

Concussion Recovery Aided by Certified Consultants of Association for Applied Sport Psychology

CHAGRIN FALLS, OHIO—December 2015—For an athlete experiencing a concussion, the process to wellness can seem difficult. Unlike physical injuries with observable signs, concussions are invisible injuries. Recovery time can vary, making it difficult to cope, but sport psychology consultants can provide support and educate athletes on injury response.

Dr. David Coppel, Director of Neuropsychological Services with the University of Washington Medicine Sports Concussion Program and Certified Consultant of the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (CC-AASP), explained that each concussion, or mild traumatic brain injury, is different. He has spent nearly 20 years evaluating Seattle Seahawks players, as part of a multidisciplinary team, to make sure they are ready to return to action after suffering a concussion.

The complexities of having a concussion vary for each individual, as some athletes may have additional risk factors, such as attention deficit disorder, learning disabilities, or psychiatric/psychological concerns. According to Dr. Coppel, those factors can often prolong an athlete's recovery time. Young athletes with concussions also may be unable to attend school for a period of time due to symptoms, which leads to stress regarding academic success.

Sport psychology consultants of AASP help athletes of all levels deal with behavioral and emotional symptoms, such as a sense of vulnerability and “not feeling like themselves.” They also provide support for impatience with recovery. The decision of when to return to play is crucial and key to preventing more serious injuries.

Athletes with concussions may also deal with guilt over letting the team down, anxiety about returning to play and fear of re-injury. Sport psychology consultants [assist](#) in developing mental coping techniques and goals to deal with frustration and isolation and can help to determine when the time is right to return to action.

“It is important to remember that in the vast majority of individuals with a concussion, they recover completely,” explained Dr. Coppel.

The Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) is an international, multidisciplinary, professional organization with more than 2,000 members in 54 countries. The organization offers certification to qualified professionals and shares research and resources with the public via www.appliedsportpsych.org.

A list of Certified Consultants of AASP is available on the [Consultant Finder](#) and the AASP Resource Center features [AASP Concussion Resources](#) as well as articles for athletes, coaches and parents including injury and rehabilitation.

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