



## **Combined Executive Summary 2018-2020**

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The Alliance of Social Workers in Sports (ASWIS) understands that a precise and critically developed strategic plan provides the blueprint for our collective growth. Having clearly stated mission, vision, and value statements provide the overarching objective of our Alliance. However, the specific goals outlined in a strategic plan give us precise tasks for achieving our prominent objective. Each presidential term we report on our strategic plan through an Executive Summary. This summary promotes accountability of our leadership and transparency to our members and supporting organizations. In the end, maintaining integrity towards this plan and demonstrating full disclosure in our reporting will gain our members access to new resources, continue to inspire a subfield of social workers, as well as draw local, state, national, and global attention to the well-being and functioning of athletes.

### **Goal Number One: Membership Education and Networking**

Recognizing the value our membership brings to the Alliance, we return their investment through educational opportunities and growing their professional network. In the past two years, we were able to achieve the following:

- Developed a three-part webinar series with the Student Athlete Mental Health Initiative. This is a Canadian based organization supporting the behavioral health and psychosocial needs of student-athletes. The series focused on student-athlete, coach, and provider perspectives of mental health in college sports.
- Gained approval for Continuing Education Units (CEUs) from the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) for multiple webinars related to sport social work at the college and professional levels. Both Alliance members and external experts hosted these webinars.
- Hosted two international conferences on sport social work at the Denver Athletic Club (Denver, CO) and RDV Sportsplex (Orlando, FL). These conferences, discussed in greater detail later, had over 250 attendees from across the globe. These conferences were each approved for 15 CEUs by NASW. These were our fourth and fifth international conferences.



- Endorsed webinars from external agencies such as the Psychiatry Grand Rounds (Unique Challenges in the Diagnosis and Treatment of PTSD in Athletes) and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (Seize the Awkward).
- Hosted monthly Alliance wide membership calls. These calls provided members an opportunity to hear about current happenings with the Alliance. We also hosted a guest speaker with national expertise on each call.
- Established regional-based membership networks. We created these regions based on the N4A regional map. Many of these regional networks meet on a regular basis.
- Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Alliance was co-sponsoring the Mental Health Awareness Game between the Detroit Pistons and the Orlando Magic. The Alliance was going to host a networking event prior to tipoff. We will resume these efforts when public health regulations and National Basketball League (NBA) policies prohibit.
- Developed a multi-part podcast series entitled, “Huddle Up,” with the Student Athlete Mental Health Initiative. This podcast series included speakers from across North America. These speakers covered a wide array of topics impacting the mental health of athletes. This series is available on all downloading platforms (e.g., Spreaker, iTunes, etc.).
- Maintained an active job center on our website with employment postings for sport social workers.
- Created a members only email listserv.

## **Goal Number Two: Committee Engagement**

The Executive Committee created a list of standing committees to help the Alliance achieve established goals. The success of the Alliance is only as great as the success of each individual committee. Accomplishments of the committees are below:

- The Committee on Youth Sports developed a list of organizations that may be interested in partnering with the Alliance. This includes partnerships in research, policy, and practice opportunities. The Committee responded to multiple stories involving injustices in youth sport. The Committee also backed several pieces of youth sport legislation. Recent legislation focused on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Youth Sport Economic Relief Fund and Youth Sports Recovery Program).



- The Committee on College Sports released several groundbreaking documents. These included a fact sheet on sport social work at the college level, sport social work and mental health best practices, and a sample sport social work job description. Committee members worked with the NCAA Sport Science Institute to create a regionalized list of sport social workers for distribution. The committee wrote position statements on matters such as the financial exploitation of athletes and to the Chairwoman of the Commission on College Basketball.
- The Committee on Professional Sports is currently planning a Professional Sport Development Day. The plans for this event are changing given the current public health crisis. The committee is in the process of putting together fact sheets about sport social work at the professional level. The committee wrote several position statements to organizations like the National Football League (NFL), USA Gymnastics, and USA Hockey. The committee also promoted the inclusion of social workers as recognized providers in recent mental health documents from the NBA and NFL.
- The Committee on Research continued to operate a current database of peer-reviewed publications involving sport social work topics.
- The Committee on Education oversaw the development and expansion of the Sport Social Work Certificate Program. This program is discussed in full detail later in this report.
- The Early Scholars Committee provided a source of ongoing support for early scholars who are engaged in scholarly activities (e.g., coursework, dissertation, job search, etc.). This committee has offered a medium for collaboration on scholarly research studies, manuscripts, and presentations. The committee experienced significant success in these areas, which included numerous peer-reviewed publications, secured grant funding, and presentations at national and international conferences.

### **Goal Number Three: Membership Growth and Sustainability**

The growth of our Alliance depends heavily on the recruitment of new members and renewal of existing memberships. It is our collective voice as a mounting group that positions the Alliance, the social work profession, and our members to better serve the athlete population. Below is a breakdown of our current membership efforts:



- The Alliance currently has 14 founding members, 110+ professional members, 65 + student members, and 36 certificate program students. This is a total membership of nearly 250. The Alliance also has one agency-based and one institutional membership.
- The goal of the Alliance is to increase membership by 50 members each calendar year. This being our fifth year of existence, our goal is to exceed 250 members by the end of 2020. Current projections support our attainment of this goal.
- The Alliance has members in North America, Europe, Africa, and Australia.
- From 2019 to 2020, the Alliance retained 87% of founding members, 78% of professional members, and 51% of student members.
- The Alliance started a new annual membership schedule in January of 2019. These efforts streamlined the membership process and made membership tracking more effective and efficient.

#### **Goal Number Four: Infrastructure**

It is the goal of the Alliance to serve as a model non-profit organization. To achieve this goal the Alliance:

- Maintains an active non-profit status.
- Maintains a current Employer Identification Number (EIN) with the Internal Revenue Service.
- Submits an annual tax return.
- Follows bylaws that provide policies and procedures for organizational governance.
- Establishes and maintains a strategic plan that provides clear goals.

#### **Goal Five: Partnerships**

The Alliance recognizes multiple professions and organizations have a stake in the safety and well-being of athletes. The Alliance seeks to develop interprofessional relationships that further advances the goals of the Alliance and positions social workers to be strong advocates in the multidisciplinary approaches commonly used in the field of athletics. The Alliance achieved the following since 2018:



- Worked collaboratively on efforts with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). This includes having Alliance representation on multiple task forces and commissions (e.g., NCAA Commission to Combat Campus Sexual Violence and Task Force on Sleep Disorders and Wellness).
- Engaged in activities with the National Association for Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), US Center for SafeSport, United States Olympic Committee (USOC), International Olympic Committee (IOC), and multiple other professional, college, and youth organizations focusing on athlete health and well-being.
- Worked closely with NASW (national office) and several state-based chapters to promote sport social work.
- Participated in efforts with the Big Sky Sport Psychology Group, Association for Applied Sport Psychology, National Athletic Trainers Association, and other interprofessional efforts.
- Discussed collaboration with the International Federation of Social Workers Africa to explore membership, education, and advocacy efforts in Tanzania, Rwanda, South Africa, and Eswatini.

### **Goal Six: Policy**

The Alliance would like to provide athletes with a voice in policies that impact their lives. Influencing policy supports the advocacy arm of the Alliance and shines a local, state, national, and global spotlight on our grassroots efforts. Recent efforts included:

- The creation of a policy platform that provides strong sport social work position statements on matters pertaining to well-being and functioning.
- Active engagement with legislators, lobbyists, and advocacy organizations as it pertains to relevant legislation.
- Writing position statements on legislative efforts regarding access to behavioral health services, equal pay, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse, exploitation, athlete likeness/image, etc.



### **Goal Seven: Research**

Research is necessary to raise awareness for the needs of athletes and to provide knowledge on how athletic competition influences an athlete across their lifespan. The Alliance also sees research as a unifier between members who could work collaboratively on projects. Furthermore, having members present their research at local, state, national, and international conferences provides necessary publicity for the Alliance and a needed voice for athletes. These research efforts can also manifest in the procurement of grants and other resources that allow the Alliance to be innovative. In particular, the Alliance membership was able to accomplish the following:

- Presented at local, state, national, and international social work conferences on sport social work. Examples of conferences include: Society for Social Work Research (SSWR), Baccalaureate Program Directors (BPD), Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), and NASW.
- Presented at local, state, national, and international conferences on sport. Examples of conferences include: College Sport Research Institute, North American Society for Sport Management, International Sport and Society, North American Society for the Sociology of Sport, and Association for Applied Sport Psychology.
- Published over 50 peer-reviewed articles related to sport social work topics in social work or related journals.
- Edited the first-ever special issue on sport social work in the *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*.
- Published the first-ever sport social work textbook.

### **Goal Eight: Marketing and Visibility**

The Alliance seeks to expand its footprint in the world of athletics. To do this, the Alliance must establish marketing and visibility plans that bring awareness to our cause, establish a level of expertise, and show open-mindedness towards working collaboratively with others. The Alliance:

- Interfaced with professional social work bodies such as NASW, BPD, SSWR, and CSWE.



- Maintained consultation services and invited presentation opportunities for our membership. The Alliance had members invited to speak at events for the NCAA, NAIA, NASW, IOC, as well as many other public and private organizations.
- Oversaw active social media efforts through Twitter, Instagram, FaceBook, and LinkedIn.
- Distributed a bi-monthly newsletter.
- Purchased print and digital advertisement to promote our annual conference and our sport social work certificate program.
- Produced promotional items (e.g., pens, stress balls, computer stickers, etc.).
- Maintained a professional website (discussed in greater detail below).
- Sponsored and endorsed various events related to athlete safety and well-being.
- Purchased booth space at the CSWE conference.

### **Goal Nine: Social Work in Sports Symposium**

The Alliance is committed to hosting an annual conference on the integration, application, and evaluation of social work in sports. The annual conference provides a peer-reviewed format for disseminating research, practice knowledge, and advocacy for the sport social work movement. The conference also serves as an excellent networking opportunity for those interested in the health and well-being of youth, college, and professional athletes. Highlights from the past two conferences are below:

- In 2018, we hosted the conference at the RDV Sportsplex in Orlando, Florida. The conference welcomed over 120 attendees for three days of learning. The conference featured interactive workshops, poster presentations, Ted Talk style presentations, panel discussions, and keynote speakers.
- Keynote speakers included: Dr. William Parham (Director of Mental Health and Wellness for the NBA), Lieutenant General Robert Caslan (President of the University of South Carolina), and Dr. Richard Lapchick (Endowed Chair and Director of DeVos Sport Management Program at the University of Central Florida).
- Sponsors for the symposium included: University of Houston Graduate School of Social Work, University of Tennessee College of Social Work, NC State University Department of Social Work, Clark Atlanta University Whitney M. Young Jr. School of Social Work, University of Michigan School of Social Work, Ball State University College of Health, The University of Alabama School of Social Work, University of Georgia School of Social Work, and NASW.



- In 2019, we hosted the conference at the Denver Athletic Club in Denver, Colorado. The conference welcomed over 150 attendees for three days of learning. The conference featured interactive workshops, poster presentations, Ted Talk style presentations, panel discussions, and keynote speakers.
- Keynote speakers included: Dr. Karen Cogan (Senior Sports Psychologist for the USOC), Dr. Claudia Reardon (Associate Professor at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health), Ms. Tish Guerin (Chief Executive Officer for Transitions Management Group), and Mr. Vince Pryor (Consultant and Activist).
- Sponsors for the symposium included: Center for Sport at Tulane University, NC State Department of Social Work, Ball State University College of Health, UC Berkeley School of Social Welfare, The University of Alabama School of Social Work, University of Georgia School of Social Work, Life Sports at The Ohio State University, University of Michigan School of Social Work, Wichita State University Department of Social Work, USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, East Carolina University, University of Denver Graduate School of Social work, and Metropolitan State University Department of Social Work.
- We are currently planning our 2020 symposium. This will be a virtual symposium given the public impact of COVID-19.

### **Goal Ten: Student Representation and Outreach**

The Alliance understands the future of the sport social work movement relies heavily on the future generations of social work professionals. Our student membership is comprised of pioneering minds, with insights that could shatter barriers currently facing the athlete population. Thus, our Alliance seeks to mentor and position our student members as they reach their educational ambitions. To do this, the Alliance has done the following:

- Supervised over 3,000 hours of practicum and internship experiences with students from multiple colleges and universities. Some of these programs include: The University of Alabama, Troy University, Ball State University, University of Nevada, University of Connecticut, and the University of Southern California.
- Aided in the development of sport social work elective courses at various colleges and universities (e.g., University of Texas, Lamar University, Wichita State University, Ball State University, etc.).
- Elected an at-large student position on the Alliance Executive Committee.
- Invited students to be active in the Alliance committee structure.
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- Included students in academic research, publications, and conference presentations.
- Encouraged student members to seek professional mentors from within our professional membership.

### **Goal Eleven: Fundraising and Development**

The financial state of the Alliance is essential to achieving the goals established in our strategic plan. Having disposable resources provides the Alliance the ability to lead the integration of social work into all realms of sports. The current financial state of the Alliance is outlined below:

- The Alliance currently has over \$50,000 of disposable revenue. These funds come from a variety of sources such as membership dues, the Sport Social Work Certificate Program, symposium sponsorships and registrations, job center contributions, and other donations.
- The Alliance is actively establishing an investment portfolio to gain larger interest on reserved funds.
- In 2020, we are expecting \$73,000 in revenue with \$41,000 in expenditures. We are projecting \$17,000 in membership dues, \$35,000 from the Sport Social Work Certificate Program, and \$21,000 from the Social Work in Sports Symposium. All other revenue categories are small in total. Our largest expenditures include the Social Work in Sports Symposium, certificate program instructor fees, continuing education unit expenses, and administrative fees.

### **Goal Twelve: Elections**

Electing leaders for the Alliance is an essential function for the oversight of any strategic plan and infusing new ideas as the Alliance continues to mature. To achieve this goal the Alliance took the following actions:

- Formalized election protocols and adopted them into the organizational bylaws.
- Held the first formal election of members to the Executive Committee.
- Created the new role of “Immediate Past President.”



### **Goal Thirteen: Website and Communication**

All organizations need a central hub where members can access and share information. Our Alliance invested time and resources in the creation of [www.aswis.org](http://www.aswis.org). Our website serves as the primary source for information about the Alliance, recruitment of new members, and other current events. We also seek to offer additional modes of communication to our members and to the larger community. This is done through dissemination of our bi-monthly newsletter, a peer-reviewed blog, and various social media accounts. The website and social media accounts are updated on a weekly basis. We average 55,000 visitors each year to our website. We have over 1,500 followers between our social media accounts. This includes over 650 LinkedIn, 500 Twitter, 130 Instagram, and 600 Facebook followers.

### **Goal Fourteen: Sport Social Work Certificate Program**

Recognizing the need to position social workers for careers in athletics, the Alliance believes a Sport Social Work Certificate Program could provide the excellence in education, research, practice, and service necessary for social workers to play a large role in promoting the health and well-being of athletes. Below is a summary of accomplishments:

- The Alliance created and maintained an eight course curriculum based on social work theory, policy, research, and practice with a focus on CSWE standards.
- The courses were taught by industry experts.
- The program utilized Google Classroom and Zoom as hosting platforms.
- The program enrolled five cohorts, which included over 30 students.
- The program received approval for 52 CEUs by NASW.
- Note: This is the only sport social work certificate program in the world.

### **Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Our Executive Committee recognizes the direct impact of COVID-19 on the world of sports. This impact is historical, far-reaching, and leading to uncharted territories. When you reach uncharted territories, you are required to make extremely difficult decisions. These decisions undoubtedly impacted the lives of millions of athletes, coaches, industry leaders, and fans. Our Alliance joined the interprofessional efforts to help those in the athletic space impacted by COVID-19. Below is a summary of Alliance actions:



- The Alliance released an official response letter to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Alliance created an expansive telehealth provider list of members able to provide behavioral health care to athletes. This list included over 50 clinical providers from the United States and Canada. This list was shared with the NCAA, NAIA, and youth sport organizations.
- The Alliance hosted weekly interprofessional Zoom meetings on various topics related to COVID-19 and sport.
- Members of the Alliance led webinars on the impact of COVID-19 on athletes.
- Members of the Alliance organized a forum supporting Black student-athletes.
- The Alliance created a dedicated resource page on the website to share COVID-19 resources.
- The Alliance participated in conversations with the NCAA and NAIA.

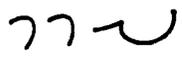
### **Closing Remarks**

The mission of the Alliance of Social Workers in Sports is to promote individual and community well-being through partnerships between the profession of social work and the field of athletics. We focus on partnerships in practice, research, and policy, with involvement and awareness in all areas where social work and sports systems intersect.

We take this mission very seriously. We also believe the efforts outlined in this executive summary pay homage to our mission. It is a great honor to have an impact on the athletic space. We look forward to expanding our footprint and paving the way for future social workers. We will also continue to maintain our athlete-centered approach to organizational activities.

The Alliance has a track record of exceptional work. If we maintain and build upon these past successes the future of the Alliance will be extraordinary.

Respectfully Submitted,

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