)
 - Compliance with treatment recommendations
 - Expectations for performance during/after recovery
- Burnout and Overtraining
 - Education on symptoms of physical/mental burnout
 - Maximizing sense of enjoyment in sport
 - Identifying life enjoyment outside of sports

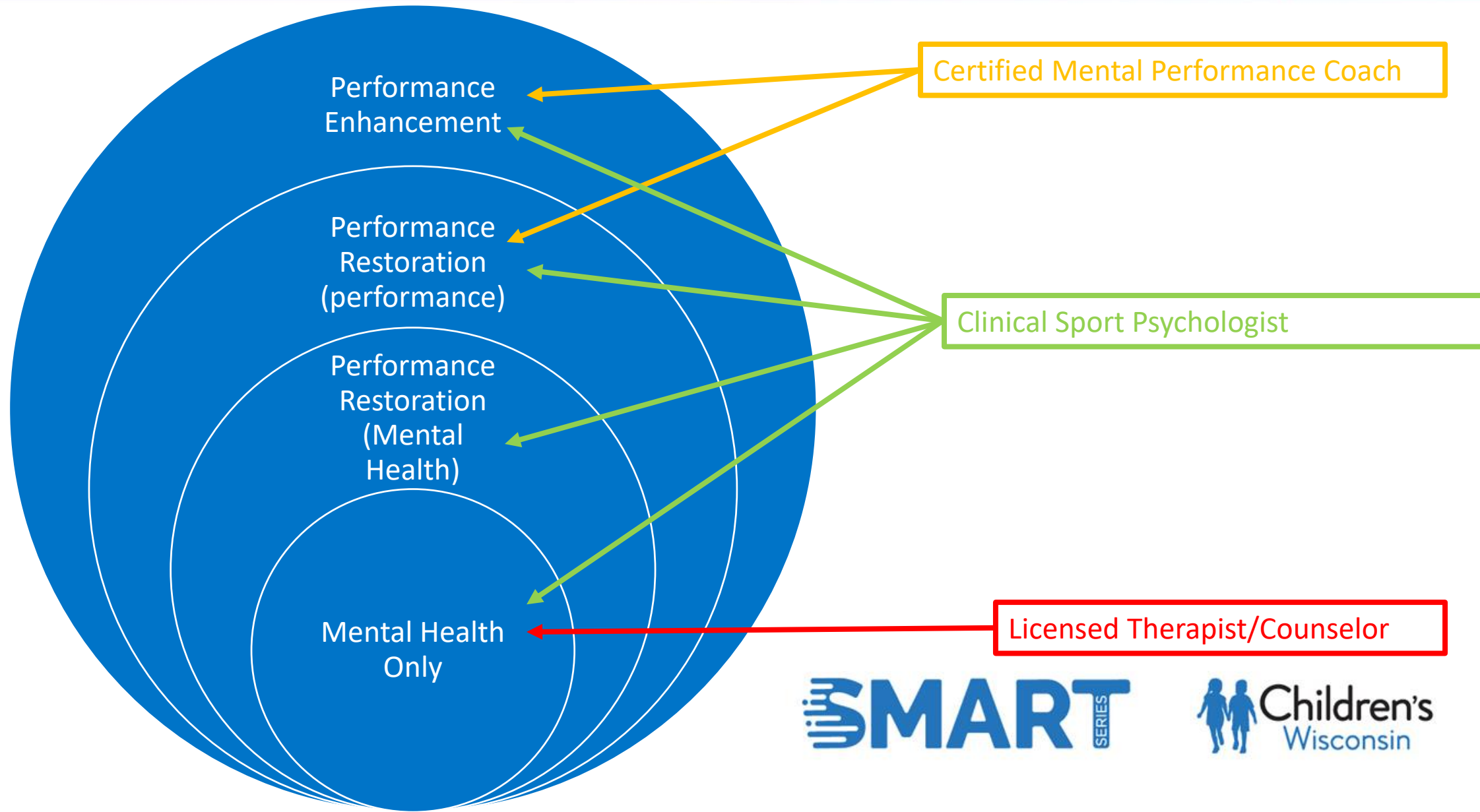
Brewer, 2009; Weinberg & Gould, 2014



Individual Health and Well-being

- Addictive and Unhealthy Behaviors
 - Substance use
 - Eating disorders/Disordered eating/Body dysmorphia
- Mental Health
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
 - ADHD/Conduct Disorder/Oppositional Defiant Disorder
 - Self-harm
 - Suicidal ideation/attempt
 - Academic under performance
 - Social issues

What/Where to Refer?



Where to refer?

- Children's Wisconsin
 - Sports Medicine: 414-604-7512 (Sport Psychology)
 - Behavioral Health: 414-266-3339 (Psychologist/Counselors)



Questions?



References

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