

Course Title	: Sports Psychology in Practice
Course Code	: SCE4009
Recommended Study Year	: Year 4
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Sectional Approach
Class Contact Hours	: 3 hours per week
Category	: Major Electives
Discipline	: Sports
Prerequisite(s)	: SCE4006 Foundation of Sports Psychology for Coach
Co-requisite(s)	: NIL
Exclusion(s)	: NIL
Exemption Requirement(s)	: NIL

Brief Course Description

This course is an advanced course that integrates theoretical knowledge with practical training in sports psychology for both individuals and teams. Students will develop foundational counselling and communication skills essential for effective support to the client, including the athlete, coach, parents and other stakeholders. The course covers team talk techniques and explores contemporary issues such as body image disturbance, eating disorders, burnout, and self-confidence through detailed case studies. Emphasizing applied learning, students will analyse and report on a selected team's or athlete's psychological profile, culminating in a comprehensive individual final report. A practicing sports psychologist will be invited to share their experience and provide guidance to the students. This course prepares students to have the basic practical skills to assist the sports psychologist in handling cases in real sporting environments.

Aims

The course aims to equip students with a comprehensive understanding of psychological principles applied to sports settings. It focuses on enhancing athletic performance, mental resilience, and motivation through evidence-based techniques. Students will develop evidence-based techniques in psychological assessment and intervention strategies, dealing with team communication quagmires, preparing them to support the client effectively working with sports psychologists.

Learning Outcomes (LOs)

On completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Apply counselling and communication skills grounded in sport psychology principles in structured consultations, demonstrating mental skills support, and maintenance of appropriate professional boundaries;
2. Critically analyse athlete or team psychological issues using relevant sports psychology theories and case evidence to identify key influencing factors.;
3. Evaluate and justify evidence-based psychological support strategies for athletes or teams using evidence and professional reasoning; and
4. Synthesise case analysis, rationale, and recommendations in a clear, professionally structured written report that sports coaching counterparts can understand and use.

Indicative Content

1. Basic counselling and communication skills
 - a. Emotional analysis and assessment
 - b. Stress management and anxiety reduction
 - c. Mental skills support
2. Core sports psychology theories
 - a. Confidence building and self-efficacy
 - b. Team dynamics and cohesion
 - c. Leadership and coaching psychology

3. Sports psychology justifications
 - a. Stress, burnout and contemporary clinical issues (e.g. Eating Disorders, Negative Body Image, etc.)
 - b. Injury rehabilitation and psychological recovery
4. Report writing and documentation
 - a. Proper process report format and case presentation
 - b. Ethics and professional practice

Teaching Method

The course is conducted through a variety of teaching methods, including lectures, classroom discussions, case studies, role-plays and workshops. Instructors use real-life examples to explain key concepts and encourage students to actively engage in learning by researching relevant information. Students are expected to demonstrate basic counselling and communication skills to provide mental skills support to a client during in-class discussion and role-play exercises, while instructors will offer immediate feedback as part of formative assessment. Lectures are supported by pertinent reading materials, which students are expected to review prior to each session. In the format of a group project, students will analyse and discuss case materials, such as the case of eating disorders or burnout, to develop evidence-based sport psychology justifications and design a support programme with execution demonstration in a group project setting. A practicing sport psychologist will be invited to share professional insights and provide formative feedback. For the final assessment, each student will select a case, conduct an independent analysis, and submit a written process report to record simulated client sessions in the form of a summative assessment, to build up the practical skill to assist a sports psychologist in real sporting environments.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

In-class participation and discussion assess students' understanding and ability to apply the counselling and communication skills and embed the theories, concepts and knowledge of sports psychology into coaching practice. Instructors will offer immediate feedback as part of formative assessment. (LOs 1-2)

Group project provides the opportunity for students to integrate and apply the knowledge concepts and principles of sports psychology and psychological approaches in sports. Students are required to search for and study the case materials on a particular topic, such as eating disorders or burnout, and design an evidence-based support programme with execution demonstration in a formative assessment approach. (LOs 1-3)

An individual case study with oral presentation and written process report requires students to show their understanding of the concept and knowledge in sports psychology. This individual case study will serve as the summative assessment of practical competence to assist a sports psychologist in real sporting environments. (LOs 1-4)

Learning Outcome	In-class participation and discussion	Group project	Individual case study
1. Apply counselling and communication skills grounded in sport psychology principles in structured consultations, demonstrating mental skills support, and maintenance of appropriate professional boundaries	✓	✓	✓
2. Critically analyse athlete or team psychological issues using relevant sports	✓	✓	✓

psychology theories and case evidence to identify key influencing factors			
3. Evaluate and justify evidence-based psychological support strategies for athletes or teams using evidence and professional reasoning		✓	✓
4. Synthesise case analysis, rationale, and recommendations in a clear, professionally structured written report that sports coaching counterparts can understand and use			✓

Assessment

In-class participation and discussion: 20%

Group Project: 40%

Individual case study: 40% (Presentation 20%, Final report 20%)

Required/Essential Readings

Thompson, M., & Nash, C. (Eds.). (2026). *Case Studies in Sport Coaching and Development: Practice Meets Theory*. Taylor & Francis.

Moffat, Z. L., & McCarthy, P. J. (2024). Process reports in applied sport psychology: A tool for professional development. *Journal of Sport psychology in action*, 15(2), 70-81.

Weinberg, R. S., & Gould, D. (2019). *Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology* (7 ed.). Human

Kinetics. Nicholls, A. R. (2017). *Psychology in Sports Coaching: Theory and Practice* (2 ed.). Routledge.

Cremades, J. G., & Tashman, L. S. (2016). *Global practices and training in applied sport, exercise, and performance psychology*. Taylor and Francis.

Andersen, M. B. (Ed.). (2005). *Sport psychology in practice*. Human Kinetics.

Recommended/Supplementary Readings

Henriksen, K., Huang, Z., Bartley, J., Kenttä, G., Purcell, R., Wagstaff, C. R., ... & Schinke, R. (2026). The role of high-performance sport environments in mental health: An international society of sport psychology consensus statement. *International journal of sport and exercise psychology*, 24(2), 269-291.

Tod, D., Hutter, R. V., & Eubank, M. (2017). Professional development for sport psychology practice. *Current opinion in psychology*, 16, 134-137.

Chan, D. K. C., Lee, A. S. Y., Hagger, M. S., Mok, K. M., & Yung, P. S. H. (2017). Social psychological aspects of ACL injury prevention and rehabilitation: An integrated model for behavioral adherence. *Asia-Pacific journal of sports medicine, arthroscopy, rehabilitation and technology*, 10, 17-20.

Rees, T., Alexander Haslam, S., Coffee, P., & Lavalley, D. (2015). A social identity approach to sport psychology: Principles, practice, and prospects. *Sports medicine*, 45(8), 1083-1096.

Cropley, B., Hanton, S., Miles, A., & Niven, A. (2010). Exploring the relationship between effective and reflective practice in applied sport psychology. *The Sport Psychologist*, 24(4), 521-541.

Meyer, B. B., & Fletcher, T. B. (2007). Emotional intelligence: A theoretical overview and implications for research and professional practice in sport psychology. *Journal of applied sport psychology*, 19(1), 1-15.

Danish, S. J., & Male, B. D. (1981). Toward an understanding of the practice of sport psychology. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 3(2), 90-99.

Important Notes:

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations and Coursework. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.
- (5) Students must adhere to the University’s guidelines and practices when using Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. The official documents “*Guidelines for Using GAI Tools at Lingnan University*” and “*Best Practices for Ethical and Responsible Use of GAI Tools in Course Assessments*” can be found here: <https://www.ln.edu.hk/cital/generative-artificial-intelligence/gai-guidelines-best-practices>.

Rubrics **In-class participation and discussion (20%)**

Assessment criteria	Excellent (A) (85-100)	Good (B) (70-84)	Fair (C) (55-69)	Pass (D) (40-54)	Fail (F) (0-39)
Preparation, engagement & professional conduct (30%)	Attendance at least 80%; consistently prepared; contributions are specific, evidence-informed, respectful; actively builds on peers’ points and maintains professional boundaries and confidentiality.	Good attendance and preparation; frequent relevant contributions; professional conduct with minor lapses.	Attends most sessions; preparation/contributions intermittent; occasionally off-point; professionalism generally acceptable.	Poor preparation or minimal engagement; contributions mostly brief/unsupported ; professionalism needs improvement.	Chronic absence, disruptive /unprofessional behaviour, or non-participation.
Counselling and communication skills (40%)	Consistently demonstrates active listening (accurate paraphrase/summaries), open and clarifying questions, empathic and client-centred tone; rapport-building behaviours evident; explicitly maintains boundaries (no diagnosis/treatment promises/guarantees); uses feedback to	Most core skills demonstrated with minor lapses; boundaries maintained; responds constructively to feedback.	Basic skills present but uneven; sometimes jumps to solutions; reflections are brief/descriptive; occasional boundary/rapport lapses but no unsafe conduct.	Two or more core skills weak (e.g., leading questions, poor listening, judgemental tone); limited response to feedback; boundaries inconsistently demonstrated.	Non-participation, unsafe or unprofessional conduct (e.g. confidentiality breach, inappropriate clinical advice).

	improve with concrete examples.				
Critical identification of client problems using sport psychology theories (30%)	Accurately identifies and prioritises key issues using at least 2 relevant theories; links each claim to specific case indicators; considers alternative explanations/limitations; uses correct sport-psych terminology.	Identifies main issues with 1–2 theories; clear case links; minor depth/precision gaps.	Issues named in general terms; partial theory use; limited prioritisation or weak linkage to case indicators.	Mostly descriptive; misapplied theory; unclear prioritisation; weak/unsupported claims.	Misidentification, harmful comments, or no coherent contribution.

Group Project: 40%

Assessment criteria	Excellent (A) (85-100)	Good (B) (70-84)	Fair (C) (55-69)	Pass (D) (40-54)	Fail (F) (0-39)
Critical analysis and problem identification (25%)	Case is clearly bounded; identifies and prioritises at least 3 influencing factors; integrates at least 2 theories with case evidence throughout; evaluates competing explanations and justifies prioritisation.	Identifies 2–3 factors with sound theory links; mostly critical analysis; minor gaps.	Identifies 1–2 factors; theory use mostly descriptive; limited prioritisation/evidence.	Problem definition unclear; weak or misapplied theory; minimal evidence-based reasoning.	No coherent analysis or major conceptual errors.
Selection and justification of psychological support (30%)	Proposes at least 3 appropriate strategies clearly linked to identified factors; each justified with theory and credible literature; explains mechanisms; anticipates limitations/risks; specifies scope and referral triggers where appropriate.	2–3 strategies with good justification; minor gaps in evidence, mechanisms, or limitations.	Strategies relevant but generic; uneven justification; limited evidence quality or case fit.	Poor match to problems; little rationale; feasibility/scope unclear.	Missing, unsafe, or inappropriate plan.
Execution demonstration counselling & communication in practice (20%)	Demonstration is feasible and professional; counselling/communication skills are clear (listening, questioning, rapport, boundaries); delivery aligns with the planned support programme and responds appropriately to feedback.	Mostly feasible and professional; skills evident with minor gaps.	Partial demonstration; weak link to programme; skills uneven.	Unclear/incomplete demonstration; limited skill evidence.	Missing, unsafe, or unprofessional delivery.
Professional communication artifact for coaching counterparts (15%)	Highly usable for coaches; clear structure and prioritised actions; includes monitoring indicators/criteria for progress; specifies boundaries and referral/ethical considerations; language is coach-appropriate and accurate.	Clear and usable; minor gaps in prioritisation/monitoring or boundary/referral detail.	Understandable but mostly descriptive; limited action steps or coach-specific framing.	Hard to apply; unclear responsibilities/actions; weak professional genre.	Incoherent or unsafe guidance; wrong audience/genre.
Team cooperation and academic integrity (10%)	Equitable contributions evidenced; roles managed professionally; accurate referencing; confidentiality/professional boundaries respected.	Good collaboration; minor contribution or referencing issues.	Uneven contribution but project completed; referencing/basic professionalism adequate.	Serious imbalance or weak professionalism/coordination.	Free-riding, plagiarism/academic misconduct, or no submission.

Individual Case Study- Presentation: 20%

Assessment criteria	Excellent (A) (85-100)	Good (B) (70-84)	Fair (C) (55-69)	Pass (D) (40-54)	Fail (F) (0-39)
Critical analysis and problem identification (35%)	Concise, accurate overview; identifies and prioritises key issues using at least 2 theories; links to specific case indicators; considers alternative explanations/limitations and explains reasoning.	Clear identification with 1–2 theories; mostly sound links; minor gaps in prioritisation or depth.	Superficial analysis; weak theory integration or limited case linkage.	Descriptive with little theory or weak evidence; unclear priorities.	Misidentification or absent analysis.
Selection and justification of psychological support (35%)	At least 2 recommendations explicitly linked to the formulation; justified with theory and credible evidence; include implementation steps, feasibility constraints, risk/limitations, and scope/referral as needed.	Two recommendations with sound justification; minor gaps in feasibility/limitations.	Relevant but generic; limited rationale or weak case fit.	Vague suggestions without sport-psych rationale; feasibility unclear.	Absent, unsafe, or inappropriate recommendations.
Counselling and communication skills in delivery and Q&A (15%)	Professional, client-centred delivery; responds in Q&A with accurate reasoning and clear boundaries (no diagnosis/guarantees); manages challenges respectfully; time kept.	Generally professional; minor lapses in clarity, listening, or boundary framing.	Understandable but uneven; Q&A responses partially supported or overconfident.	Delivery impedes understanding; weak boundary management in Q&A.	Cannot present or inappropriate/unprofessional Q&A.
Structure and clarity for coaching counterparts (15%)	Logical flow; visuals support message; ends with a clear action summary for coaches (what to do, when, how to monitor).	Clear structure; minor flow issues; action points mostly usable.	Basic structure; limited coaching utility; action steps unclear.	Hard to follow; minimal coach-usable output.	No usable structure.

Individual Case Study- Final Report: 20%

Assessment criteria	Excellent (A) (85-100)	Good (B) (70-84)	Fair (C) (55-69)	Pass (D) (40-54)	Fail (F) (0-39)
Case background and critical problem identification (30%)	Sufficient context; primary problems prioritised; integrates at least 2 theories with consistent case evidence; shows critical evaluation (alternatives/limitations).	Good context and identification; minor gaps in depth or integration.	Adequate context; thin critical analysis; theory used partially descriptive.	Minimal context; problems not clearly prioritised; theory weak/misapplied; limited case linkage.	Missing/incorrect identification or harmful/misleading framing or no case-based reasoning.
Selection and justification of psychological support (35%)	2–3 strategies clearly linked to problems; justified with theory and credible literature; explains mechanisms;	Clear recommendations; adequate justification; minor gaps in monitoring/limitati	Partly generic; limited citations; weak mechanism explanation or case fit.	Weak problem–recommendation linkage; feasibility/monitoring unclear.	Absent, unsafe, or out-of-scope recommendations without appropriate referral.

	includes feasibility, monitoring/review plan, risk/limitations, and referral criteria where appropriate.	ons or evidence quality.			
Structured report format and usability for coaching counterparts (25%)	Professional report genre and appropriate sections; coherent synthesis; concise coach action summary; accessible, accurate language; consistent referencing in required style; reference list complete and accurate; no integrity/confidentiality concerns.	Appropriate format; minor clarity/organisation issues; action summary mostly usable; minor referencing inconsistencies (e.g., occasional format errors) that do not undermine credibility.	Readable but limited organisation/coach utility; action summary underdeveloped; frequent referencing errors or incomplete reference list; confidentiality handled inconsistently.	Poor structure for professional audience; difficult to apply; serious referencing problems (missing citations for key claims, largely incorrect style) or weak academic presentation.	Wrong genre/incoherent or academic misconduct (plagiarism, fabrication, undisclosed policy-breaching GAI use) or confidentiality breach or failure to meet submission/integrity requirements.
Reflection on communication and professional boundaries (10%)	Focused reflection with specific incidents; analyses communication choices; boundary awareness (scope, confidentiality, referral); concrete improvement targets	Adequate reflection with some detail and realistic improvements.	Brief/generic; limited analysis of communication/boundary decisions.	Minimal reflection; weak boundary awareness.	Missing/irrelevant or evidence of boundary breach or unsafe advice.