

## CHAPTER

# 19

## Gender, Diversity, and Cultural Competence

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*How many goodly creatures are there here! How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world that has such people in it!*

*—From William Shakespeare's The Tempest, V, 1, 182*

*One size does NOT fit all!*

Both our larger world and our sport world do indeed include a wondrous diversity of people. Just as clearly—one size does NOT fit all—whether we are considering clothing, policies, institutions, or applied sport psychology. Gender and cultural diversity issues are real and powerful. As applied sport psychology practitioners, whether in teaching, research, or consulting with athletes, it is imperative that we recognize the possibilities and constraints of cultural diversity and keep reminding ourselves that one size does not fit all. Attention to gender and cultural diversity is vital to our scholarship, and cultural competence is essential to professional practice. We hope this chapter will encourage more scholarship on diversity issues and greater emphasis on cultural competencies in professional practice.

### ***Overview and Framework***

This chapter begins with a guiding multicultural framework, examines gender and cultural diversity

in sport, and then focuses on applied sport psychology research and professional practice. Throughout the chapter we include examples, as well as suggestions for promoting cultural competence in applied sport psychology. We interpret sport broadly, including all levels and forms of sport, and we intentionally advocate *sport for all*. That is, applied sport psychology can best address gender and cultural diversity by promoting safe, inclusive physical activity and by highlighting cultural competence in professional practice.

### **Multicultural Psychology**

Although gender and cultural diversity are seldom central themes in applied sport psychology, the larger field of psychology, and particularly the American Psychological Association (APA), has developed a scholarly base and professional resources on multicultural psychology.



The continuing work in feminist and multicultural psychology provides a framework for this chapter, helps clarify terminology, and provides guidelines for professional practice.

*Culture* is complex and not easily defined. As Mio, Barker-Hackett, and Tumambing (2012) note, narrow definitions emphasize ethnicity, but a broader definition refers to *shared values, beliefs, and practices of an identifiable group of people*. With that broader, encompassing definition, gender is part of culture. Thus, culture includes gender, race, ethnicity, language, spirituality, sexuality, many other social characteristics, and, of particular relevance here, *physicality* (physical abilities and characteristics).

This chapter draws from that expanding multicultural psychology scholarship, along with the feminist and cultural sport studies literature. These sources converge on the following common themes that form the guiding framework for this chapter:

**Multiple, intersecting cultural identities.** We all have gender, race, ethnicity, and multiple cultural identities, with the mix varying across individuals, time, and contexts. Moreover, multiple identities are not a simple additive combination, but reflect intersectionality. *Intersectionality* primarily stems from the work of black feminist scholars, such as Kimberlé Crenshaw and Patricia Hill Collins. Crenshaw (1993, 2011), often credited with introducing the concept of intersectionality, argued that women's issues are not only gender issues, but are shaped by other dimensions of identity, particularly race and class. As Collins and Bilge (2016) argue, African American women's experience of intersecting oppressions cannot be separated. For example, the experiences of black women athletes are unique and not simply the combination of black male athletes' and white women athletes' experiences. Within psychology, Shields (2008) states that intersectionality has transformed how gender is conceptualized in research, and Cole (2009) noted that intersectionality calls

for a conceptual shift in the way psychologists understand social categories. Rosenthal (2016) further argues that intersectionality draws psychology's attention to structural-level issues and social justice as a central issue in the field.

**Power relations.** Cultural relations involve power and privilege. Who makes the rules? Who is *left out*?

**Action and advocacy.** Multicultural perspectives demand action for social justice.

Culturally competent applied sport psychology professionals develop their own multicultural competencies and also work for social justice and advocate sport for all.

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### Exercise 1: Identify Your Own Multiple Identities

*List as many as you can of your own social identities (gender, race, ethnicity, social class, sexuality, spirituality/religion, physicality, etc.). You should have a long list. Try to mark three identities that are especially salient or influential for you (that won't be easy, as different identities are more or less salient in different situations). Now, select a profession in which you might be working with sport participants, such as sport psychology consultant, athletic trainer, coach, or fitness leader. How will your own multiple, intersecting identities affect your work and interactions with participants?*

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The most recent APA (2017) multicultural guidelines explicitly highlight intersectionality in the title: *Multicultural Guidelines: An Ecological Approach to Context, Identity, and Intersectionality*, 2017. The current guidelines extend previous versions to consider a broader range of contextual factors and intersectionality among identities. The guidelines reflect an ecological model of concentric circles moving from the microsystem of immediate family, friends, and institutions, through the mesosystem of social entities; the exosystem of



societal forces; the macrosystem of cultural, legal, and governmental influences; to the chronosystem of historical context. Sport psychology consultants not only address issues within the microsystem but may also engage with exosystems or macrosystems, which suggests advocacy for social justice.

By adopting the approach of the APA (2017) guidelines, and the multicultural framework of this chapter, sport psychology consultants can advance our understanding of and promote cultural competence in professional practice—but that's no easy task. Sport psychology is explicitly context dependent, and the sport context is unique in many ways. Sport psychology consultants must pay attention to power relations and social context in the sport environment, while retaining concern for the individual. The combined focus on the individual and layered cultural systems is key to cultural competence and promoting inclusive and empowering sport for all.

### ***The Cultural Context of Sport***

Before examining the scholarship on gender and cultural diversity, consider the cultural context of sport. Specifically consider gender and culture in the following exercise.

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#### **Exercise 2: Gender and Culture Influence in Sport**

*Chris, the most talented 12-year old soccer player on the team, often loses focus and has angry outbursts on the field. The coach wants to help Chris develop emotional control and asks your advice. Before moving into a psychological skills training program, consider how gender and culture might affect Chris, the coach, and your advice. Specifically, would you expect different behaviors or reactions from Christine and Christopher? Do you think others (parents, teammates) would react the same way to both of them? What if Chris's parents were immigrants from a non-Western culture? What if Chris was not so talented?*

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Gender and culture are embedded in sport. If you try to be nonsexist or nonracist and treat everyone the same, you will have difficulty; everyone is not the same and cultural identities are relevant. Moreover, power and privilege are involved; trying to treat everyone the same may well do a disservice to participants. Invariably, identical treatment means treating everyone as if they were part of the dominant (privileged) group without considering cultural and individual differences. Our world is shaped by gender and culture. Gender influence is particularly powerful in sport, with some unique features. Sport participants are diverse, but not as diverse as the broader population. Sport is male-dominated, and elite sport programs clearly reflect gender and cultural restrictions. For example, Sabo and Veliz (2012), in a nationwide study of high schools, found that overall boys have more sport opportunities than girls. Geographic region and social class further affected sport opportunities, with urban schools and those with the fewest economic resources offering fewer athletic opportunities for all students.

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#### **Exercise 3: Treating Everyone the Same**

*As a physical educator or coach, you likely want to be fair and treat all of your students and athletes the same. How might that be problematic? How might treating everyone the same do a disservice to some athletes? How might considering gender, race, ethnicity, or social class help you better understand a student or athlete?*

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#### **Gender and Sport**

Society and social institutions clearly are gendered, and sport has a unique gender context. Long before the women's movement of the 1970s early women leaders advocated putting athletes first, preventing exploitation, and downplaying competition. Instead they emphasized enjoyment



and sportspersonship and promoting activity for all rather than an elite few, as expressed in the classic statement, *"A game for every girl and every girl in a game"* (National Amateur Athletic Federation [NAAF], 1930, p. 41). The 1972 passage of Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act, which is the U.S. federal law prohibiting sex discrimination in federally funded educational programs, marked the beginning of the move away from that model toward today's competitive women's sport programs. Indeed, female athletic participation has exploded in the last generation. Still, the numbers of female and male participants are not equal. More important, female athletes are not the same as male athletes. To understand gender and sport, we must look beyond dichotomous biological sex differences to the social context. Sex and gender often are used interchangeably, yet sex is biologically based, whereas gender refers to social roles and the meaning we attach to being female or male in a particular culture. These social meanings attached to being female or male can vary with race, ethnicity, social class, and sexual orientation. *Citius, Altius, Fortius*—the Olympic motto—translates as "swifter, higher, stronger," underscoring that sport is competitive and hierarchical as well as physical. The average male may be taller, faster, and stronger than the average female, but biological sex is only part of the gender mix. All the meanings, social roles, and expectations related to gender are constructed in the sport context, and the sport context varies across cultures.

### Cultural Diversity in Sport

In considering cultural diversity, we must go beyond numbers to consider power and privilege—*"who makes the rules."* For example, while the 2018 U.S. Congress was more diverse than ever before, it still was overwhelmingly composed of white men compared to the population they represent (Tully-McManus, 2018); 75 percent of full-time college faculty are white (Meyers, 2016), and "as of January 2018, just 27 of the leaders

of Fortune 500 companies, or 5.4 percent, are women and just three, or 0.6 percent, are black (all of whom are male)" (MarketWatch, 2018). Of special interest here, only 9 of the 133 (or 6.7 percent) of major North American professional sport teams—National Football League (NFL), National Basketball League (NBA), and Major League Baseball (MLB)—have female team owners (Ovenden, 2018). And there was a conspicuous absence of female athletes on the 2018 Forbes' list of the 100 richest athletes (Szczepanek, 2018).

As Sue (2004) noted, privileged people often are unaware of power relations, and "color blindness" often denies opportunity to others. Sue argued that psychology must recognize white privilege and the culture-bound nature of our scholarship and practice to advance psychology's mission and enhance the health and well-being of all people. The following quote from Muhammad Ali clearly illustrates that white privilege is quite visible to those who are not so privileged:

*We were taught when we were little children that Mary had a little lamb, its fleece was white as snow. Then we heard about Snow White, White Owl cigars. White Swan soap. White Cloud tissue. White Rain hair rings. White Tornado floor wax. White Plus toothpaste. All the good cowboys ride white horses and wear white hats. The President lives in the White House. Jesus was White. The Last Supper was White. The angels is White. Miss America is White. Even, Tarzan, the King of the Jungle in Africa is White.*

—Muhammad Ali, 1967 (cited in McDonald, 2005, p. 245)

The Ali quote is 50 years old, and Sue's numbers are over 15 years old, but white privilege remains, and the numbers haven't changed much. Richard Lapchick's annual *Racial and Gender Report Cards* clearly show persistent racial and gender inequities in U.S. sport, with little progress. In the 2017 report card (Lapchick, 2017), African American athletes are slightly overrepresented in U.S. college sports in Division I football and basketball, but other cultural minorities are clearly underrepresented.



When we consider power positions, cultural diversity drops dramatically. The Racial and Gender Report Card (Lapchick, 2017) indicated that whites hold approximately 92 percent of the head coaching positions in U.S. college athletics, and about 86 percent of Division I athletics directors are white, and only 9.8 percent are women. Before Title IX was enacted (1972) over 90 percent of U.S. women's college athletic teams were coached by women and had a woman athletic director (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). While participation of female athletes has increased, the percentage of female coaches remains under 50 percent of women's teams. The 2017–2018 report by the Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sport revealed that only 41.7 percent of head coaches of women's teams at NCAA Division I universities were female (LaVoi & Silva-Breen, 2018). The proportion of female athletic directors, head athletic trainers, and sports information directors is even lower and far below male numbers.

Although international data is lacking, the underrepresentation of women coaches at the elite level is likely a global trend (Norman, 2010; Norman & Rankin-White, 2018), and the limited data available suggests even fewer women coaches at the youth level than at the collegiate and elite levels (LaVoi, 2009; Messner, 2007). The 2012 London Olympics showcased women athletes and also demonstrated intersecting cultural identities and power relations. The United States sent more female than male athletes to London, but women were vastly underrepresented in several countries such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Power relations were also evident; coaching positions are heavily dominated by men, and Olympic officials are not as diverse as the athletes. Clearly, elite sport is culturally elite.

Gender bias and white male privilege may not totally explain the declining numbers of women coaches, but Kamphoff's (2010) research clearly shows that women coaches within collegiate athletics experience marginalization, devaluation,

and homophobia. Norman and Rankin-Wright (2018) interviewed women coaches and concluded that coaches' personal lives were sidelined to meet expectations and that the women coaches were surviving rather than thriving. The former women coaches who Kamphoff interviewed suggested they received fewer resources, lower salaries, more responsibilities, and less administrative support than their male counterparts. They also had difficulty balancing work and family and reported that others saw them as "distracted by motherhood" if they had children. As one coach commented:

*When I resigned, I remember [the athletic director] telling me, "You know, I often wondered how you could juggle being a wife, and having two kids." . . . Are you kidding me? He wouldn't say that to a man. (A former collegiate coach, cited in Kamphoff, 2010, p. 367)*

### **Cultural Diversity in Exercise and Physical Activity**

Perhaps exercise and physical activity are more diverse than elite sport—or perhaps not. Do the fitness centers and activity programs in your community reflect the population diversity? U.S. census data and public health reports indicate that physical activity is limited by gender, race, age, and socioeconomic status. Physical activity decreases across the adult lifespan, with men more active than women, and racial and ethnic minorities less active across all age groups. The dramatic drop in physical activity during adolescence is a public health concern and also a social justice issue, as the drop is greater for girls than boys, and especially for racial or ethnic minority and lower-income girls (Pate, Dowda, O'Neill & Ward, 2007). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) tracks physical activity, and the CDC website (<https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/index.html>) provides data on those trends as well as other helpful information.



### Cultural Diversity in Sport Psychology

Despite the diversity of participants and the need for cultural competence, sport psychology has not adopted multicultural perspectives in research or professional practice. Duda and Allison (1990) first identified the lack of research, reporting that only 7 of 186 empirical papers (less than 4 percent) considered race and ethnicity, and most of those were sample descriptions. Ram, Starek, and Johnson (2004) updated that report by reviewing articles in sport and exercise psychology research journals between 1987 and 2000 for race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation content. They found only 20 percent of the articles made reference to race or ethnicity and 1.2 percent to sexual orientation. More important, those few articles provided few insights to advance our understanding. Ram et al. concluded that there is no systematic attempt to include the experiences of marginalized groups.

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#### Exercise 4: Lack of Research on Cultural Diversity

*Research reviews (Duda & Allison, 1990; Kamphoff, Gill, Araki, & Hammond, 2010; Ram et al., 2004) demonstrate a lack of culturally diverse samples in sport psychology research. Has our research become more inclusive since those earlier reports? Check the most recent two years of one of our major journals (e.g., Journal of Applied Sport Psychology; Psychology of Sport & Exercise; Sport, Exercise and Performance Psychology). How culturally diverse are the samples and participants in the studies? Do they represent the larger sport or exercise population?*

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Kamphoff et al. (2010) surveyed the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) conference programs from the first conference in 1986 to 2007 and found only about 10 percent of all abstracts addressed cultural diversity issues, with most of those being simple comparisons of gender differences.

Almost no abstracts addressed race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class, physical ability, or any other cultural diversity issue. AASP program content extends beyond the research to professional issues, but our findings suggest a continuing gap in applied sport psychology with little attention to the wider range of participants or multicultural issues.

Butryn (2002), taking a critical perspective, argued that “confronting the invisible knapsack of white privilege” is essential for effective sport psychology consulting. Butryn used Peggy McIntosh’s (1988) term “invisible knapsack” to describe the invisible privileges that come with having white skin; for example, a white person who goes shopping is not likely to be followed or harassed. Butryn emphasized that we must consider these privileges when consulting. He further reminded us that race is not just black and white; we must expand the discourse on race and privilege to the wider range of racial and ethnic identities.

To expand our worldview, sport psychology scholars must expand the research base on cultural diversity and adopt multicultural competencies for professional practice. To get started, we can draw from related multicultural psychology scholarship.

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#### Exercise 5: White Privilege in Sport Psychology

*Sue discussed “invisible whiteness” and Butryn (2002) examined white privilege in sport psychology, arguing that we should confront the often taken-for-granted notion of race. Check the Association for Applied Sport Psychology’s website (<https://appliedsportpsych.org>), and specifically the Certified Consultants link (<https://appliedsportpsych.org/certification/find-a-consultant/>). What do these websites and the consultants’ bios and pictures tell you about cultural diversity in applied sport psychology? How do these websites help us examine white privilege in applied sport psychology?*

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## Gender and Sexuality

### Gender Scholarship

Gender is a clear and powerful cultural force in society and a particularly powerful and persistent influence in sport. Gender scholarship in sport psychology largely follows gender scholarship within psychology, which has shifted from a focus on sex differences, to gender role and personality, to social context and processes, and most recently to a multicultural perspective, but sport psychology is lagging behind.

Much sport psychology research on gender emphasizes differences, such as early work (e.g., Harris & Jennings, 1977; Spence & Helmreich, 1978) reporting that female collegiate athletes had more masculine and less feminine personalities than nonathlete college females. Current research continues to focus on gender differences suggesting that, for example, comparatively males have more anger (Bartlett, Abrams, Byrd, Treankler, & Houston-Norton, 2018), higher self-confidence and lower anxiety (Dias, Cruz, & Fonseca, 2014), and generally higher motivation (Vora & Naik, 2016), whereas females have more adverse reactions to ego-oriented (focused on winning) motivational climates (Breiger, Cumming, Smith, Smoll, & Brewer, 2015). Overall, this research is not particularly enlightening, as it infers that all females and all males will be similar rather than using a multicultural approach that considers athletes' multiple identities and wide-ranging cultural influences (i.e., intersectionality). Sport psychology research must move beyond the male-female and masculine-feminine dichotomies to more complex developmental, social, and multicultural models to advance our understanding.

### Gender Stereotypes

Gender stereotypes did not fade away with the implementation of Title IX in 1972. In 1993, Messner, Duncan and Jensen showed that female athletes receive much less and different media coverage than male athletes. In an update of their

25-year longitudinal study, Cooky, Messner, and Musto (2015) found televised coverage of women's sport "dismally low" with no progress. Media representations are a major source of stereotypes through representing women as sexualized objects, the tendency to view women athletes in their roles as mothers, and sending the message that sport is for men (Fink, 2015).

Stereotypes are a concern because we act on them, exaggerating minimal gender differences and restricting opportunities for everyone. Psychological research confirms that how people *think* males and females differ is more important than how they actually differ. If children think that dance is for girls, boys will stand aside while girls dance. Children see female gymnasts and male baseball players as role models; peers gravitate to sex-segregated activities; and parents, teachers, and coaches support gender-appropriate activities of children.

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### Exercise 6: Gender Stereotyping in the Media

*Follow the coverage of both men's and women's intercollegiate basketball for a week in a newspaper, television news sport report, sport magazine, or sport website. Do men and women receive different amounts of time or space? Does the type of coverage differ (e.g., references to accomplishments, appearance, personal lives)? If so, how does the coverage differ? Do you find gender stereotyping or bias?*

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### Sexuality

Sexuality and sexual orientation are clearly linked with gender, and especially so in sport contexts. In her early work on gender roles Bem (1978) noted that we often (and incorrectly) conflate biological sex, gender roles, and sexual orientation. For example, it often is assumed that a male football player must have masculine personality characteristics and be heterosexual. As research shows, and as most people recognize, that is not necessarily true. Furthermore, the male-female biological sex,



masculine-feminine personality, and homosexual-heterosexual categories are not the clear, dichotomous binaries that we often assume. Binaries refer to pairs of related terms that most people think are opposite in meaning (e.g., male/female, black/white, masculine/feminine). Even biological sex is not the clear dichotomy that we assume, and individuals' gender identities, gender expressions, and sexual orientations are even more varied (Krane, 2019) and not necessarily linked. Still, when people step out of those binaries, they face discrimination. Discrimination and prejudice on the basis of sexual orientation often is described as homophobia, but Herek (2000), a leading psychology scholar on lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) issues, prefers *sexual prejudice*, which is an attitude (evaluation) directed at a social group involving hostility or dislike.

Messner (2002) argues that sexual prejudice is particularly powerful in sport and leads all boys and men (gay or straight) to conform to a narrow definition of masculinity; real men compete and avoid anything feminine that might lead them to be branded a sissy. More recent work (e.g., Anderson, Magrath, & Bullingham, 2016) suggests that sportsmen, and particularly gay men, may have more latitude in sports today, but sport settings are still spaces of restricted masculinity and hostility toward sexual minorities (Cavalier, 2019).

Sexual prejudice in sport typically is discussed in relation to women's athletics. Walker and Melton (2015) interviewed lesbian college coaches and administrators who described overt discrimination as well as pressures to conform to heterosexual norms, a lack of administrative support, and a lack of a sense of community at work. These negative experiences were more pronounced for the racial minority women. These findings are consistent with Kamphoff (2010), who concluded there is rampant sexual prejudice in U.S. collegiate coaching and women clearly feel pressure to act in a heterosexual way, regardless of their sexual orientation, to fit into the collegiate system. Norman (2012) interviewed ten professional women UK coaches who identified as lesbian and found that the everyday homophobia

they experienced left them feeling undervalued, humiliated, trivialized, and framed as sexual predators. One former women coach in Kamphoff's study stated,

*I know of a specific case of a lesbian coach that was asked to leave and . . . they said, "We want to change the face of the coaching staff." So, what does that mean? A lesbian coach, of course, is going to take that as you want a straight coach. You are saying it without saying it. (A former collegiate coach, cited in Kamphoff, 2010, p. 368)*

Although research is limited, reports from the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN) national survey (Kosciw, Greytak, Giga, Villenas, and Danischewski, 2016) suggests that sport is a particularly hostile environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth. They found that most LGBTQ students have experienced harassment and discrimination at school. In fact, over 85 percent experienced verbal harassments based on a personal characteristic, 55 percent experienced discrimination at school, and almost one-third missed at least one day of school due to feeling unsafe or uncomfortable. These hostile school climates can have a negative impact on LGBTQ students' mental health and educational outcomes, given that those who experienced victimization were twice as likely to report that they did not pursue postsecondary education. GLSEN developed "Changing the Game: The GLSEN Sports Project" (available at [www.glsen.org/participate/programs/changing-the-game](http://www.glsen.org/participate/programs/changing-the-game)) to assist teachers and administrators in kindergarten through high schools with creating safe and respectful sports and physical education environments for LGBT students. School-based supports do have a positive effect on school and sport climates (Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009; Krane, Barber, & Darah, 2018).

In the short time from the last edition of this chapter to the current time, the situation for LGBTQ people has changed in society, and even in sport. More professional LGBTQ athletes have



come out, although usually after their professional careers have ended. The widely publicized coming out of NBA basketball player Jason Collins and top WNBA selection Brittney Griner in 2013 clearly marked changing times. The most common response to Jason Collins's *Sports Illustrated* (May 6, 2013) cover story was muted, but positive. In her *New York Times* essay (May 5, 2013), Griner expressed optimism and pride, even after describing the bullying and harassment she had faced in earlier years.

Most recently, the public and sport psychology communities have given more attention to the "T" in LGBT. Hargie, Mitchell, and Somerville (2017) interviewed transgender athletes and found common themes of intimidation; alienation; fear of public spaces; and overall effects of being deprived of the social, health, and well-being benefits of sport. Lucas-Carr and Krane (2011) noted that transgender athletes were largely hidden and argued that the creation of safe and compassionate sport settings for all athletes, including trans athletes, is an ethical responsibility.

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### **Exercise 7: Consider Intersections of Gender, Culture, and Sexuality**

*NBA basketball player Jason Collins and top WNBA selection Brittney Griner are both talented black athletes who came out as gay/lesbian in May 2013 with a great deal of public attention. Consider how gender, culture, and sexuality interact to affect their behaviors, media reports, and the reactions of others. How does gender affect the situation and reactions? What if they had been white or Asian? What if they were not so talented? What other aspects of their cultural identities might affect their behaviors or reactions of others?*

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### **Sexual Harassment**

Considerable research demonstrates the prevalence of sexual harassment and abuse, in all types of settings, but prior to the important work of Kari Fasting of Norway and Celia Brackenridge of

the United Kingdom, the sport psychology literature was silent on this topic. Indeed, we still have little research on related issues, despite recent highly publicized cases. Related research in sport indicates that some sport climates foster sexual harassment and abuse; that young, elite female athletes are particularly vulnerable; that neither athletes nor coaches have education or training about the issues; and that both research and professional development are needed to address the issues (Fasting, 2015; Fasting, Brackenridge & Walseth, 2007). That research comes from several European countries and Australia, and Rodriguez and Gill (2011) reported similar findings with former Puerto Rican women athletes. The International Olympic Committee (IOC, 2007) defines sexual harassment as

behavior towards an individual or group that involves sexualized verbal, nonverbal or physical behavior, whether intended or unintended, legal or illegal, that is based on an abuse of power and trust and that is considered by the victim or a bystander to be unwanted or coerced. (p. 3).

Women are more likely to be harassed, and men are more likely to be harassers, although it is not exclusively men harassing women—as the highly publicized Sandusky case at Penn State in the United States or the case against Brazilian national gymnastics coach Fernando de Carvalho Lopes who was accused of abusing 42 boys over two decades illustrates. Clearly more research is needed, and sport psychology consultants, coaches, and other sport professionals who are aware of gender and cultural dynamics might be quicker to recognize and prevent sexual harassment.

### ***Race and Ethnicity***

Race and ethnicity are just as salient as gender and sexuality in the ever-changing cultural context of sport but have received far less attention in the sport psychology literature. As noted earlier, the striking void in sport psychology research on race



and ethnicity persists despite the increased multicultural diversity in society and in sport.

The psychology scholarship on race and ethnicity is growing and taking a multicultural perspective. Much of that work addresses health disparities, which are well documented. Continuing reports since 2011 indicate that health care access and quality are suboptimal for minorities and low-income people (see National Healthcare Quality & Disparities Reports; available at: <https://www.ahrq.gov/research/findings/nhqrdr/index.html>). Given that physical activity is a key health behavior and that disparities in physical activity parallel disparities in health, sport psychology consultants who are aware of the health disparities research are better positioned to provide guidance on promoting physical activity for health and well-being (see also Chapter 25).

Steele's (1997, 2010) extensive research on stereotypes and *stereotype threat*—the fear of confirming negative stereotypes—indicates that stereotypes affect all of us. That research, largely in academic settings, indicates that the most devastating effects, such as reduced effort, disengagement, and poor performance, are on those minority group members who have abilities and are motivated to succeed. A review by Smith and Martiny (2018) reveals these effects in sport as well; when gender and racial stereotypes are activated, overtly or subtly, minority athletes performed worse, identified less as an athlete, decreased effort, and some ultimately dropped out of sport. On the positive side, Steele and Smith and Martiny suggest that even simple manipulations that take away the stereotype threat (e.g., discussing stereotypes or telling students/athletes that performance is not related to race or gender) can help.

The prevalence of negative stereotypes for racial and ethnic minorities, particularly black athletes, is well documented. For example, black athletes are perceived to be natural athletes, academically or intellectually inferior, from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and poor leaders (Sailes, 2017). These stereotypes affect the experiences of black

athletes who have to navigate and counteract them (Fuller, 2017). Stone, Chalabaev, and Harrison (2012) provide evidence that blatant reminders of negative stereotypes can sabotage performance and cause athletes to avoid failure, especially those who are psychologically invested in their sport.

Ruth Hall, who is particularly eloquent on intersections of gender, race, and class in sport and exercise, began a discussion of women of color in sport psychology with a commentary that claimed:

*Race and gender are firecrackers that ignite America's social conscience, rattle the cages that bind us—cages that block our passage to equality. It's a double whammy for African American female athletes since we aren't the dominant norm—we're not white. Race and racism loom large and throw a level playing field off kilter.*

*Many of us don't fit the Anglo mold. We stretch the parameters of gender roles by our presence, our physical appearance, and sometimes unorthodox style. We aren't "feminine" they say. Commentators describe figure skaters Debbie Thomas and Surya Bonaly and the tennis star Venus Williams as "athletic" and "muscular" meaning not feminine. We create dissonance with our skin color, body type, and facial features. We are the other. . . .* (Hall, 2001, pp. 386–387)

Hall's statement aptly applies to contemporary media commentary surrounding athletes like Serena Williams and Brittany Griner, and McDowell and Carter-Francique (2016) note that women of color have lower participation and less power in sport compared to people in majority social groups. African American women tend to be clustered in basketball and track, with few in sports perceived as feminine, such as gymnastics and skating; they argued that those patterns reinforce stereotypes about African American women, and those stereotypes present challenges and barriers. Withycombe (2011) interviewed African American female athletes about their experiences in sport and found a complex effect of the intersecting racial and gender stereotypes they face. While the athletes experienced empowering experiences, they also felt disempowered by media that sexualized black female



athletes, questioned their femininity, and presented them as dominating and aggressive.

Carter and Davila (2017) interviewed black sport and exercise psychology professionals about microaggressions, which are defined by Sue et al. (2007) as common and often unintentional racial slights toward people of color. They found black sport and exercise psychology professionals reported instances of blatant racism via verbal and nonverbal attacks, and participants shared incidents where their education, skill set, or overall abilities were ignored or questioned. Participants said they experienced numerous microaggressions, yet they did not allow them to be a roadblock or deterrence. Carter and Davilla argue for a more supportive and open space for professionals to advance the field.

### Physicality and Cultural Diversity

Sport psychology professionals deal with physical activities, and thus, physical abilities and characteristics are prominent. Moreover, opportunity is limited by physical abilities, physical skills, physical size, physical fitness, and physical appearance—collectively referred to here as *physicality*. Elite sport implies physically elite performers. Persons with disabilities certainly are among those left out in sport settings, and the increasing public attention on obesity has created a negative culture for overweight and obese persons. Indeed, exclusion on the basis of physicality is nearly universal in sport, and this exclusion is a public health issue. Rimmer (2005, 2017) notes that people with physical disabilities are among the most inactive segments of the population; he further argues that rather than physical barriers, organizational policies, discrimination, and social attitudes are the real barriers. Jeff Martin (2013), a leading scholar on disability sport psychology, reviewed the research from a social-relational perspective and concluded that while physical activity is particularly important for those with disabilities, they are relatively inactive. Furthermore, he argued that medical, psychological, social, and environmental barriers make physical activity difficult

and that professionals who are more aware of the benefits and barriers can better serve their clients. His recent *Handbook of Disability Sport & Exercise Psychology* (Martin, 2018) expands on these issues and provides helpful information for sport psychology professionals interested in disability sport.

Gill, Morrow, Collins, Lucey, and Schultz (2010) examined the climate for minority groups (racial and ethnic minorities; gay, lesbian, and bisexual people; older adults; and people with disabilities) in organized sport, exercise, and recreational settings and found the climate most exclusionary for those with disabilities. Testimony from people who have faced discrimination because of physicality speaks clearly. Pain and Wiles (2006) conducted in-depth interviews with obese and disabled individuals; consider these quotes from three of the participants (p. 4):

*I am frightened to go back about this wheelchair because they're always going on about my weight.*

*They think that because you are in a wheelchair you haven't got a brain.*

*I have got to say that actually every time you go outside your front door, life's really difficult. . . . Barriers all the way along, really.*

Physicality is particularly relevant to applied sport psychology. Physical skill, strength, and fitness are key sources of restrictions and stereotyping. Physical appearance influences outcomes in subjectively judged sports such as gymnastics—and perhaps in some that are not so subjectively judged. Physical size, particularly obesity, is a clear source of social stigma and oppression and is a particular concern in physical activity and health promotion.

Many studies (e.g., Puhl & Suh, 2015; Puhl et al., 2017) document clear and consistent stigmatization of obese individuals in employment, education, and health care. And several studies indicate that sport and physical activity professionals hold negative stereotypes and biases. Greenleaf and Weiller (2005) found that physical education teachers held anti-fat bias and strong personal weight control beliefs (e.g., obese individuals are responsible for their obesity). Chambliss, Finley, and Blair (2004) found a strong



anti-fat bias among U.S. exercise science students, and Robertson and Vohora (2008) found a strong anti-fat bias among fitness professionals and regular exercisers in England. Negative stereotypes about obese people are so prevalent that we may not realize our biases. That is, we may have implicit, or unconscious, biases even if we do not explicitly recognize them. A great deal of research has been done on implicit biases and their effects (see the Project Implicit website: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>). Check your own implicit biases in Exercise 8. Implicit weight biases are particularly likely given the media coverage. Research confirms that obese individuals are targets for teasing, are more likely to engage in unhealthy eating behaviors, and are less likely to engage in physical activity (Puhl et al., 2017). See the UConn Rudd Center Website ([www.uconnruddcenter.org/](http://www.uconnruddcenter.org/)) for resources and information on weight bias in health and educational settings.

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### Exercise 8: Test Your Implicit Biases

*Go to the Implicit Attitude Test (IAT) at the Project Implicit website at Harvard University (<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>) and take the IAT on weight demonstration test to assess your own implicit attitudes about obesity. Most likely you will find that you have some implicit bias. Implicit bias does not necessarily suggest that you are prejudiced, but it does indicate the power of the negative stereotypes and associations that are so prevalent that we don't recognize them. Think about those implicit assumptions and cultural biases that may affect your behaviors and interactions in sport. Specifically, how might you counter that implicit bias to make a youth sport program more welcoming for youth who are overweight or not physically skilled? Check information on the Project Implicit website, Puhl and Wharton's (2007) article, and the Rudd Center (<http://www.uconnruddcenter.org/>) for ideas.*

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### Cultural Sport Psychology

Although the earlier sections of this chapter show a lack of attention to cultural diversity in sport psychology, a few dedicated scholars have been developing *cultural sport psychology* over the last 15 years. Fisher, Butryn, and Roper (2003) advocated cultural studies as a promising perspective for sport psychology, and the publication of Schinke and Hanrahan's (2008) edited text, *Cultural Sport Psychology*, suggests that cultural sport psychology is now a recognized area. Two of our journals have devoted special issues to cultural sport psychology. The *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* special issue (Ryba & Schinke, 2009) highlighted the dominance of the Western worldview in our research and practice. The *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology* special issue (Schinke & Moore, 2011) on culturally informed sport psychology called for understanding, respect, and integration of culture in professional practice. The continuing work of these scholars gives culture and cultural diversity a greater presence in sport psychology and fits with the framework of this chapter. Cultural sport psychology scholars call for awareness of (and a critical look at) our own cultural identity, continuing reflection to gain a deeper understanding of culture within sport psychology, and action. That brings us to the topic of cultural competence and social justice.

### Cultural Competence and Social Justice in Sport Psychology

Cultural competence, which may be described as *the ability to work effectively with individuals who are of a different culture*, takes gender and cultural diversity directly into professional practice. Culturally competent professionals act to empower participants, challenge restrictions, and advocate for social justice. Indeed, cultural competence is a professional competency required in psychology and many health professions. Cultural competence includes



both understanding and action, and is needed at both the individual and organizational level. That is, sport psychology professionals not only develop their own cultural competence but also work to ensure that their educational programs, professional practices, and organizations are culturally competent. Sport psychology professionals can advocate for sport as a place that is socially just where all can participate, feel supported, and be respected. Sport psychology professionals can continue to write, research, and work with marginalized communities and participants that have received little scholarly attention. In addition, sport psychology professionals can continue to use sport as a vehicle for social change and advocate for social justice.

Most advocates of cultural competence follow Stanley Sue's (2006) model in which cultural competence has three key components: (a) awareness of one's own cultural values and biases, (b) understanding of other worldviews, and (c) development of culturally appropriate skills. Culturally competent sport psychology professionals work to be conscious and mindful of their personal reactions, biases, and prejudices to people who are different (i.e., awareness); recognize their client's worldview or perspective given their culture and background (i.e., understanding); and develop abilities that allow them to work effectively with people who are different from them (i.e., skills). Increase your own awareness by examining your biases in Exercise 9. Sport psychology professionals work with a wide range of people who are culturally different; therefore, learning about our clients' worldviews and developing culturally appropriate skills is essential. Furthermore, cultural competence is not static and requires frequent learning, relearning, and unlearning about diversity and culture.

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### **Exercise 9: Becoming Aware of Your Own Worldview**

*Becoming aware of your own limited worldview is the first step to becoming culturally competent. Consider*

*your own perceptions and stereotypes about each of the following groups (women basketball players, Asian golfers, gay male athletes). Quickly—what are the first five words or images that come to mind? Do your perceptions reflect biases (implicit or explicit)? Why do you believe this? And how might your perceptions influence a client–consultant relationship?*

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The AASP Ethics Code, Principle D (Respect for People's Rights and Dignity) clearly calls for cultural competence within applied sport psychology in stating

AASP members are aware of cultural, individual, and role differences, including those due to age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status. AASP members try to eliminate the effect on their work of biases based on those factors, and they do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices. (Available at <https://appliedsportpsych.org/about/ethics/ethics-code/>).

William Parham (2005), a leader in APA's multicultural efforts as well as an active sport psychology professional, offers useful guidelines based on his professional practice, including the following three guiding premises:

*Context is everything.* When working with diverse individuals (and all sport psychology professionals work with diverse individuals) history, economics, family, and social context are all relevant.

*Culture, race, and ethnicity as separate indexes do little to inform us.* Parham reminds us that cultural groups are not homogeneous, and every individual has a unique mix of cultural identities.

*Using paradigms reflecting differing worldviews.* The typical U.S. worldview emphasizes



independence, competitiveness, and individual striving. Emphasis on connectedness rather than separation, deference to a higher power, mind-body interrelatedness rather than control, and a sense of “spirit-driven energy” may be more prominent in another’s worldview.

Parham (2011) offered further helpful guides and proposed consideration of the immediate and historical cultural context of communication. He suggests we consider both historical (culture, race, ethnicity, gender, and religion) and contemporary (parents, family, community, school, socioeconomic status [SES], sexual orientation, disability, media, religious/spiritual affiliations, and local/state/regional/global events) phenomena that affect the behavioral, cognitive, and affective expressions of both the sender and receiver when communicating. Overall, Parham calls for “more of thee and less of me” in research and practice. That is, professionals are listening as much as (or more than) talking while engaging in culturally informed interactions and keeping in mind the context-sensitive across-cultures communication model he proposes.

The International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP) developed and published a position stand on culturally competent research and practice in sport and exercise psychology (Ryba, Stambulova, Si, & Schinke, 2013). The authors provide an excellent review of the relevant cultural sport psychology scholarship, as well as guidelines and recommendations for culturally competent research and practice in sport psychology. In their closing section, they describe three major areas of cultural competence for sport psychology practitioners as (a) cultural awareness and reflexivity, (b) culturally competent communication, and (c) culturally competent interventions. Awareness and reflectivity refer to recognition of between and within culture variations, as well as reflection on both the client’s and one’s own cultural background. Culturally competent communication involves meaningful dialogue and shared language—much as Parham (2011) suggested in calling for “less of me and more of thee” in working across cultures.

Culturally competent practitioners recognize culture while avoiding stereotyping, take an idiosyncratic approach, and stand for social justice.

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### Exercise 10: Working with Diverse Clients

*Assume that you are a professional sport psychology consultant. You begin working with a client from a culture about which you have limited knowledge (e.g., an Australian indigenous athlete, an African American-Muslim athlete, an international student-athlete from China). What could you do to increase your understanding and work more effectively with this client? List three ways you can learn more about the athlete’s culture and enhance your cultural competence. What personal or professional limitations, given this discussion on cultural competence, might warrant the referral of this client to another sport psychology professional?*

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### Cultural Competence for Sport Psychology Professionals

Cultural competence is integral to quality programs and effective practice, not only for sport psychology but also for all sport and physical activity professionals. Sport psychology consultants can play an important role in helping all sport professionals develop multicultural competencies.

As part of a project to develop more inclusive physical activity programs, we (Gill, Jamieson, & Kamphoff, 2005) found professionals rated their ability to deal with students of other cultural backgrounds as good, but they seldom took any proactive steps to promote inclusion. While the professionals saw the need for cultural competence, the work has barely begun. Cross, Bazron, Dennis, and Isaacs’s (1999) continuum of cultural competence is a helpful starting place. Considering cultural competence as a developmental process, the continuum presents steps moving from cultural destructiveness to cultural proficiency:



**Cultural destructiveness**—characterized by policies, actions, and beliefs that are damaging to cultures.

**Cultural incapacity**—not intending to be culturally destructive, but lacking ability to respond effectively to diverse people (e.g., bias in hiring practices, lowered expectations).

**Cultural blindness**—philosophy of being unbiased and that all people are the same (e.g., encouraging assimilation, blaming individuals for not “fitting in”).

**Cultural precompetence**—desire but no clear plan to achieve cultural competence.

**Cultural competence**—respect and recognition for diversity, genuine understanding of cultural differences (e.g., seek training and knowledge to prevent biases from affecting work, collaboration with diverse communities, willingness to make adaptations, continued training, and commitment to work effectively with diverse groups).

**Cultural proficiency**—culture held in high esteem and it is understood to be an integral part of who we are (e.g., conducting research to add to knowledge base, disseminating information on proven practices and interventions, engage in advocacy with diverse groups that support the culturally competent system).

The Cross et al. (1999) model and APA (2017) multicultural guidelines reflect similar themes. That is, professionals, including sport psychology consultants, must recognize and value cultural diversity, continually seek to develop their multicultural knowledge and skills, translate those understandings into practice, and extend their efforts to

advocacy by promoting organizational change and social justice.

Sport psychology professionals must continuously examine their own cultural competence to ensure their practices support their diverse clients. Sport psychology professionals can extend their services to a wider population, help other physical activity professionals develop their cultural competencies, and advocate for social justice in sport and physical activity programs.

Hacker and Mann (2017) have provided specific recommendations for moving toward social justice in sport psychology practice. Drawing from their professional experiences, they present guidelines and examples in calling for sport psychology consultants to be reflective and emphasize context-driven practice. That includes reflecting on how cultural identities and experiences might affect your own and the client’s behaviors, questioning your own interpretations of athletes’ behaviors, and recognizing that any professional practice takes place in a specific sociohistorical moment (context).

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### Exercise 11: Consider Your Own Cultural Competence

*How culturally competent are you? Review the six points on the continuum of cultural competence and think about your current or possible applied sport psychology activities. Are you culturally proficient or competent? How so? Are any of your activities culturally destructive or incapacitating? Where does your school, agency, or program fit on this continuum? How could you move “up” the cultural competence continuum? List two specific things you could do to enhance your own cultural competence and two things that would help your school/program move toward social justice.*

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### Summary

Gender and cultural diversity characterize sport and influence all sport participants. Culturally competent sport psychology professionals cannot simply treat everyone the same. Gender and culture



are dynamic social influences best understood within a multicultural framework that recognizes multiple, intersecting identities, power relations, and the need for social action. Sport psychology has barely begun to address multicultural issues in research and professional practice. To date most scholarship focuses on gender issues, with few truly multicultural frameworks. Multicultural perspectives and cultural competence are especially needed for sport psychology in the real world. To advance sport psychology research and professional practice, we must develop our multicultural competencies, expand our reach to the marginalized “left outs,” and promote sport for all.

### Study Questions

1. Identify and briefly explain the three themes in the multicultural framework for this chapter.
2. Describe the impact of Title IX on girls' and women's participation in athletics and in coaching and administration positions.
3. Explain the terms *invisible whiteness* and *white privilege*. Give two specific examples to demonstrate white privilege in sport.
4. Define the terms *sexual prejudice* and *heterosexism*, and explain how sexual prejudice might affect sport participants.
5. Define stereotype threat and explain how stereotype threat might operate in sport.
6. Describe the research on stereotypes and biases related to obesity, and explain how such bias might affect participants and professionals in physical activity programs.
7. Define *cultural competence* and identify the three general areas of multicultural competencies.
8. Identify the steps or levels on the cultural competence continuum. Give two specific things a sport psychology professional could do to move up to a higher level of cultural competence. Describe how sport psychology professionals might promote organizational change and social justice in sport.

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