

## **Mosewich, Amber**

**University of Alberta**

**Holt, Nick; University of Alberta**

**McHugh, Tara-Leigh; University of Alberta**

**Gunnell, Katie; Carleton University**

**Sapieja, Klaudia; University of Alberta**

**Gallaher, Ben; University of Alberta**

**Insight Grant 2021**

*Supporting athlete psychosocial development: A longitudinal mixed-method study of psychosocial skills, resilience, and well-being.*

---

### **Overall Purpose of Research...**

Supporting Canadians involved in sport requires promoting the development of adaptive psychosocial skills and resilience, thereby fostering the ability to manage or adapt to demands and work towards one's potential while maintaining well-being. Canada's model of *long-term development in sport and physical activity* (LTAD) emphasizes the promotion of psychosocial skills as an integral component of sport delivery (Canadian Sport for Life, 2019; MacNeill et al., 2014). Our research seeks to further understand athlete psychosocial development within a Canadian LTAD model through a longitudinal examination of psychosocial skills, resources, resilience, and well-being. Framed in resiliency theory, this research is (a) conceptually connected to the skills targeted by the LTAD model and (b) positioned to provide insights that can be used to direct future promotion and/or intervention efforts aimed at participant support and development within the Canadian Sport for Life movement. The objective of this research is to examine the trajectories of change in psychosocial skills, resources, resilience, and well-being among adolescent and youth adult athletes participating in a LTAD-based program over a multiyear period, spanning stages of athlete development (with an emphasis on the Train to Train and Train to Compete stages). Our research questions are: (1) How do psychosocial skills, resources, resilience, and well-being change (i.e., develop) over time in LTAD programming?; (2) Which psychosocial skills and resources are promotive factors for resilience and how do they predict resilience and well-being?; and (3) What factors and experiences do athletes perceive contribute to their trajectories (i.e., the development, regression, or, maintenance) of resilience and well-being?

### **Research in Progress...**

A two phase, mixed-methods, longitudinal design will assess how psychosocial skills and resources, resilience, and well-being change over time, and identify predictors of resilience and well-being. Phase 1 is underway, and involves a multi-wave longitudinal design. Our goal is to recruit 400 adolescent and young adult athletes from LTAD programming who will complete assessments of psychosocial skills, resources, resilience, and well-being at 4 month intervals, for up to 3 years. Early findings with 204 adolescent (101 boys; 103 girls; age  $M = 15.36$  years,  $SD =$

1.86) and 85 young adult (52 women, 33 men; age  $M = 20.52$  years,  $SD = 1.83$ ) athletes suggest targeting psychological skills (e.g., coping with adversity, concentration, goal-setting / mental preparation) to promote resilience may directly and indirectly support well-being among young athletes. In Phase 2, a qualitative trajectory approach will be adopted with subsets of athletes who exhibit upward, downward, and maintenance trajectories ( $n = 5/\text{group}$ ) on resilience and well-being during the first 18 months of Phase 1. Athletes will complete one-on-one semi structured interviews at 4 month intervals (3 interviews each).

**Anticipated Impact of Research...**

Our research stands to directly inform strategies designed to develop athlete psychosocial skills and resilience, and support well-being. This study stands to inform sport programming designed to take a systematic, strength-based approach to athlete psychosocial development that fosters the skills and provides the resources necessary to have positive sport experiences and encourage lifelong sport participation, directly contributing to the lives of Canadians involved in sport. Results will provide the ability to evaluate LTAD programming to allow for future refinement to optimally enhance athlete development and guide future research.

*Research Tags: Athlete Development, Long Term Development, Mental Skills, Psychology; Stress and Coping*