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## BOOK AND RESOURCE REVIEWS

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### ***Routledge Handbook of Applied Sport Psychology; A Comprehensive Guide for Students and Practitioners.***

Edited by Stephanie J. Hanrahan and Mark B. Andersen. Copyright 2010 by Routledge, 270 Madison Ave. New York, NY 10016 (\$220.00, 564 pp.).

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The field of sport and performance psychology is gradually approaching integration of two historically orthogonal foci: performance enhancement and therapy. With the *Routledge Handbook of Applied Sport Psychology* (2010), Stephanie Hanrahan and Mark Andersen present a model of applied practice that seeks consilience by linking together principles from counseling, assessment, therapeutic models, and traditional mental skills training. By emphasizing the importance of establishing therapeutic relationships (working alliances) between sport psychology practitioners and their clients, Hanrahan and Andersen are attempting to make applied sport psychology more “psychological” (p. xiv). This editorial approach reflects their professional identities as psychotherapists with expertise in applied sport psychology consultation. By placing most of the Handbook’s chapters within a psychological context, Hanrahan and Andersen attempt to overcome what they term the “false dichotomy” (p. 6) of categorizing athletes’ issues as either performance or personal in nature. To this end, they largely succeed.

What is often lost in the debate over training and credentials in the profession is the obvious fact that the best sport psychology consultants view their clients holistically, rather than rigidly or artificially confining their work to personal vs. performance issues. The well-known, successful consultants in the field certainly have the counseling skills and interpersonal qualities necessary to establish rapport and develop relationships with their consultees, in addition to possessing techniques that facilitate performance excellence. While distinctions between psychology- and kinesiology-based approaches are argued about at professional conferences and in journal articles, no consultant would persist for very long in an applied setting without being able to respond to a wide array of issues and provide theoretically-supported and evidence-based consultation. In a real-world setting, it is likely that practitioners will encounter some variation of each of the topics presented in this Handbook. Regardless of training and title, sport psychology professionals who wish to deliver comprehensive and valuable consultation to their clients would be well-served by becoming familiar with the multitude of subjects contained within this Handbook’s pages.

Hanrahan and Andersen make the point that if it is the athlete’s agenda to learn mental skills for performance, then it is appropriate to follow the athlete’s lead and address performance concerns. If the athlete wishes to discuss “off-field” issues, then it is helpful to be able to ethically and competently counsel the athlete in these areas as well. The idea is that it is the athlete who principally determines

the focus of the work, not a sport psychology consultant with a particular agenda. This approach is only possible if the consultant takes a holistic view and has the knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide effective service. It is important to see our athlete clients as they are, not as “we are”. By having the contributing authors emphasize the relational qualities of consultant-athlete and consultant-coach interactions, Hanrahan and Andersen sidestep the personal vs. performance debate and provide a holistic context for each of the topics addressed.

A Handbook's primary function is to provide a quick and comprehensive reference, in this case for students and practitioners. Most of the chapters deftly (and briefly) summarize state-of-the-science research, while emphasizing practical application through the use of vignettes, case studies, and examples. Each chapter concludes with a section of “practical suggestions” – excellent summaries of helpful points and main ideas. Several chapters present information that may be new to sport psychology consultants educated primarily in the cognitive-behavioral traditions of individual psychology and traditional mental skills training approaches. For example, Zito (chapter 19) presents a review of family systems interventions in sport that would be helpful for those working with teams and organizations. Statler's chapter (34) on developing a shared identity/vision also provides practical suggestions for team-oriented consultation. Graduate students in applied practicum settings will be particularly helped by Watson and Shannon's review of the purposes and processes of individual and group observations (chapter 10). Early-career consultants will benefit from Van Raalte's discussion of when, why, and how to make referrals (chapter 22). Kellmann's review (chapter 31) of overtraining and recovery is a practical approach to assessment and intervention in an area that will allow practitioners to provide immediate value for athletes, coaches, strength and conditioning staff, and sports medicine providers. Terry's discussion (chapter 36) of empirically-supported protocols for travelling and Hodge's overview (chapter 42) on working at the Olympics are essential reading for consultants who accompany athletes and teams on the road. Hodge's suggestion that sport psychologists should be available but not get in the way applies to any sport setting, and is part of the “art” of consulting that is enhanced by competent supervision/mentorship. This is addressed in his discussion of training and professional development in sport psychology (chapter 3). Overall, readers will find much value for their applied endeavors.

The third section of the book includes descriptions of different theoretical or therapeutic intervention models adapted for consultation with sport performers. These adapted models are effective for performance restoration, as they may be used to help athletes overcome obstacles that have diminished or impeded a previously achieved level of performance. The majority of these adapted approaches are derived from personality theories and behavioral models developed in the parent discipline of psychology, originally created to explain and understand pathology and to assist in preventing, eliminating, or assessing symptomatic, maladaptive, or undesired behavior. A holistic sport psychology approach should include these adapted models as well as overarching theories of performance excellence developed specifically to understand and explain optimal performance from a psychological perspective. This holistic approach addresses both performance restoration and performance enhancement, guided principally by the client's needs and focus. It is hoped that the next edition of this Handbook includes theories and models of