

The State of Sport-Based Practicum Education for Social Work Students

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Abstract

In preparation for a career in social work, students take part in a field practicum, an opportunity to engage in experiential learning, which is considered a signature pedagogy by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). With the emergence of sport social work as an area of social work practice, there is a need for sport-specific field practicums to prepare students for a career as a social worker in sport. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore the state of sport-specific field practicums in the United States. A survey was completed by 119 social work faculty and staff at CSWE-accredited institutions. Findings support the fact that social work practice in sport is growing, but there remain barriers to establishing effective and sustainable practicum placements in sport organizations. Considering these barriers, specific implications for social work staff, faculty, and students are discussed in order to support the continued growth of sport-related social work practicum opportunities.

Keywords: field education; field placements; sport social work; internships; sport organizations

The mission of the social work profession is to empower and enhance the well-being of vulnerable populations (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2021). To ensure all aspiring social work students are competently prepared for professional practice, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) sets accreditation standards for bachelor- and master-level social work programs throughout the United States. The goal of CSWE accreditation is to ensure quality education and prepare social workers to provide public service through upholding the professional ethics and core values of justice, dignity and worth of a person, human relations, integrity, and competence. In addition to traditional coursework via in-person and online formats, social work practicums are recognized as an essential pedagogical component of CSWE accredited social work programs.

Amongst the diversity of ways in which social workers provide competent public service is the emerging subspecialty of *sport social work* (Anderson-Butcher & Bates, 2021; Moore et al., 2022; Newman et al., 2024). Sport social workers have been characterized to fulfill three distinct purposes: (1) the use of sport, recreation, and play to promote healthy youth development, often through community-based and afterschool programs (Anderson-Butcher, 2019); (2) the provision of mental and behavioral health services to athletes and teams, most commonly as an embedded clinician within collegiate athletic departments (Beasley et al., 2021); and (3) the application of social work values, knowledge, and skills (e.g., holistic biopsychosocial perspective, trauma-informed practice) by youth sport leaders, such as youth sport coaches (Tarr et al., 2023). However, as sport social work continues to evolve, scholars (e.g., Bates & Kratz, 2022) have advocated for

formal learning opportunities within mainstream social work education. The current study seeks to assess the landscape of available sport social work practicum experiences offered by CSWE accredited programs. Indeed, in preparation for the current study, a cursory review of available undergraduate and graduate CSWE accredited programs found that individual sport social work courses may be a growing trend, yet past research (e.g., Beasley et al., 2021; Magier et al., 2021) has suggested that sport-based practicum experiences are rarely available or are challenging to establish.

Advancing Sport Social Work

Throughout all systems and settings of sport, a spotlight has been shone on injustices and inequities, including bullying and abuse, gender- and sex-based inequities, racial discrimination, and mental health stigmatization (e.g., Meister & Lavanchy, 2021; Reardon et al., 2019). Given the dynamic and complex needs of sport participants (e.g., athletes, coaches, referees, parents), the social work profession may be uniquely equipped to provide services, supports, and resources that meet the diversity of mental and behavioral health needs among those involved in sport. For instance, the social work profession often operates from an ecological systems theory perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) that proposes an individual functions within society (i.e., person-in-environment) in which the environment interacts dynamically to shape that individual's wellbeing, health, and development.

In a similar fashion, Anderson-Butcher et al. (2011) and Dorsch et al. (2022) proposed that a sport system is comprised of three interrelated subsystems (i.e., family, team,

sport environment) within the broader ecological system (i.e., micro-, mezz-, and macro-levels) of human (i.e., athlete) development. Sport social workers at the micro-level serve as licensed mental health providers, often within collegiate and professional sport organizations (Beasley et al., 2022; Bennett, 2022). In fact, college athletes may have higher levels of mental health concerns compared to general university student populations (Wolanin et al., 2016), with nearly one-in-three college athletes reporting moderate to severe symptoms of depression or anxiety (Drew & Matthews, 2019). At the mezz-level, sport social workers create and implement mental health training for coaches (Bates et al., 2024), as well as evidence-based community youth sport programs, which are shown to promote long-term life skill development (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2018) and transfer (Newman & Anderson-Butcher, 2021) among youth. From a macro-level perspective, sport social workers help address concerns of diversity, equity, and inclusion within sport systems and organizations. For example, sport social workers have been instrumental in advocacy efforts for the inclusion of trans and gender non-conforming athletes (Huslage, 2023). Ultimately, social work values, ethics, and skills uniquely position sport social workers to make positive changes throughout all levels of sport systems (Newman et al., 2022; Tarr et al., 2023).

Sport Education in Social Work

Due to the continuing evolution of sport social work as a subspecialty, Clark et al. (2022) advocated for the value of including sport social work, as with military social work and other subspecialties, as an essential element of the

social work curriculum. Yet, there is a lack of formal sport specific educational opportunities for social work students. For instance, among current sport social workers, Magier et al. (2021) reported that a critical contributor to the development of professional competence was individuals' ability to integrate sport content, themselves, into coursework assignments. Similarly, Magier et al., (2024) found that aspiring sport social workers often felt it was necessary to explore informal (e.g., webinars) and nonformal (e.g., mentorship) learning opportunities to supplement their social work education. Such findings help to explain why sport social workers may describe a lack of direction when establishing their social work careers (Beasley et al., 2021).

The lack of available formal education opportunities is not to suggest that significant advances have not been made in the advancement of sport social work. Lawson and Anderson-Butcher (2000) delivered the "The Social Work of Sport" presentation at the *World Sport for All Congress*. Moreover, the *Social Work and Sport Association* student organization at University of Michigan School of Social Work held the first sport social work conference (Newman et al., 2016), and the Alliance of Social Workers in Sports (ASWIS) was founded and later established as a 501(c)(3) organization. Additionally, with support from the ASWIS, the *Sport Social Work Journal* was launched and is the only peer-reviewed journal dedicated to the subspecialty. The last decade has also seen the development of several sport social work professional certificate programs hosted by ASWIS, University of Michigan School of Social Work, and New York University Silver School of Social Work. The University of Kentucky, in addition to the recently established Sport Social Work Research

Lab, is developing a Doctor of Social Work (DSW) with a sport social work concentration. However, the backbone of available sport social work educational opportunities comes in the form of unique, individual courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels, such as those offered at The Ohio State University and University of Michigan.

Social Work Practicums

From a pedagogical perspective, CSWE (2022) holds that social work practicums are a unique method of teaching and learning. Practicum experiences provide the opportunity for hands-on, applied experiential learning that is meant to empower students to practice applying classroom content (e.g., theory, research) to real world situations and settings. Although specific requirements may vary by program, all accredited social work programs are required to provide practicums of at least 400 hours and 900 hours for undergraduate and graduate students, respectively. Social work scholarship has demonstrated that applied, hands-on learning experiences prepare students to be ethical, competent, innovative, and effective practitioners. For instance, social work practicums have been positioned as critical opportunities to reflect on ethical social dilemmas (Barsky, 2019), develop critical thinking skills (Lit & Shek, 2007), and practice applying novel social work approaches and skills (Fortune et al., 2007). Moreover, a critical component of social work practicums is structured supervision. In this way, aspiring social workers are not only supervised by a seasoned social work professional but, importantly, students are also provided the space and time to debrief, process, and critically reflect upon their firsthand experiences

working with clients. This continual supervision is also intended to foster professional competence, particularly when serving individuals, groups, and communities that are often marginalized throughout historical and contemporary societies.

For many undergraduate and graduate students, social work practicums commonly occur in 'traditional' social work settings, such as at local social service agencies, community-based organizations, faith-based programs, and community schools. However, establishing a practicum opportunity in non-traditional settings is often recognized as being more challenging (Rawsthorne et al., 2018). Indeed, preliminary research has suggested that, like other nontraditional settings (e.g., law offices, museums; Elswick et al., 2015), students are often confronted with limited access to sport organizations and a lack of qualified social work supervision (Beasley, 2022). Given the essential nature of practicum experiences—and the reality that such an experience may be the only opportunity students have to work in such a setting before becoming a social worker—there is a need for sport-based learning opportunities to be prioritized and positioned in the same manner as classroom-based learning.

The Current Study

Held as the *signature pedagogy* for the social work profession (CSWE, 2022), there is an essential need for formal sport-based practicum experiences. Indeed, to develop the requisite professional competence, sport social work scholars have suggested that sport-based practicum experiences represent critical learning experiences for aspiring social work students (Bates & Kratz, 2021; Beasley, 2022; Magier et al., 2021; Newman et al., 2022). The creation of

sport-based formal learning experiences may also help to educate others (e.g., coaches, sport managers, administrators) within the sport system about the social work profession (Beasley, 2022). For instance, prominent members of inter-professional care teams (e.g., athletic trainers, sport psychology professionals, mental performance coaches) are often unaware of sport social workers (Beasley et al., 2021; Newman et al., 2022). Ultimately, to continue advancing the subspecialty of sport social work, research must begin by assessing the current landscape of formal sport social work practicum experiences.

Method

Upon approval from the authors' Institutional Review Boards, an online Qualtrics survey was distributed to social work program staff and faculty across the United States. The contact list was developed utilizing the CSWE online directory of accredited programs. Email information for staff and faculty across 769 total institutions were collected, including undergraduate and graduate Practicum Directors, as well as Program Directors and Deans when Practicum Director information was unavailable (See Table 1).

Online survey links were sent directly to the entire contact list in late September 2023, with two subsequent reminders sent following the initial invitation after one week and one month, with data collection concluding in early November 2023. The survey presented a consent form upon first clicking on the survey link, describing the study, risks and benefits, and how the data collected was to be utilized. Once an individual agreed to the consent form, they were able to complete the survey. Of the 769 individuals invited to take the survey, 46 emails were invalid; thus, 723 invita-

Table 1
Participant Demographics

Item	<i>n</i>	%
<i>What position(s) do you hold at your school?</i>		
MSW Practicum Director	55	27.64
MSW Program Director	3	1.51
BSW/BASW Practicum Director	67	33.67
Practicum Liaison	20	10.05
School Director	3	1.51
Department Chair	5	2.51
Other (please describe):	14	7.04
<i>What type of college or university is your social work program located in?</i>		
For-Profit	4	3.42
Public Division III	9	7.69
Public Division II	17	14.54
Public Division I	34	29.06
Private Division III	18	15.38
Private Division II	6	5.13
Private Division I	7	5.98
Public, not an NCAA member institution	12	10.26
Private, not an NCAA member institution	10	8.55

tions were sent, of which 119 surveys were completed (16.46% completion rate). After the survey was closed, data were exported by the research team for statistical analysis and qualitative coding in Excel and SPSS.

Measures

The primary goal of the survey was to assess the "state" of sport-based social work practicum placements. The survey started by asking about the respondent's position and school setting. Respondents were asked "what type of college or university is your social work program located in," prompted to describe if their school is public or private, as well as if they are a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) member institution and if so, what division. The survey then moved to investigating the

social work practicum placements the school offers in sport settings, asking if sport-related practicum placements have been offered either currently or previously, at what degree level they are offered, how many sport-related placements are available, how many students utilize them, how many paid sport-related placements are offered, and at what level of practice (micro, mezzo, macro) placements are offered. Further, targeted questions prompted respondents to describe the tasks and duties students are responsible for.

The survey proceeded to explore the types of practicum sites, as well as what populations students work with. Subsequently, respondents were asked who in their department-initiated partnerships with practicum sites, the average length of the practicum relationship, and what

types of supervision the placements utilized. The final section of the survey asked 5-point Likert-scale questions about the ease of finding sport-based placements for students, getting in contact with agencies, meeting CSWE standards in placements, and sustaining practicum sites over time. Finally, respondents were asked about barriers to finding sport-based placements, ethical dilemmas, and whether the programs offer sport-specific content in their social work curriculum. The final question was an open text question that allowed respondents to expand upon their experience with sport-based practicum placements.

Data Analysis

As an exploratory study, descriptive statistics were observed for all variables. Descriptive statistics were generated using a mix of Qualtrics' built-in data analysis features and SPSS when statistics other than frequencies and percentages were required. Additionally, a member of the research team completed a basic content analysis of open-ended questions related type of tasks students complete in field placements. The first author coded the frequency that different social work tasks were identified by participants as micro, mezzo, and macro-practice (e.g., frequency of "therapy" being indicated as a type of micro-practice; Saldaña, 2016). The content coding was then reviewed by the lead author, and further discussed with the research team to finalize the results.

Results

Descriptive results (see Table 2) found that 35.04% of respondents ($n = 41$) currently or previously have had a sport-related practicum placement, and 19% of those respondents stated they currently have a student in a sport-based

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics on Placement Type

Item	<i>n</i>	%
<i>Does your program currently have or have previously had any sport-related practicum placements?</i>		
No	67	57.26
Yes	41	35.04
Unsure	9	7.69
<i>Does your program currently have any students placed in sport-specific practicum placements?</i>		
No	30	60.00
Yes	19	38.00
Unsure	1	2.00
<i>At which degree level are sport-related practicum placements available or have been available?</i>		
BSW	20	39.22
MSW	31	60.78
<i>At what level of practice are sports-related practicum placements available?</i>		
Micro	37	43.02
Mezzo	31	36.05
Macro	18	20.93
<i>What type of practicum site do you partner with for sport-based placements?</i>		
Professional sport teams	2	3.45
Community sport organizations	10	17.24
K-12 sport teams	1	1.72
University sport teams	23	39.66
Youth sport organizations	7	12.07

practicum placement. Respondents shared that an average of 3.15 students participate in sport-related practicum placements through their program ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 3.45$). Further, most placements were at the graduate, MSW-level (60.8%).

In general, the highest percentage of social work practicums focused on micro-level practice (43%), particularly within collegiate athletics (40%) and in-

cluded responsibilities such as individual counseling, case management, and crisis intervention. Participants also indicated practicums with professional leagues, high school and youth sports, and community sports. At the mezzo-level, respondents shared that the most common tasks were facilitating group activities, community engagement, contributing to program development and evaluation, and providing education and

training. At the macro-level, the most common tasks were policy and advocacy work, program development, research, and education and training. The most participants (40.4%) also reported that the supervision model of current placements was that the organization had a social worker on staff.

Participants were also asked how partnerships with sport organizations were initiated. The most common answers were that the student(s) initiated the partnership ($n = 17$), followed by a colleague in the social work department ($n = 15$), the organization reaching out to the social work department ($n = 13$), the respondent themselves by way of a contact within the organization ($n = 11$), and the respondent by way of cold calling ($n = 7$). Participants were asked about the ease or difficulty of the practicum placement process on a 5-point Likert-scale (1 = Extremely difficult to 5 = Extremely easy; see Table 3). Participants were somewhat ambivalent about the difficulty of assuring that CSWE competencies are met in sport-based practicum placements ($M = 3.3$), but participants indicated that it was somewhat difficult to find placements for students interested in a sports-based internships ($M = 2.4$), to get initial contact with sport-based practicum sites ($M = 2.8$), and to sustain practicum placements ($M = 2.8$). The difficulty of sustainability was supported by the length of partnerships, as 46.51% ($n = 20$) of the respondents indicated the average length of a relationship with a sport-based practicum agency was one academic year, followed by 18.6% indicating 4-5 academic years ($n = 8$) and 16.28% indicating 1-3 academic years ($n = 7$). Only two participants had a relationship with a sport-based practicum agency for 6 or more academic years. The data indicate that most relationships with sport-based practi-

cum agencies are relatively new and may not last past one intern placement.

In a select-all-that-apply question, the largest barrier identified was that there are not enough practicum supervisors with required credentials working at agencies (26.09%), followed by not enough sport organizations willing or interested in hosting a social work intern (21.74%), and no identified barrier (18.84%).

Open-ended responses focused on the different type of tasks students complete to meet CSWE competences. Responses varied, but there were clearly identified tasks at each level of practice (i.e., micro, mezzo, and macro; see Table 4 for detailed breakdown of tasks).

Discussion

As social work practicums are the signature pedagogy of the profession (CSWE, 2022), understanding the current landscape of formal sport-based experiences is a next big step in the advancement of sport social work. Overall, findings suggest social work practice in sport is growing, as demonstrated by social work programs offering sport-specific practicum opportunities. This is promising, because the lack of this type of specialized training has been previously identified in the literature as one of the primary gaps in the education of social workers working in sport settings (Beasley et al., 2021; Magier et al., 2021; Newman et al., 2024). Furthermore, the growth of sport-specific practicum education opportunities may also indicate that sport social work is further professionalizing as a subspecialty. Along with an ethical code and a theoretical foundation and applied knowledge base, specific standards of training and education are the markers of a specific profession (Broman, 1995). Therefore, sport-based practicum placement opportunities present a step to-

wards professionalization. Findings from the current study identified micro-level practice as the most common form of sport social work practicum experience. The systems perspective of social work is what distinguishes social work services in sport from other clinical professions (e.g., counseling, psychology; McHenry et al., 2021). Therefore, to continue to grow sport social work as distinct from other behavioral health professions in sport, practicum departments should also look to expand mezzo- and macro-based sport practicums, as well as opportunities outside of college sport.

Looking more specifically at the process of establishing placements, the findings suggest that students most often bring sport-based opportunities to the social work staff and faculty at their institution. Although there are some departments that operate in the model of students seeking their own practicum placements, this may not be best practice with establishing new sport-based practicum placements due to the often closed-off nature of sport (Beasley, 2022). Social work departments should thus begin doing their own outreach to sport organizations to proactively recruit sport-based practicum sites. Luckily, despite the need to continue growing such opportunities, there are current sport-based practicums that can be a model to aid practicum departments in beginning to conceptualize what a sport-based placement may look like at all levels of practice. For example, at the micro-level students could provide college athletes individual therapy, at the mezzo level students could develop interprofessional education seminars for staff, and at the macro level student could conduct policy evaluations. The ASWIS also recently released a manual to aid social work staff, faculty, and students in creating and maintaining sport-based practicum placements, as well as suggestions

Table 3*Descriptive Statistics on Placement Specifics*

Item	<i>n</i>	%
<i>Does your program currently have or have previously had any sport-related practicum placements?</i>		
No	67	57.26
Yes	41	35.04
Unsure	9	7.69
<i>Does your program currently have any students placed in sport-specific practicum placements?</i>		
No	30	60.00
Yes	19	38.00
Unsure	1	2.00
<i>At which degree level are sport-related practicum placements available or have been available?</i>		
BSW	20	39.22
MSW	31	60.78
<i>At what level of practice are sports-related practicum placements available?</i>		
Micro	37	43.02
Mezzo	31	36.05
Macro	18	20.93
<i>What type of practicum site do you partner with for sport-based placements?</i>		
Professional sport teams	2	3.45
Community sport organizations	10	17.24
K-12 sport teams	1	1.72
University sport teams	23	39.66
Youth sport organizations	7	12.07
Other (please describe):	15	25.86
<i>What supervision model do current sport-specific practicum placements use?</i>		
The organization(s) has a social worker on staff who provides supervision	23	40.35
The organization(s) does not have a social worker on staff, so we contract an outside supervisor	14	24.56
The organization(s) does not have a social worker on staff, so a social work faculty or staff member provides off-site supervision	18	31.58
Unsure	2	3.51

Table 4*Descriptive Statistics on Placement Challenges*

Item	<i>n</i>	%
<i>What supervision model do current sport-specific practicum placements use?</i>		
The organization(s) has a social worker on staff who provides supervision	23	40.35
The organization(s) does not have a social worker on staff, so we contract an outside supervisor	14	24.56
The organization(s) does not have a social worker on staff, so a social work faculty or staff member provides off-site supervision	18	31.58
Unsure	2	3.51
<i>For both past and current sport-specific practicum placements, who initiated the partnership?</i>		
Myself, I "cold-called" the organization(s)	7	10.45
Myself, I had a contact at the organization(s)	11	16.42
A colleague in the practicum department	15	22.39
The organization(s) reached out to the practicum department	13	19.40
The student(s)	17	25.37
Other	4	5.97
<i>How easy or difficult has it been for your program to find practicum placements for students interested in a sport-based internship?</i>		
Extremely difficult	8	18.60
Somewhat difficult	14	32.56
Neither easy nor difficult	17	39.53
Somewhat easy	3	6.98
Extremely easy	1	2.33
<i>Approximately, what has been the average length of a relationship with a sport-based practicum agency?</i>		
One semester	6	13.95
One academic year	20	46.51
1-3 academic years	7	16.28
4-5 academic years	8	18.60
6+ academic years	2	4.65
<i>What barriers to finding practicum placements for students interested in a sport-based practicum placements has your school encountered, if any?</i>		
Not enough spots for students at agencies	6	8.70
Not enough sport organizations willing to take students	15	21.74
Not enough practicum supervisors at agencies with required credentials	18	26.09
It is too expensive or complex for agencies to host a student (due to a lack of space, stipends, no willing task supervisor, etc.)	2	2.90
Agencies' policies or practices are not consistent with social work values	6	8.70
Student(s) has/have had negative experiences with an agency or agencies in the past	2	2.90
Agencies are concerned with client confidentiality	1	1.45
No barriers	13	18.84
Other barriers	6	8.70

Table 5*Ease and Difficulty of Practicum Placement Planning Process*

Item	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Count
Approximately how many students participate or have participated in sports-related practicum placements through your program?	0	15	3.15	3.45	46
How easy or difficult has it been for your program to assure student interns are meeting CSWE competencies with their work at a sport-based practicum placement?	2	4	3.30	.76	40
How easy or difficult has it been for your program to find practicum placements for students interested in a sport-based internship?	1	4	2.40	.93	40
How easy or difficult has it been for your program to get in initial contact with a sport-based practicum placement?	1	4	2.83	1.04	40
How easy or difficult has it been to sustain practicum sites over multiple semesters?	1	4	2.80	1.04	40

around supervision models when the organization does not have a supervisor on site (Beasley et al., n.d.), which was a challenge identified in the current study. This can be a great resource for anyone interested in establishing a practicum partnership with sport organizations.

Interestingly, not many challenges were identified once the process of establishing the practicum site was initiated, outside of securing appropriate social work supervision, which is a recognized challenge in other nontraditional social work practicum placement settings (Jasper et al., 2013). This suggests that establishing practicum placements in sport settings, in practice, may not be as difficult as perhaps perceived. However, despite participants indicating that sustainability was not extremely difficult, the majority of the placement opportunities only lasted one year. Thus, sustainability of these placements may be a challenge, as has been identified in qualitative work on the experiences of practicum staff establishing sport-specific filed placements (Beasley, 2022).

Research indicates that to sustain any type of higher educational program's partnership with outside organizations, systemic buy-in throughout both institutions is needed (Sandmann et al., 2009). When there is only buy-in from one individual from each organization, if one or both of those individuals leave, then the relationship has a high likelihood of dissolving. Similar challenges to sustainability have been identified in sport-based practicum partnerships (Beasley, 2022). Beasley (2022) suggests that systemic organizational buy-in only can happen if social work programs understand the need for social workers to provide services to people in sport, and if sport organizations understand what services social workers can bring to their organization. Therefore, social work faculty and staff need to educate and advocate for the subspecialty of sport social work both with their social work colleagues as well as with the sport organizations they are contacting. This can include education and advocacy through interdisciplinary efforts such

as webinars, attending sport and social work conferences to discuss practicum opportunities in sport, and hosting and attending continuing education-unit opportunities. These efforts should intentionally include educational campaigns for athletic administrators prior to any conversations about social work internships to decrease misconceptions and eliminate some of the educational work on the front-end of initiating a practicum partnership. This type of advocacy can both grow the practicum and ensure longer lasting sustainability of established partnerships.

Overall, practicum placements can grow the subspecialty of sport social work, as they not only train more social workers to work with sport populations or use sport as interventions in their social work practice, but they also introduce sport organizations to the social work profession, which can lead to more social work roles being created in sport (Beasley et al., 2021; Beasley, 2022). In line with this call for growth, the findings of this study provide a base un-

Table 6*Practicum Placement Task Examples*

Practice Level	Practicum Tasks
Micro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual counseling/therapy: Providing direct 1:1 counseling or therapy athletes • Case management: Managing individual cases, assessing needs, making referrals • Supporting student success: Addressing barriers to academic success, providing tutoring/academic support • Wellness promotion: Educating on mental health, providing social-emotional support • Crisis intervention: In the moment crisis intervention with athletes • Mentorship: Serving as mentors/peer supports to athletes • Group work: Facilitating group counseling or psychoeducation • Professional skills development: Learning case management, applying CSWE competencies in practice • Referrals/linkages: Connecting athletes to additional services and resources as needed • Assessment: Initial assessment of athlete needs
Mezzo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group work: Facilitating support groups, psychoeducation groups, team trainings • Community engagement: Community outreach, establishing partnerships • Program development/evaluation: Contributing to program design, policies, administration, needs assessments • Education/training: Developing materials, leading seminars/workshops, teaching skills • Interdisciplinary collaboration: Attending multi-disciplinary meetings, collaborating across organizations • Wellness promotion: Organizing activities, workshops related to health/wellbeing • Family work: Working with athletes' families • Professional skills development: Applying CSWE competencies in program evaluation, grant writing • Peer support: Coordinating peer mentoring opportunities • Assessment: Assessing community needs
Macro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy/Advocacy: Policy analysis, revision, implementation; Advocacy efforts • Program Development: Program development; Grants, fundraising, marketing, recruitment • Research: Assessing wellness programs, Community needs • Education/Training: Developing resources and trainings; Providing continuing education • Community Engagement: Community outreach, facilitation, collaboration • Awareness Building: Educating others on the role of social work with athletes • Journal Development: Working on editorial boards, production • Leadership/Management: Working with executive teams, committees

derstanding of what current practicums may look like, the process of establishing such practicums, and can provide insights on the future growth of these specialized practicum opportunities.

Although the current study offers one of the first explorations of the state of sport-based practicum education, it is not without its limitations. First and foremost, there was low response rate to


the survey. Future surveys, perhaps one that is backed by CSWE, should target an increased sample size. Secondly, there were more public institutions represented than private institutions. With these two limitations taken together, the results may not be generalizable. Finally, the data are descriptive in nature, which offers many opportunities for future research. For example, research on


student experiences in these types of placements can provide a needed perspective, and case studies on different types of internships can provide more nuanced insights, such as the differences of practicum placements in a sport organization versus practicum placements in clinical settings where sport is used as an intervention.


Conclusion

Practicum education is the signature pedagogy of social work education (CSWE, 2022) and can help professionalize the subspeciality of sport social work (Beasley, 2022). Therefore, it is important to understand the current state of sport-based practicum placements at CSWE-accredited institutions. Overall, the findings of this study suggest that there are opportunities for growth of these types of practicum placements, including more case management, community, and macro-based placements. Continued advocacy for sport-based practicum placements can ensure that programs are graduating social workers prepared to work at the intersection of social work and sport.

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