



## Resilience in Motion: Social Work's Role in Sports

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Jara Dillingham, MSW, LCSW  
Clinical Assistant Professor  
University of Southern Indiana  
Social Work  
[Jdillingh@usi.edu](mailto:Jdillingh@usi.edu)  
812-228-5156



Summer Wilderman, LCSW, DSW  
Assistant Professor  
University of Southern Indiana  
Social Work  
[s.wilderman@usi.edu](mailto:s.wilderman@usi.edu)  
812-465-1147

## Presenters



## Poll

SPORT INVOLVEMENT



# American's Participation in Sport

Sport participation in America is higher than it has EVER been!

- The participation rate for “Americans aged six and older across 124 different sports, fitness, and outdoor activities” has reached **80%** (SFIA, 2025)
  - 247.1 million Americans participated in at least one activity in 2024
- 55.4% of children (ages 6-17) “played organized sports in 2023” (Striveon, n.d.)
  - Parents are VERY Involved (YSBR, 2025)
    - Team Parent (43.6%), Concession/Ticket Sales (16.4%), Coach (14.5%), Referee/Official (7.1%), Administrator (6.4%), Athletic Trainer/Medical Support (4.2%)
- 48% of Americans “took part in organized, competitive sports in high school or college” (Hatfield, 2024)
- 38% “follow professional or college sports”
  - This is “nearly four-in-ten Americans” who are regular sports fans



## Poll

SPORT SOCIAL WORK



## Learning Objectives



1

Define Sport Social Work

2

Opportunities for resilience through social work & sport collabs

3

Identify social work practice opportunities within sports

4

Networking opportunities in sport social work







## What sets us apart from other disciplines?

- Strengths-Based
- Person Centered
- Social Justice Lens
- Holistic Approach
- Collaborative

These approaches create opportunity for resilience through social work and sport collaboration.



## Levels of Practice & Ways to Engage



Micro: Individuals

Mezzo: Groups & Communities

Macro: Policy & Systems



## Connecting the Dots . . . Resilience

"The process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands"  
(APA, 2026)

### Contributing Factors:

- Personality
- Encounters with the world around us
- Access to resources
- Development of healthy coping strategies



Resiliency can be learned and refined with practice  
(Willmore et al., 2022)





# Resilience in Motion

Resilience does **NOT** have to be **Reactive**

- Resulting from a stressor or circumstance

Resilience **CAN** be **Proactive** through

- Increasing Awareness
- Building Skills
- Developing Others
  - Role Modeling
  - Education

With 80% of Americans being involved/having interest in sports, let's capitalize on this opportunity!

Sport is a natural way to develop resiliency skills!



## Beyond the Physical: What else is developed in sports?

- Communication
- Adaptability
- Teamwork/Collaboration
- Accountability
- Time Management
- Stress Management
- Perseverance

These soft skills can build resiliency!



## Developing these Skills

Who influences the development of soft or resiliency skills in athletes?

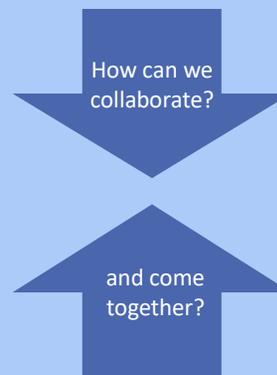
- Coaches
- Athletic Trainers
- Parents
- Teammates
- Sports Program Culture

❖ Are these individuals trained to effectively build resilience?

- Athletes **WILL** develop skills from these experiences
  - Healthy vs Unhealthy
  - Effective vs Ineffective

❖ Social workers **ARE** equipped

- Proficient Interviewing, Assessment, and Interpersonal Skills
- Trained in Awareness Raising & How to Educate and Equip Others



# Opportunities (& Barriers) to Resilience

## Opportunities

- Online Trainings
  - Coach Beyond – FREE!
- Partnerships
- Workshops
  - Effective Communication
  - Healthy Support for Healthy Athletes
  - The Balanced Athlete

## Barriers

- Sport Culture
- Time
- Money
- Access to Information
- “Getting in the Door”



## Happening NOW!



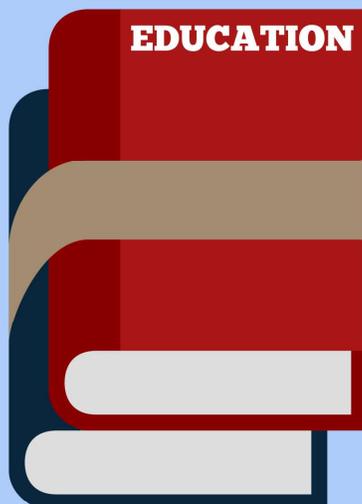
**ASWIS Mission:** promote individual and community well-being through partnerships between the profession of social work and the field of athletics (<https://www.aswis.org>)

- Est. 2015
- Membership
- Partnership & Networking
- Education: CEUs, Annual Symposium, Certificate, Practicum
- Committees: Executive, Conference, Clinicians, Research, Practicum
- Sport Social Work Journal
  - Sponsored by UK & Ball State (2021)



**CCSSWI Mission:** provide licensed social workers with world class content on athletes and mental health, to prepare them to compete for employment in the sports industry, and to build trust with sports organizations about the competency of sports social workers, our graduates and ACMH - Certified Athlete Clinical Mental Health (<https://ccsswi.org>)

- Created by the co-founder of ASWIS and the creator of the ASWIS certificate program.



## Education Opportunities

### Continuing Education (CEUs)

- ASWIS webinars, trainings, annual conference

### Certificates

- ASWIS Sport Social Work Certificate
- Athlete Clinical Mental Health (ACMH) Certification
- University of Michigan
- Georgia State University

### Internships

- ASWIS

### Specializations

- University of Tennessee
- Ball State University
- Ohio State

# Employment Opportunities

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## Professional Sports

- NFL
- NBA

## Colleges & Universities

## United States Olympic & Paralympic Committees (USOPC)

## Organizations

- US Center for SafeSport

## Non-Profits

- Childhelp
- New Heights



## Questions? Thoughts?

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What's missing?

What is intriguing you?



Sport Social Work Interest



## Now What?

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Want additional information about sport social work?

Have an interest in collaborating?

What potential next steps are you interested in pursuing? Individually or collectively?



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