



## **SPORT SOCIAL WORK FACT SHEET**

### **What is Sport Social Work?**

- Sport Social Work focuses on the unique individual and environmental needs of athletes and promotes social justice and social change across sports.

### **What is the role of a Sport Social Worker in College Sports?**

- Provide clinical services and performance enhancing services to student-athletes. Sport Social Workers are equipped to address depression, anxiety, bipolar, substance abuse, and eating disorders as well as a litany of other mental health challenges that can be exacerbated by sports.
- Offer program development services to athletic departments in areas such as sports performance, transitions, career development, substance use, post traumatic growth and other programs for student-athlete groups.
- Participate in multi-disciplinary behavioral teams that include athletic trainers, sports psychologists, and team physicians to promote the health and well-being of student-athletes.
- Some Sport Social Workers are athletic department staff members while others may be employed by an outside vendor or university counseling department to work exclusively with student-athletes.

### **How are we unique?**

- Sport Social Workers are equipped to help student-athletes and athletic departments navigate systems including criminal justice, foster care, communal, familial, and peer networks that some student-athletes continue to interact with upon their arrival to college campuses.
- Sport Social Workers use strength-based and biopsychosocial approaches in their work with student-athletes and athletic departments.
- Values and ethics established by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) guide Sport Social Workers.

## ADDRESSING NCAA'S MENTAL HEALTH BEST PRACTICES THROUGH SPORT SOCIAL WORK

### 1. Clinical Licensure of Practitioners Providing Mental Health Crisis

- Nearly 300,000 licensed social workers in US
- Utilize person-in-environment framework to understand social, psychological, biological, cultural, and spiritual dimensions
- Address behavioral and emotional issues
- Offer various therapeutic techniques

### 2. Procedures for Identification & Referral of Student-Athletes to Qualified Practitioners

- Develop and review referral protocols
- Provide case management and crisis intervention to athletes, teams, and departments
- Communicate with medical and mental health professionals inside and outside the university
- Advise Athletic Trainers on identifying mental health and referring to appropriate resources

### 3. Pre-Participation Mental Health Screening

- Assess student-athlete's strengths, risks, needs and systems prior to collegiate sport participation
- Conduct various screening tools
- Develop and oversee mental health referral plans

### 4. Health Promoting Environments that Support Mental Well-Being and Resilience

- Collaborate with NCAA Committees
- Develop and evaluate interventions & preventions
- Partner with campus resources to promote health and well-being of student-athletes
- Advocate for the best interests of student-athletes, coaches and athletic departments

## EXAMPLES OF COLLEGES UTILIZING SPORT SOCIAL WORKERS

- George Mason University
- Lamar University
- Lindenwood University
- Louisiana State University
- North Carolina Central University
- University of Connecticut
- University of Georgia
- University of Iowa
- University of Louisville
- University of Massachusetts Amherst
- University of Michigan
- University of North Dakota
- University of Pittsburgh
- University of Tennessee
- University of Texas
- Utah State University

*Helping athletes win at life!*

### Alliance of Social Workers in Sports

P.O. Box 592664

San Antonio, TX 78259

Tel: (800) 567-1178

Fax: (765) 285-1029

Email: [socialworkersinsports@gmail.com](mailto:socialworkersinsports@gmail.com)

