GUIDELINES FOR A SPORT SPECIFIC EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

By

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ABSTRACT

The need for an EAP in a sport environment is considered on the basis of a questionnaire completed by a group of Netball players and an overview of the high performance environment of elite athletes.

The questionnaire covered the personal, work(career), home and sporting environments of the respondents with a view to identify those stressors that could possibly impact on performance on the playing field. The particular profile of the responding group of Netball players is taken into consideration.

Responses received from the group of Netball players together with the characteristics of the high pressure world of high performance or “elite” athletes provides insight into the nature of the related factors at work in this environment.

General principles involved in EAP, as applicable in normal workplace situations, are reviewed and the support services provided compared with the support services generally available to athletes. Support services provided by sports organisations are essentially focused on the physical well-being of the athlete and very little is available to attend to the emotional needs of athletes. The stressful environment within which elite athletes function impact the mental well-being of athletes dramatically and interventions are required to ensure that performance quality is not affected.

It is concluded that existing support services for athletes are deficient with respect to their emotional needs. By extending traditional athlete support systems to include the basic principles of EAP it is possible to support both the physical and emotional needs of elite athletes.

Guidelines for such a sport specific EAP is provided.
SAMEVATTING

Die behoefte vir ’n sportgerigte WHP word aangespreek op grond van ’n vraelys voltooi deur ’n groep Netbal speelsters sowel as ’n oorsig van die hoogs kompeterende omgewing waarin elite atlete funksioneer.

Die vraelys verskaf inligting oor die persoonlike, werk(loopbaan) en sport omgewings van die Netbal respondente met die doel om van die meer belangrike stressors wat prestasie op die speelveld kan beinvloed, te identificeer. Die terugvoer verkry tesame met die eienskappe van die kompeterende omgewing van elite atlete verleen insig in die faktore wat deelnemers in sport emosioneel beinvloed.

Die algemene WHP beginsels van toepassing in ’n normale werksomgewing word vergelyk met die standard ondersteunings programme tot beskikking van elite atlete. Hierdie programme is grotendeels gefokus op die meer fisies georiënteerde behoeftes van die atleet terwyl emosionele behoeftes baie min aandag verkry. Hierdie tekortkoming kan betekenisvol impakteer op prestasie vlakke en dit word gesien as ’n leemte in die mondering van ’n elite atleet.

Die gevolgtrekking is dat die ondersteunings programme aan elite atlete uitgebrei moet word om basiese WHP beginsels te inkorporeer op ’n sport vir sport basis. Op hierdie wyse word beide die emosionele en fisiese behoeftes van elite atlete aangespreek.

’n Definisie en riglyne vir so ’n sport spesifieke WHP word verskaf.
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GLOSSARY

Employee Assistance Programmes

EAP

Sport EAP

Elite Sport

Elite Athlete

High Performance Athlete

High Performance Sport

Sport Psychology
CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, & Delport, 2002, the introduction provides the reader with an overview of the proposal. It explains the main elements that are featured and presents a background for why the particular topic has been chosen.

The rationale for this research project was to explore the problems experienced by elite (high performance) sportmen and women with a view to establish the viability of an EAP for the sport environment. The literature study focused on sport within a far wider context than just one specific sport type however the empirical part of the research concentrated on specifically the Netball sector.

1.2 Motivation For The Study

It was noted that specifically within a South African context there is very little if any practical emotional support for athletes or sports people as well as their families. It was acknowledged that although professionals such as sport psychologists do play an important role, their primary involvement appears to focus on performance and techniques to help athletes improve performance through relaxation, visualization and motivational techniques. Whilst they are able to offer support through basic counseling to athletes, it is felt that this is an area generally not fully focused on, very seldom offered to athletes and hence it is not used. This was confirmed by Potgieter (1997: 1), where the following is stated regarding sport psychology, “…focus on the behaviour of individuals in relation to exercise and general sport environment”. The same author identified the following goal of sport psychology as a profession –

- Knowledge regarding coaching
- Goal formation, control, image, concentration span – of athletes
- Information regarding sports injuries and the impact thereof psychologically
- Concept of burnout amongst athletes
- Performance enhancement and visualisation techniques
Kerr (1997: 76), noted that many athletes (especially the young and inexperienced), feel isolated and controlled by others, such as their parents and their coaches. For these young athletes, the pressure to achieve and perform is massive and as such they are expected to confide in their coaches, managers and even each other. This phenomenon is not ideal due to the following factors:

- The coach may be untrustworthy;
- An athlete looking for support in an area other than that which is directly related to their performance on the sports field, could be viewed as a sign of weakness;
- Many of these young athletes live with the knowledge that they do not have anyone independent to talk to about their personal needs and that by talking to their coaches and managers they could jeopardize their future in the team and in sport.

The research was also aimed at gaining a better understanding of athlete’s views and opinions regarding counseling support as well as other personal areas in which support might be needed. For the purpose of this proposal, the term support encompassed the help or assistance being offered to an individual in order to help him/her cope with personal difficulties, or to empower him/her to help themselves overcome personal problems experienced in everyday lives. This assistance might be focused around concerns as an athlete extended into private lives and of a practical, emotional, physical and psychological nature.

The question may be asked, “Why employee assistance programmes should be considered as the basis for the proposed intervention”. EAPs form the basis of counseling programmes within an average work organisation. Such a programme is implemented so as to offer support to staff of the organisation as well as in some cases their extended families. This support covers all areas from financial difficulties to substance abuse. It is thought that employees with personal problems are less productive than those without or those who are able to cope with their problems.

Kerr (1997: 1) notes that when sport is no longer seen as a leisure activity and it instead begins to monopolize a person’s energies it is no longer a game, it could be considered a part-time job. Considering this statement, it is easy to see why there is a possible link between the world of work and the world of a professional sports person. Research has
shown that organizations that offer appropriate support to staff have led to improvement productivity levels and a decrease in absenteeism levels. Research conducted in 2003 by the Validium Group (www.validium.co.uk), EAP providers in the United Kingdom, substantiates this statement. This research estimated that in the United Kingdom 8.4 working days were lost on average per employee per year because of absence as a result of sickness. Employers furthermore considered family difficulties or related problems to be one of the major contributory causes for this. A decrease in absenteeism levels was seen with the successful implementation an EAP within organizations.

A sporting team can be viewed in a similar way to a normal work situation. The team players, coaching staff and other members of staff are all seen as employees of a wider organization, the South African Netball Association in this particular instance. The individuals are no different from any other person in that they too are holding up jobs, however, on top of this they have to function in an another performance oriented environment – the sport “work” environment.

The focus of this study was specifically on the athletes themselves, to identify their needs and difficulties and what use an EAP might be to them as individuals and as a team. The study also aimed to ascertain whether or not this service should be extended to include the athlete’s wider family.

1.3 Problem Formulation

The problem was formulated from the point of view that an athlete’s ability to perform will be affected by an ability or inability to cope with personal and emotional problems in areas not necessarily directly or indirectly related to sport. In order to support a sustainable and improving quality of performance, athletes should be provided with an opportunity to seek and get support for their more personal problems in a safe and confidential environment, not necessarily directly linked to the sport they play. This opportunity and support should be extended to an athlete’s family in that family related problems will be taken onto the field of play and impact relations at home. Generally sport psychologists and coaching staff do not have the time or the desire to deal with an athlete’s personal difficulties. The focus here is essentially on those performance related
issues that are impacting performance directly to the exclusion of the other more personal and emotional of the individual.

Though very little research has been done on sport specific EAPs, there would appear to be a need for it. Research conducted by Leffingwell, et al (2001) on the role of sports psychologists within professional sports teams highlighted the significant need for a wider support package for sports people. He also noted that this kind of support is at times difficult for the pure sports psychologist to implement and manage.

1.4 Goals and Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 Goal

According to Fouché (2002:107), the goal is seen as the “dream” of the study – the purpose or aim. The goal for this study is to present guidelines for the design of a sport-specific employee assistance programme.

1.4.2 Objectives

In order to achieve the goal for this study it was necessary to gain an insight into the more personal needs of top performing netball players in various netball teams and to explore whether or not an EAP would have a role to play within sport.

The following objectives in the process were formulated to bring about the achievement of the overall goal –

- To conduct a needs assessment in order to identify potential factors which may have an influence on a player’s ability to perform effectively on the playing field
- To identify the general attitude towards an employee assistance programme and to establish whether or not it might be utilized, by athletes, staff and their extended families.
- To explore whether an EAP would be suitable for the sport environment.
1.5. Research Question

“Some research proposals contain both general questions and specific hypotheses, other
have only a question or a hypothesis”, according to Moss (1988:437). It also seems as if
the hypothesis is more commonly formulated if sufficient information is available, but
that a question is developed in case of insufficient information. (Moss, 1988:437).

The research questions formulated for this research study were:

- Will an athlete be able to perform at an optimal level on the netball field if she is
  experiencing personal difficulties?
- Is there a need for an EAP within the netball sector?
- Is an EAP viable for the netball sector?

1.6 Research Approach

The research approach for this study was based on a quantitative research approach as
described by DeVos et al (2002: 79) “…an inquiry into a social or human problem,
based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers and analysed
with statistical procedures in order to determine whether the predictive generalizations
of the theory hold true”. The general aim of such research is to test the validity of
variables and to use statistical processes to represent data.

Quantitative research is concerned with statistical measurements and numbers. Research is interpreted and the findings are produced usually in numbers and percentages and data collection is by means of questionnaires with respondents being
selected randomly. A quantitative approach is best suited, specifically due to the fact
that the data collection method is that of questionnaires was considered the best route to
follow for this study. The aim was to gain an understanding as to whether or not an
individual’s performance in their chosen career as a professional athlete, is influenced
in any way by an inability to cope with personal problems impacting day-to-day life.
Considering that very little literature is available on the specific subject the researcher noted a vital first step in the process would be to gather information to determine whether or not there is a link between performance in sport and ability to cope with personal difficulties.

1.7 Type of Research

The type of research chosen for this study was that of applied research. This type of research aims to address an immediate problem facing the professional in practice. According to Newman (1997: 22), applied research can be described as follows, “Applied research is frequently descriptive research, and its main strength is its immediate practical use.”

In this study the aim was to assess the needs and experiences of players and staff within a specific setting. It was the intent to determine the relationship between an athlete’s personal problems and ability to function optimally within the sport arena and to recommend certain guidelines for application in dealing with sportsmen’s and women’s personal problems.

1.8 Research Design

Mouton (2001:55), as quoted in De Vos (2002: 137), states that a research design is the plan for how the researcher intends to conduct the research. According to Punch (2003: 9), a research design is considered to be the actual planning of each step of the research process and that this detailed plan forms a vital part of any quantitative study.

The most appropriate design for this study was that of a combination of the exploratory and descriptive design. Firstly the nature and extent of problems and its influence on sportsmen’s performance was explored and secondly it was established how EAP can possibly be applied as a solution to problems experienced by sports people.

The exploratory design is often seen as appropriate when little is known about a specific phenomenon – in this case the problems experienced by sports people and the potential of an EAP in the mentioned context. The descriptive design, on the other
hand is an appropriate design for a situation where sufficient information is in existence – like in this case – the theoretical basis of the EAP, although in general terms and not in the sport field as such.

1.9 Research Procedure and Strategy

In this study, the data collection instrument was a questionnaire. The respondents were those individuals directly involved or affected by the proposed study, in other words the team members involved with the Eastern Gauteng Netball Squad.

The questionnaires were distributed to respondents with the support of the team coach and Mrs Susan de Bruyn. To ensure that those distributing the hard copies of the questionnaires were fully informed and well versed with regards to the content of the questionnaires, the researcher initially distributed copies of the questionnaire via e-mail to the involved individuals. Discussions could then take place regarding the questionnaire and these individuals would be in a position to deal with any direct questions from the respondents.

Whilst it was not ideal that the researcher was not physically present at the time of the distribution of the questionnaires, it was felt that in today’s society, modern technology allowed for this process to occur without too much difficulty. The researcher felt confident that those who were directly involved with the distribution of the questionnaires were well versed and fully informed about all aspects of this research project. No major difficulties were encountered.

There were 50 respondents who were asked to participate in completing the questionnaire, unfortunately on many of the questions on some questions only 39 respondents answered. No sampling technique was used, as all netball players from the Eastern Gauteng Netball Squad were involved in the survey.

Information had to be acquired directly from the players and staff themselves and not from individuals who presumed they know the answer.

The research process is considered to be the procedure or steps followed to complete the research study.
The procedure followed in this study was:

- Literature study,
- Drafting of measuring instrument (questionnaire)
- Pilot testing of measuring instrument with 2 or 3 respondents
- Adapting the measuring instrument accordingly
- Performing the actual survey – (As the researcher is currently residing in the UK and the respondents for this study were in South Africa, alternative ways of making contact with the respondents were put in place). Respondents were initially contacted via e-mail and where this was not possible via letters. Coaching or administrative staff from the netball squad were used in the distribution and collection of questionnaires. The researcher worked very closely with at least one identified individual who was present when the respondents were completing the questionnaire to answer any questions raised.
- Analysis and interpretation of data: All data was interpreted manually by the researcher, which was possible due to the relatively small group involved.

Written permission had been obtained from the Netball Association of South Africa for purposes of the research.

### 1.10 Pilot Study

Mouton (2001: 103) indicates that the pilot study is the way in which the researcher is able to orientate himself/herself to the proposed project. The pilot study forms an essential part of any research project as it provides the researcher with an opportunity to test out ideas and concepts prior to the actual project taking place, in this way it is possible to solve and identify difficulties that might occur. The following are aspects directly related to the pilot study –

#### 1.10.1 Literature Study

The literature study focused on the difficulties experienced by elite sporting teams and sporting organizations. It highlighted the potential difficulties faced by such individuals as well as highlighting the kind of life-styles these players lead and the
pressures they face as elite sportsmen. The study also took a look at the role that the public and the media play within sporting environments and also the meaning they attach to sporting heroes and the possible effects thereof on athletes.

The concepts of a work organisation and a sport organisation were also reviewed and comparisons drawn. The reality of sport as a job was also considered.

The literature study also investigated the EAP, as it is known in today’s society and variations of EAPs were looked at so as to understand the flexibility of such a programme and hence how it could be modified to suit another type of organisation – the sporting one.

1.10.2 Consultation with Experts

Consultations with experts from a variety of related fields were arranged. This took place so as to obtain viewpoints on the viability of the implementation of a sport specific EAP and the value thereof in the sporting environment.

Considering the fact that the researcher was in the UK, and the research took place in South Africa, issues around the researcher’s ability to discuss with experts in the field were taken into consideration. Consultation with the experts took place via e-mail and telephone as well as other means of written correspondence. When opportunities presented itself face-to-face consultations took place during visits to South Africa.

The following people were consulted:

- Dr A. van Jaarsveld - Managing Director: Centre for Human Development and Chief executive officer – The Careways Group: for his knowledge and background in EAP.
- Mrs. Susan De Bruyn - previous international netball and basketball player and coach: for her knowledge directly related to netball and the world of high performance sport. Currently Director of Sport at St Mary’s DSG.
Manager of the Netball Team: Frieda Potgieter – Manager of Netball team, for her knowledge regarding netball as a sport and also for her involvement with the group of respondents and their experiences as a whole.

1.10.3 Feasibility Of The Study

The study was considered feasible, especially considering the worldwide expansion and development of employee assistance programmes. Across the world organizations are becoming more aware of the well-being of their employees and the responsibility to ensure that they function optimally, professionally as well as on a personal level. Leaders of large organizations are very aware of the potential negative financial impact that “troubled employees” could have on an organisation and are therefore taking action to provide support for their staff.

Individuals, who have chosen to use their talent for a specific sport as their future career, can be seen a similar light as employees in large business organizations. They are active in highly result-oriented environments and are also experiencing everyday life-related problems that at times would influence their ability to perform.

If EAP can prove effective within the workplace, then there is reason to assume that it would be effective within sporting teams. And as each organization’s EAP is different, depending on identified needs and goals, it is thought that there is a possibility that a specific type of needs-based programme could make a contribution to sport.

Permission for this study to commence was being gained from the various Professional Bodies directly involved within the sporting arena; this would include the President and vice-president of Netball South Africa. Permission was also obtained from the University of Pretoria’s Research Ethics Committee. The respondents agreed to participate in the project, as it was not compulsory and up to the individual whether to partake or not.

The respondents were readily available as they attend regular team practices and as the research costs were low, the study was funded by the researcher.
1.10.4 Pilot Testing Of Questionnaire

The aim of the pilot study is to test the proposed measuring instrument on a smaller group of respondents similar to those respondents selected for the main study. It is according to De Vos et al (2002: 211), the “...small-scale trial run of all aspects planned for use in the main enquiry”.

The pilot test involved the researcher identifying a group of individuals who found themselves within a similar sporting environment, similar in age to the main group of respondents.

The researcher required two respondents to complete the questionnaire in order to test responses and understanding of the questions and concepts central to the study. Adaptations were made accordingly. Participants in the Pilot Test were excluded from the main survey. The individuals chosen to participate were individuals who were unable to participate in the actual completing of the questionnaire, due to personal commitments making them unable to attend on the day.

1.11 Description of Research Population, Delineation, Boundaries, Boundaries

The research population is described by Powers et al. (1985: 235) in De Vos et al. (2002:198) as follows:
“...a set of entities in which all the measurements of interest to the researcher are represented”. The population is a group of individuals within a universe who possess a specific set of characteristics.

For the purpose of this study the research population was considered women who play netball for the Eastern Gauteng Netball league, i.e. provincial level.

This group consisted of 39 players representing the age groups 17 to 35 years of age. This specific group of players was selected because they are considered to be representative of teams whose players and staff are under a considerable amount of pressure to perform. They are from an area characterized by significant social and
organizational related problems. It should be acknowledged that that the group of
research players making up the respondent group is smaller than the actual research
population – this is due to the fact that on the day the questionnaires were completed
only 39 of the original 50 players were able to attend.

1.12 Ethical Questions

1.12.1 Harm To Respondents

This ethical issue relates to the potential physical and or emotional harm, which can
occur during the research process. With this study in mind, there was a potential for
emotional harm to respondents, especially considering that the researcher was
attempting to identify their potential personal need and or difficulties in life.

Respondents were therefore fully informed of the topic being researched and the type
of questions that would be asked. They were also given the option of not participating
in the project. An informed consent form was developed and made available to each
and every respondent. Should any respondent have experienced any discomfort,
support would be offered to them afterwards and they would receive counseling by a
professional should it be required. This was not necessary.

1.12.2 Deception Of Respondents

This involves the researcher being dishonest about the purpose of the research and
hiding facts about the research that they feel might influence an individual’s decision
to participate.

The purpose of the study, what was hoped to achieve and the reasoning behind it was
highlighted in covering letters attached to questionnaires.

Should any queries or concerns have been raised by the respondents, a group session
with opportunity to ask questions would have been held?

As the researcher was not physically able to be present at such a group session, it was
arranged that Mrs. Susan de Bruyn who had been involved within the netball arena for
many years would fulfill this role. Ms de Bruyn is well respected amongst the athletes themselves and she has a good understanding of the research project and what it aims to achieve. Ms de Bruyn was fully equipped and able to fulfill this role. No problems were encountered.

1.12.3 Violation of Privacy
This involves the researcher violating the individual’s right to confidentiality. This required a need to ensure that all information given was anonymous and that individuals were comfortable with this. It also required the necessity to ensure that all paperwork or documentation with the respondent’s details was kept safe and private.

1.12.4 Actions and Competence of Researcher
This involves the researcher being considered competent and skilled in what is done and that the process has been well thought through. This was duly considered to be the case.

1.12.5 Debriefing of respondents
This involves giving the respondents an opportunity after the study is completed to discuss and go through their individual experiences. In this way the researcher will be able to ascertain whether or not the respondents are experiencing any emotional difficulties as a result of participating in the research process.

Respondents were also given the opportunity on an individual basis to discuss any concerns that they might have. Arrangements were made for respondents to have access to the Call Centre of The Careways Group. This call centre is situated in Midrand and renders a counseling service on a 24/7 basis.

1.13 Definition Of Main Concepts

1.13.1 Athlete
“…person who is trained or skilled in exercise, sports or games which require strength, agility or stamina” (Encyclopedia Britannica – www.britannica.com : 2003).
“...a person who is good at sport”; “…a person who competes in track and field events” - (www.askoxford.com : 2003).

An athlete is considered to be an individual who excels at some form of physical exercise or game or an individual who receives training or coaching in their chosen activity and one who competes against others at sporting events on a competitive level.

1.13.2 Employee Assistance Programme

“An employee assistance programme (EAP) is a worksite-based program designed to assist in the identification and resolution of productivity problems associated with employees impaired by personal concerns including, but not limited to: health, marital, family, financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress or other personal concerns which may affect employee job performance”.

The specific core activities of EAPs include:

- Expert consultation and training to appropriate persons in the identification and resolution of job-performance issues related to the aforementioned employee personal concerns, and
- Confidential, appropriate and timely problem assessment services;
- Referrals for appropriate diagnosis, treatment and assistance;
- The formation of linkages between workplace and community resources that provide such services;
- And follow-up services for employees who use those services” (EAPA 1992: 1).

“UK Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs):

Provide worksite-focused programmes to assist the identification and resolution of employee concerns, which affect, or may affect performance. Such employee concerns typically include, but are not limited to: -
• **Personal** matters – health, relationship, family, financial, emotional, legal, anxiety, alcohol, drugs and other related issues.

• **Work** matters – work demands, working relationships, personal and interpersonal skills, work/life balance, stress and other related issues.

“An EAP provider will necessarily utilize a multi-disciplinary team to achieve an effective intervention at an organizational level. EAP professionals therefore come from diverse backgrounds including psychology, social work, account management, business administration, law, finance, information, occupational health, family specialists and so on” (UK EAPA: 1998 – 6).

Considering the above definitions, a general definition can be concluded:

An Employee Assistance Programme is a voluntary programme that is designed specifically to provide support to employees within the workplace. The aim of such a programme is to offer assistance to those employees experiencing personal and or work related problems in the hope that it can reduce personal anxieties and stressors of individuals and hence enables them to function at their optimum level. Each programme has clear-cut policies and procedures designed to make its use easier. It aims to support individuals or groups of employees who are experiencing a variety of difficulties. These can be both,

- **Personal** (financial difficulties; marital difficulties; illness; legal advice…) or
- **Work-related** (work-place conflict; stress; job-dissatisfaction…)

and are not limited to the afore-mentioned. The support provided is highly confidential and dealt with by trained professionals.

Services provided by the EAP are not limited to employees only; the services should ideally also be accessible to family members of employees or then sportsmen and – women in this study.
The programme is designed to identify needs and assess individuals and to provide support and intervention to employees who require it, based on the assessed needs. Referrals to appropriate external organizations are made should the intervention required not be available within the organisation. Follow-up procedures are incorporated.

Therapeutic support services are not the only element of the EAP. The programme will also strive to educate employees on a variety of issues, namely those identified through the assessment process. These could include information days on relevant topics such as HIV/AIDS and workplace conflict, thereby empowering organizations and employees.

Each EAP is unique. It is designed with a specific organisation and its employees in mind. Each programme utilised within the EAP is formulated by the EAP practitioner and forms the framework of the support services provided to the employees of a specific organisation. Each EAP and the services it offers, take into consideration the needs of both the organisation and its employees and it attempts to provide a range of services to best meet the needs of these two groups.

1.13.3 Sport

Sport is defined by McPherson; Curtis, and Loy (1989: 15) as:

“...We think of sport as a set of specific competitive physical activities based on elements of play, games and contests. From this perspective we formally define sport as a structured, goal orientated, competitive, contest-based, lucid physical activity” (1989: 15).

The Encyclopedia Britannica 2003 defines sport as:

“...recreational or competitive activities that involve a degree of physical strength or skill. At one time, sports were commonly considered to include only the outdoor recreational past times, such as fishing, shooting and hunting as opposed to games,
which were regarded as organised athletic contests played by teams or individuals according to prescribed rules”

Considering the above, sport can be considered any physical activity in which people of all ages participate on a competitive level or recreational level.

For the purposes of this research study it is important to note the link between sport and the world of work. For an individual who competes on a competitive level within their chosen sport, it can be said that their sport becomes a livelihood and hence a situation which can be compared to the world of work. Many professional athletes receive remuneration for their participation in a specific sport directly or indirectly through sponsorships based on performance and achievement. Professional participation in sport can be viewed in the same light as a full-time job. A sports person’s productivity and performance quality is affected by personal and emotional difficulties in the same way as that of an employee in the traditional work place.

1.13.4 Work

Akabas and Kurzman (1982) provide the following definition:

“Work is an instrumental activity carried out by human beings, the object of which is to preserve and maintain life, which is directed at a playful alteration of certain features of man’s environment.”

The Encyclopedia Britannica (2003) considers the term within the context of economics and sociology and provides the following explanation:

“...the activities and labour necessary for the survival of society”.

Considering these two definitions, it is clear that the authors consider the term work as an activity which an individual carry’s out for a specific purpose, mainly to survive. Considering that professional athletes receive remuneration for participating within a specific sport, it could be considered a type of work in that they participate not only for their own vested interests, but also the to satisfy their other more basic needs.
A group is defined by Bergh and Theron as:
“...two or more persons who are united by a common interest, characteristic or bond, and whose activities influence each other” (1994: 260).

Another definition is provided by Furnham (1992):
“...persons (more than two, which is a dyad), who communicate regularly, share goals and interact with each other over time, so building up affective (emotional) bonds (1992).
CHAPTER 2: EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES: A LITERATURE OVERVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the concept of Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). The aim would be to provide an understanding of what an EAP is - how it works, where it is currently utilised and why it is viewed as a successful tool within the business world to boost employee morale and productivity. In order to gain an understanding of the concept, a definition will be provided.

2.2 Definition and Background

According to Googins & Godfrey (1987: 102), it is difficult to define the concept of EAP. It is noted that this is partially due to the fact that practitioners have not yet come to an agreement as to what exactly constitutes an EAP programme and exactly how to define it. This is probably due to the fact that EAP has emerged or developed from a number of different types of workplace based support programmes, such as alcohol programmes, employee wellness programmes and employee recovery programmes to name but a few.

Despite the fact that it is difficult to find one complete definition, Googins & Googins & Godfrey (1987: 102), have provided the following statement, “EAPs generally refer to a set of policies and programme procedures by which a work organisation legitimately intervenes in identifying and treating problems of employees that impact and have the capacity to impact job performance.”

Googins & Godfrey (1987: 102) then take this definition a step further by quoting Walsh (1982: 495), “....as a generic entity, an EAP can be defined as a set of company policies and procedures for identifying or responding to personal or emotional problems of employees which interfere directly or indirectly with job performance.”

From this definition it can clearly be said that EAPS are designed and implemented purely for the well-being of the organisation. Whilst they do aim to identify and respond to employee problems it is clearly stated that this is done with only the well-being of the organisation in
mind. It feels as though they have acknowledged that personal problems affecting employees will undoubtedly affect their performance at work and hence be bad for the organisation and that would be the sole reason for the organisation deciding to address the problem. This definition does not incorporate the possibility of extending the service to employees families, in other words such organisations view the individual and their difficulties in isolation and treat only the presenting problem and the individual presenting it. No thought is given to the individual outside the work environment and the potential difficulties he or she might be facing outside the workplace.

Whilst seeking out other definitions for EAP, it became very clear that the difficulty in defining the concept has largely been due to its constantly changing nature and content. Clearly when the concept of EAP initially emerged it was seen as merely a programme which would provide support to employees who were presenting with major problems, such as alcohol and drug dependency, which were in turn affecting their ability to perform adequately within the workplace. However as time has moved on, it has become clear to those professionals involved directly with employee assistance programmes, that it is essential that scope of the programme be broadened. Research began to show that alcoholism and drug addiction were not the only problems facing employees and that it was essential that more effective programmes be developed which would provide employees with support with varying types of personal problems including drugs and alcohol abuse. This development is highlighted by Akabas and Kurzman (1999: 30) who have quoted Nathan as stating the following.

“…managers have concluded that traditional employee assistance programmes, those that focus only on alcoholism detection, referral and treatment, may not be as effective as programmes that extend their view to a broader range of problems including familial, vocational and financial, interpersonal, behavioral and psychological or psychiatric ones…” (Nathan, 1984: 390).

Clearly the concept of EAP has evolved and now covers a very wide range of potential issues or problems, which could be affecting employees. Practitioners have also evolved and are now clearly able to cope with all situations and not merely with one specific issue such as alcoholism.
Akabas and Kurzman provide the following definition of EAP, which they prefer to term the comprehensive EAP model:

"Comprehensive EAPS are free and confidential workplace entitlements that are voluntarily sponsored by employers or trade unions, jointly or both. In-House (internal) and contract (external) EAPS respond to the human service needs of workers and their families and to corresponding agenda’s of the work organisation. Under the overall direction of professional health or mental health staff, such EAPS address comprehensive current and prospective bio psychosocial progress of education, prevention, assessment, treatment, case-management and referral" (1999 : 35).

Clearly from the above definition it can be seen that EAPs are or at least should be considered to be a definite part of every work organisation. It appears that employees are seen as having a clear right to be able to access such support services within their place of work. These programmes and those providing the service should have the ability to deal with a large variety of potential human problems – the employee assistance programme is clearly not designed to provide support and intervention for one problem only, such as alcoholism. Potential human problems are not isolated and it is accepted and expected that problems experienced by employees will be inter-related, in other words one will inevitably lead to another. For example, an increased amount of stress at work could lead to potential difficulties within the home, which could therefore increase the stress being experienced by that employee. This increased amount of stress could result in the employee starting to drink or taking drugs simply as a coping mechanism – this highlights that problems are complex and cannot be looked at in isolation, therefore an effective EAP will ensure that professionals involved are able to deal with a wide variety of problems and not simply focus or specialize in one.

This definition also clearly states that problems will not only affect the employee, but also his or her family and friends. This statement highlights the importance of the systemic approach, which forms the basis of EAP development. The systemic perspective highlights the fact that the individual cannot or should not be seen in isolation, it states that as individuals we form a part of a variety of systems, which are all inter-linked. As a result an individual exerts an influence over the systems of which they are a part and visa-versa. With this concept in mind it becomes clear that it is vitally important that support services be extended further a field than merely the employee himself. They should extend to the employees family and any other
significant others within the employees life as these are all groups or systems which the individual employee forms a part of and hence they exert an influence over the individual and could possibly be causing him or her increased stress, resulting in them not performing to the best of their ability at work.

This definition also acknowledges that EAPs do not only focus on treatment programmes, but that they also serve educational purposes, assessment purposes and also are most likely to result in multi-disciplinary working.

When taking into consideration these definitions, it is troubling to observe the differences within them. Whilst it is clear that EAPs are considered to be programmes which are introduced into the workplace with the ultimate goal of supporting employees with social or personal problems (work-related and other), the definitions do appear to differ greatly when it comes to the question of who exactly the service is being provided for and why exactly companies are providing the service.

If the employee assistance programme is designed with the systemic perspective in mind then the definition for employee assistance programmes should emphasize that the programme and its related services are also available for employee’s family members. Not only does this then result in making the service far more effective, it also provides employees with a sense of belonging, that they are valued by the organisation and that they and their families have a right to such services.

The simple fact that Googins & Godfrey definition included the following statement, “...emotional problems of employees which interfere directly or indirectly with job performance” (1987: 495), raises concerns that the programme is seen as merely a tool which is used to improve work performance levels of an organisations staff. Whilst there is no denying that improvement of work performance and hence productivity is a clear goal of an EAP, it should not be considered the only reason for the implementation of an EAP. If employee assistance programmes are to be successful and well utilised by staff, employees need to fell valued and respected. It should be clear to employees that such programmes are being implemented for their well-being and their families as well as to improve their level of performance at work and hence for the benefit of the company they work for.
One of the main similarities in all the definitions discussed is that the EAP is considered to be a programme designed to support employees and help them cope with personal problems they might be dealing with. The main aim of such programmes is to provide employees with opportunities to discuss such problems and seek skills, solutions or resources to help them cope better and hence function at higher levels.

Most of the definitions do not cover the roles of practitioners; however Akabas and Kurzman (1999) do cover this aspect within their discussion of EAP. These authors discuss the various types of programmes which could be incorporated or included into an EAP and have identified some of these as follows:

**Educational:** providing information to employees on issues such as HIV/AIDS, financial planning, sexually transmitted diseases, domestic violence, to name but a few. The EAP in this sense could also be used to distribute information on various organisations, which could provide assistance to employees should they not wish to access the service within their place of work.

**Preventative:** issues such as aggression or workplace conflict, stress management are very rife within the workplace. An EAP could be utilised to draw employee’s attention to these issues and workshops could be held within the workplace to discuss stress etc. In this way the programme serves as a preventative measure.

**Assessment:** prior to the implementation of the EAP, the practitioner would carry out a number of assessments to ensure that they implement the right programmes to meet the needs of the organisation. Each organisation is different and each individual is different and hence all needs and problems will be different and they will require a variety of different means to deal with them. The assessment process also provides valuable information on individual and the organisation as a whole, which is very valuable for statistical purposes.
To include these roles within a definition is of great importance. The definition needs to outline what areas are covered within an EAP and that such a programme will do more than merely provide a support to staff with their personal problems.

Despite all the above discussion and varying degrees of definitions, the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA) approved a definition for EAP in 1988. The definition is quoted as follows:

“An employee assistance programme (EAP) is a worksite-based program designed to assist in the identification and resolution of productivity problems associated with employees impaired by personal concerns including, but not limited to: health, marital, family, financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress or other personal concerns which may affect employee job performance.

The specific core activities of EAPs include (1) expert consultation and training to appropriate persons in the identification and resolution of job-performance issues related to the aforementioned employee personal concerns, and (2) confidential, appropriate and timely problem assessment services; (3) referrals for appropriate diagnosis, treatment and assistance; (4) the formation of linkages between workplace and community resources that provide such services; (5) and follow-up services for employees who use those services”

(1992: 1).

This definition draws attention to the fact that an EAP is a worksite-based programme. It also highlights that such a program’s main aim is to identify and assist employees with problems affecting their level of productivity. This is an important factor, but the question remains is it essential that such a statement remain within the definition? Should it not be considered that any problem experienced by any person is undoubtedly going to eventually, if it is not dealt with, affect that individual’s ability to function at their optimum level. One cannot help but consider that employees might be more willing to utilize such a programme at work if they truly felt that it had been implemented purely for their well-being in mind and not with the aim of improving the organisations levels of productivity. Could the idea of improving levels of productivity not be left as a hidden benefit of such a programme? or if it is felt that it is essential to include the statement that it be emphasized that the relationship is mutual between employer and employee and that the EAP aims to serve 2 groups simultaneously.
The EAPA definition highlights potential problems, which could be dealt with and clearly states that these are only a few. In this way the scope for the EAP is left wide open and it is in no way limited to specific problems.

The EAPA definition also identifies the core activities of the EAP. In this way it manages to include the roles of the practitioner along side the explanation of how the EAP functions and what employees should expect from such a service. It mentions that individuals will be dealt with professionally and confidentially. It also states that the programme could offer training on issues as well as links to outside organisations for support and that follow-up services are available.

This definition is brief and clear cut. It does provide the basic information about what an EAP is, and how and why it functions. However it does focus strongly on issues relating to productivity and this might offend some employees and the definition does not highlight the fact that the service is available to family members of employees. The intensive focus on productivity, could also lead to the assumption that such a service would only be available to employees and not their families as they do not directly effect the organisation.

The United Kingdom branch of EAPA provides another definition. This definition reads as follows:

“UK Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) provide worksite focused programmes to assist the identification and resolution of employee concerns which affect, or may affect performance. Such employee concerns typically include, but are not limited to: -

**Personal matters** – health, relationship, family, financial, emotional, legal, anxiety, alcohol, drugs and other related issues.

**Work matters** – work demands, working relationships, personal and interpersonal skills, work/life balance, stress and other related issues.

An EAP provider will necessarily utilize a multi-disciplinary team to achieve an effective intervention at an organizational level. EAP professionals therefore come from diverse backgrounds including psychology, social work, account management, business administration,
law, finance, information, occupational health, family specialists and so on” (UK EAPA: 1998 – 6).

Clearly the definitions are very similar, and the basic core elements are the same. However it should be noted that this definition makes it clear to the reader that EAPs are not only encouraged for the benefit of the organisation. The definition highlights that the EAP can be utilised for both personal and work-related issues, it also stresses that whilst the improvement of work performance is hopefully to be effected positively by the EAP, it does not emphasise that this is the sole reason for implementation of such a programme.

This definition also highlights the type of professional involved with the EAP. It notes that it is multi-disciplinary in nature and that in order for it to be completely effective it requires the support of a wide range of individuals. It is felt that this definition does come across to the reader as being more diverse and self-explanatory. It does distinguish between personal and work-related problems and clearly mentions the individual’s family as a possible stressor. However it is still not clear to the reader that the EAP service will be available to wider family members of the employee. If this definition is to attract potential clients then such vital information cannot be left out. Even if this is disclosed at a later stage, I am of the opinion that the broad approach or scope of the programme should be noted up front in the definition.

Considering the above noted criticisms it is potentially a good idea to define terms such as employee; support; job performance. In this way there cannot be any discrepancies or misunderstandings. It is felt that when introducing an employee assistance programme to an organisation management structure or even when promoting the programme amongst front-line staff, a clear, defined definition of what an EAP is, is vital. The description of what an EAP is and what it entails is going to be the first think that is seen or read by individuals. With this thought in mind it can be seen how vitally important the definition is. It should be clear and concise. Not length, but it should include all relevant information about the programme. What it is, what its services are, who can use it etc. Descriptive terminology such as troubled employee should be avoided as it immediately places a label on those individuals who would potentially utilise the service, thereby making it a less attractive option. Concept jargon should be kept to a minimum and utilised only when absolutely necessary.
2.3 Functions of an EAP

When considering the concept of EAP, it is essential to consider its function and or role within the workplace. As has been clearly identified it is essential for the EAP definition to include a statement of the programs functions – what it aims to achieve within the workplace. The functions of the programme need to be highlighted so as to ensure that all involved are aware of its role and why it is being implemented.

Akabas and Kurzman (1993) discuss an article published by Roman and Blum in 1985 entitled, “The Core Technology of Employee Assistance Programmes”. This article defined what constituted the roles and functions of EAP providers and it identified the following –

- Identification of employee’s behavioral problems on the basis of job performance and consultation with supervisors, managers and shop stewards,
- Appropriate use of constructive confrontation as leverage when employees refer, micro and macro linkages with external counseling treatment and other community resources.

Centrality of employee alcohol problems as the focus of programmes with most significant promise for product recovery and genuine cost savings for work organisations


Once again from these above mentioned factors it can be seen that the focus of EAP at this time was still very much that of employee’s alcohol problems. Whilst alcohol problems are very viable and extremely significant within a workplace, by emphasizing the programmes specific approach to these problems, EAPs run the risk of allowing individuals to think that alcohol problems are the only problems dealt with. In this way the programme could become stigmatized and those individuals utilizing it for whatever reason could become victims of labeling.

Clearly the above functions have changed over time and this change is reflected in the more recent models or approaches to EAP. Professionals could not ignore the fact that the workplace is a constantly changing entity and as a result the problems faced by employees change and become more complicated and diverse. An effective EAP model or programme therefore needs to reflect these changes. As a result the above-mentioned article and highlighted “Core technologies” is no longer the only model identified. Substance misuse is no longer the only
problem recognized and therefore EAPs need to incorporate a wider range of services. Akabas and Kurzman (1993), quote Richard Hellen from Employee Assistance Programmes (1987:28), as referring to the ““full-services system”” (1993: 28). By using such a term it clearly indicates that an EAP provides support and services of a wide range – that the programme is by no means limited to specific problems or issues only.

Akabas and Kurzman state the following:

“...modern EAPs will not be successful unless the early ‘core technology’ model is supplanted by a conceptualization that reflects not only the nature of the modern workplace, but the legitimate vested interests of the several parties involved: employers, employees, unions and third party players” (1993: 28).

From this it can clearly be seen why the EAP needs to consider ALL client groups and not only the interests of the employer (organisation) itself.

To support this statement, Akabas and Kurzman (1993: 30) provide a table of comparison, between the core technology service and the comprehensive EAP. It is felt that to include this comparison is vital as it emphasizes the point previously made of how important it is to have an EAP, which is able to provide support on a wide variety of issues to employees.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>CORE TECHNOLOGY</th>
<th>COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DESIGN</td>
<td>Management tool</td>
<td>A benefit for workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORIENTATION</td>
<td>Alcohol and drug abuse</td>
<td>Personal problems which may affect ability to function productively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRINCIPLE</td>
<td>A workplace disciplinary alternative</td>
<td>A workplace social utility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUNCTION</td>
<td>Supervisory training and intervention with workers</td>
<td>Supervisory training, intervention, workplace health, education, wellness and prevention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOCUS</td>
<td>Current job performance</td>
<td>Present and potential capacity to function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>Enhance employees productivity</td>
<td>Preserve precious human and fiscal resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCEPT</td>
<td>New personnel prerogative for employers</td>
<td>New resource and entitlement for workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERVENTION</td>
<td>Constructive confrontation</td>
<td>Differential biopsychosocial assessment and intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERVICES</td>
<td>Prescribed and proscribed by Roman - Blum model 1985</td>
<td>Evolving to meet the changing needs of the workers and work organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCOPE</td>
<td>Assessment and referral</td>
<td>Assessment, referral, prevention and short-term treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTAKE</td>
<td>Primarily by supervisors referrals</td>
<td>Referral by supervisors, self and peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLIENTS</td>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>Workers’ families and their communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREVENTION</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Primary and secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAFFING</td>
<td>CEAPs with CAC counseling credentials</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary team led by licensed health/mental health professionals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSPECTIVE</td>
<td>Health vs. pathology perspective; goal: to discipline or heal</td>
<td>Ecological-life perspective; goal: to enhance social functioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMITMENT</td>
<td>To provide prescribed services</td>
<td>To provide prescribed services and to promote social change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Akabas & Kurzman (1993:30).
When studying the above table it becomes increasingly clear how the concept of EAP has evolved with time. The Core Technology Model focused not on the individual as a person, but rather on the individual as purely a worker whose sole purpose was to do his job and be productive. This particular model, as time has moved on, has proved to be very limited, focusing on mainly drug and alcohol abuse and included in that, the programme was not seen as being a potentially positive and uplifting experience for the employee. It also did not appear to show any improvement in the relationship between employer and employee. Instead, this model was seen as a management tool (enforcing staff to utilize services as referrals only came from a supervisory level) and also as a way to instill discipline and fear in employees.

The EAP was seen as a tool to measure purely job performance with the only aim being to improve productivity for the organisation. The service was seen as being set in stone, not allowing for or adapting to inevitable changes in society, people and within the workplace. The Core Technology model was a very clear-cut, defined model, which aimed to have the EAP run along strict rules and boundaries. It was very much based on reflective of the hierarchical structure within an organisation, namely:

- Management
- Supervisors
- Staff/employees

Management implemented the programme, based on their needs and referrals were made by and could only be made by employees on a supervisory level. Employees (front-line staff) could not refer themselves and it was therefore seen as a management tool and not a support to staff.

The more open and comprehensive service of today’s model allows for self-referral making the entire process more voluntary and confidential. Another aspect of the comparison was that of who was identified as the client. A clear change was made within the Comprehensive Model, to include families and communities of the employee and not only the employee himself. This change emphasized the systems perspective and made the service a more viable and useful one to both organisation and staff.
Another very clear distinguishing point between these two approaches is that of perspective and commitment of the EAP. Clearly the Core Technology Model was developed from a more medical model. The medical model identifies that all problems or issues can be cured. A diagnosis of the presenting problem is made and the intervention chosen is done so with the aim of alleviating the problem completely. It does not focus on long-term change – it only considers first-order change and hence it treats symptoms, quickly. It is also noted that this model was utilized by employers to maintain a level of control amongst employees. Employees were only referred to the programme if they were not achieving a certain level or if they had done something wrong, in this way it was viewed as a punishment or a disciplinary method.

Unfortunately the procedures implemented within this model did not aim to support employees with problems in the long-term. The medical model, diagnoses the presenting problem and aims to fix it, the solution is therefore short-lived as the issues affecting the employee which led to the presenting problem are not dealt with. An example of this could be as follows: 

an employee presents with a drinking problem. The only reason it has been noted at work is because his level of productivity had fallen significantly and he had been caught drinking at work. The supervisor would refer him to the practitioner for alcohol abuse at work. The practitioner would then diagnose the individual as having a drinking problem (diagnosis), he would be referred to a counselor and his problem with drink would be discussed. It should be noted that in this case his drinking problem in relation to work would be dealt with (first order change). No attention would be given to other issues within his life which could have led to him abusing alcohol.

In terms of the more Comprehensive model, the referral process might have been similar but the difference would occur when it came to dealing with the problem. The employee would be treated on a personal level by counselors, most likely someone from a member of a multi-disciplinary team with experience in alcohol abuse. The problem would be explored further (systemic perspective) so as to identify the underlying issues for the employee, possibly family issues etc. Once these had been identified, various other types of support will be offered to employee and his extended family. The support will be reviewed and progress monitored over a long period of time to ensure that change is occurring. The name of the employee is not disclosed or discussed with management as it is not a punishment, it is a source of help and assistance, and it is completely confidential.
The Comprehensive model aims to treat the presenting problem as well, however it takes the process further on the premise that the individual forms part of a wider system and hence the problem is indicative of other issues in the employee’s life. The comprehensive model aims to identify these and provide the employee with a holistic approach to his problem. In this way the change and support is long-term, it aims to change the employee’s life and hence it aims to achieve second-order change. Such change is considered to be long-term and more successful.

In conclusion it can be seen from the above discussions that EAP as it is known today has developed over a long period of time. As a process or procedure it has evolved from being simple, clear-cut and specific with it’s focus being purely on issues such as substance abuse and productivity within the workplace to a programme which follows a holistic approach, incorporating a wide variety of problems with services being offered not only to the employee but to wider family and other systems within the employees life.

Today’s EAP is designed to provide a comprehensive service to employees, to assist them with workplace problems, family-life problems, to educate them and support them with the overall aim being to improve quality of life for each individual and therefore to improve their ability to function effectively both at home and at work.

2.4 EAP AND RELATED CONCEPTS
2.4.1 HEALTH ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMMES

- Under this heading the following programmes can be included:
- Balanced Lifestyle Programmes
- Physical Fitness
- Smoking Cessation
- Stress Management
- Weight Control.

Recently society has undergone a real shake-up with regards to health and fitness. There has been an increase in media attention to subjects such as dieting, fitness, alternative therapies, cancer risks, heart disease, diabetes to name but a few. Over recent years our life-styles have changed dramatically and it is thought that these changes are mostly due to people’s desire to
work and be successful. Various reports have been written stating that life-expectancy levels are
decreasing as a result of increased stressors and pressures at work and that individuals are
pushing themselves to achieve certain levels and that the business world is becoming more and
more competitive.

One of the biggest problems facing individuals today is the risk of heart disease and other
related illnesses such as diabetes. It is thought that these are all stress related and brought upon
as a result of poor diet, lack of exercise and to much stress. Working individuals, especially
those in high-powered jobs which carry a lot of responsibility are likely to be over-worked,
spending very little time on themselves and therefore not ensuring that they eat healthy,
balanced diets and take in frequent exercise. The result of this “new-age” lifestyle is that society
is becoming ill; work organisations are suffering as a result of increased levels of absenteeism
mostly due to stress-related illnesses. The point therefore of Health Enhancement programmes,
is to educate individuals on the importance of leading healthy balanced life-styles and to provide
them with support in achieving these and the ultimate goal being more stable, healthier,
productive workforces.

The benefits of such a programme are the following:

Increased ability to work increased energy and strength, stamina, concentration, emotional
stability and confidence. The benefits are exceptional but such a programme is high
maintenance and very specific in its focus.

EAP is a concept, which has been around for sometime, however it should be seen as an ever-
changing phenomenon. From the discussion above it can be seen how the EAP model as it is
known today has undergone many changes over the years. EAP has gone from being a
programme which focused on one singular difficulty for an individual, that of alcoholism, to
being a multi-faceted support packages for individuals and their families, to help them cope with
a wide variety of difficulties they may experience. EAP is a concept, which adapts and changes
according to the times and the most valuable option of such a programme, is that it
acknowledges the fact that individuals are all different and that thus a generic approach to their
problems does not work.
Due to the fact that EAPs are constantly adapting and changing according to the assessed need of the moment it can be seen why the EAP professional must be able to exist within a multi-professional environment. Mankind is increasing in complexity and so are the problems experienced, thus one individual or professional could never be fully equipped or able to deal with the multiple variety of potential problems they may face as a practitioner. Within an EAP framework, numerous professionals will need to be used to ensure a complete, appropriate and professional service is provided.

The basic concept behind any EAP is that the organisation which implements it believes that by addressing their employee’s difficulties and providing them and their families with the necessary support, the productivity levels of these employees will improve thus leading to overall enhancement for the organisation. However, considering that EAP as a concept is so adaptable and the principles behind the implementation of such a programme so valuable, one would assume that such a support package could be provided to any individual in any situation or environment where the focus was on that individual’s performance or productivity. People are the same no matter what their race, gender, religion or financial status. Every individual experiences difficulties which when they are not dealt with appropriately cause stress and anxiety. This stress and anxiety impacts on an individual’s general well-being as well as on their ability to function optimally and effectively. Considering this, the question of why EAP has not emerged into other settings apart from the work environment, should be raised.

2.5 STANDARDS OF AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

An EAP should comply with a set of standards in order to be recognized as a proper EAP. As the focus of this study is not on the EAP as such - but rather to explore the need for a sport-specific EAP, the researcher will only briefly refer to the different standards of the EAP. (Compare the Standards for an EAP, US: 1992 and Standards for an EAP, UK, 1997 and Standards for EAPs in South Africa, 1999).

2.5.1 Programme design

2.5.1.1 Advisory committee: there should be an advisory committee at the highest possible level within the organization involving representatives of all segments of the workforce.
2.5.1.2 **Needs assessment:** Programme design shall be based on an assessment of organizational and employee needs as they relate to EAP utilization. The background information and organizational data to be considered into the programme design will include at least organizational profile and needs; employee needs; supervisors and union representatives’ needs and health care profiles and needs.

2.5.1.3 **Service delivery systems:** Employee assistance programme services shall be provided through a comprehensive, formal service delivery system.

2.5.2 **Implementation**

2.5.2.1 **Policy statement:** The policy statement defining the EAPs relationship to the organization it serves, shall describe the EAP as a confidential resource for the organization and its employees and state the scope of the programme’s services as well as the programme’s limitations.

2.5.2.2 **Implementation plan:** An implementation plan shall outline the actions needed to establish a fully functioning EAP and set forth a schedule for its completion.

2.5.3 **Management and administration**

2.5.3.1 **Programme procedures:** Standardized policies and procedures for programme administration and operation shall be developed.

2.5.3.2 **Staffing level:** An appropriate number and level of EAP professionals shall be available to achieve the stated goals and objectives of the programme.

2.5.3.3 **Staffing criteria:** Each EAP shall retain professionals qualified to perform their duties and those staff shall adhere to all legal and professional regulations and ethical codes regarding their scope of practice.

2.5.3.4 **EAP consultation and case supervision:** Every EAP practitioner who provides client services shall receive consultation and/or case supervision.
2.5.3.5 **Confidentiality:** The written policy shall include a clause on confidentiality consistent with all professional standards and ethics and which adheres to other regulations that may apply to information in the possession of the EAP.

2.5.3.6 **Recordkeeping:** the EAP shall maintain records.

2.5.3.7 **Professional liability cover:** All EAP practitioners shall have adequate professional liability cover/insurance.

2.5.3.8 **Ethics:** EAP Practitioners shall register with their respective professional boards and adhere to the codes of practice of such bodies.

2.5.4 **Direct Services:**

2.5.4.1 **Crisis Intervention:** The EAP will offer responsive intervention services for employees, family members and the organization in acute crisis situations.

2.5.4.2 **Assessment and referral:** EAP professionals, or and assessment service under contract to the organization, will conduct an assessment to identify employee and/or family member and/or organization problems, develop a plan of action and recommend or refer the individual(s) to an appropriate resource for intervention.

2.5.4.3 **Short-intervention:** EAP professionals will determine when it may be appropriate to provide short-term intervention services, and when to make a referral to community resources. Long-term, ongoing treatment is not part of the EAP model.

2.5.4.4 **Monitoring:** The progress of referrals will be reviewed and monitored.

2.5.4.5 **Follow-up:** The EAP will ensure that follow-up services are provided to EAP clients, supervisors, worker organization representatives and service providers.
2.5.4.6 **Organizational consultation:** EAPs will consult with the organization when developments and events, such as retrenchments, impact on employee well-being and fall within the EAP professional’s area of expertise and the role of the EAP.

2.5.4.7 **Training of managers, supervisors and worker representatives:** The EAP will provide training for supervisors, management and worker organization personnel in order to give them an understanding of the EAP objectives, procedures for referring employees experiencing job performance problems to the programme and the impact of the programme on the organization.

2.5.4.8 **Supervisor/manager/worker representative consultation:** EAP professionals will provide individual consultation to supervisors/managers and worker representatives regarding the management and referral to the EAP of employees with job performance and other behavioral problems.

2.5.4.9 **Programme promotion/marketing:** EAPs will ensure the availability and use of promotional materials and educational activities which encourage the use of the programme by supervisors, managers, worker representatives, peers, employees and family members.

2.5.5 **Linkages**

2.5.5.1 **Internal organizational activities:** The EAP, being an integral part of the organization, should be integrated with the various internal departments and committees.

2.5.5.2 **External community organizations and resources:** The EAP, shall identify, utilize and evaluate health care delivery systems and community resources which provide quality assistance at an affordable cost for the work organization, employees and family members.

2.5.5.3 **Professional organizations:** EAP professionals shall maintain and upgrade their knowledge by belonging to one or more organizations specifically designed for EAP professionals, attending training and/or professional development programmes and maintaining regular ongoing contact with other EAP professionals.
2.5.5.4 External agencies: EAP professionals shall be informed and aware of external bodies which impact on EAP activities. Such external bodies include regulatory, legislative, advocacy, financial, business and academic bodies.

2.5.6 Evaluation

EAP professionals evaluate the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the EAP operational activities.

2.6 Conclusion

Having the support for the above-mentioned standards amongst EAP professionals, it can be assumed that any well designed EAP should at least adhere to the above-mentioned standards, in order to be implemented, managed and administered, provide direct services, link with other role-players and be evaluated.
CHAPTER 3: SPORT AND RELATED CONCEPTS

3.1 Introduction

For centuries man has been involved in some form of sporting activity or another. Since the time of the ancient Roman’s all the way through to modern times, sport has fulfilled a vital role within individual lives as well as in society. Sport itself has evolved and grown to encompass a huge variety of activities, but it has also evolved into an activity which is taken seriously by many individuals, to such an extent that they have made it their life’s ambition to achieve at the highest level possible in their chosen area of sport.

As is stated by McPherson, Curtis and Loy (1989: xi), there remain few individuals or groups within contemporary society who do not encounter elements of sport, either directly or indirectly, within their daily lives. These authors go on to state that some of these individuals may be actively involved as participants or as spectators or they may follow sport via the mass media. Another way in which individuals are involved is by being coaches, referees or executive members of sporting organizations.

Over the past century, sport has begun to fulfill a bigger, more powerful role within society. Professional athletes are becoming media icons and role models to younger members of society. Man’s ability to perform is improving and individual athletes are pushing themselves further and further in order to perform at the required level. Individuals are stronger, fitter and more determined and as a result of this the pressure to achieve is greater than ever before.

In order to gain a better understanding of sport and where it fits in society, a definition for sport is required. In addition the concept of “elite athlete” will be defined and some of the more relevant issues and difficulties faced by professional athletes today, such as pressure to perform, injuries, drugs in sport, financial concerns, will be highlighted. Following this the existing support structures available to elite athletes will be explored.

3.2 Definition of Sport
Sport can be seen as a set of specific competitive physical activities based on elements of play, games and contests. Following on from this, sport has been defined by McPherson, Curtis and Loy (1989) as

“...a structured goal-oriented, competitive, contest-based, ludic physical activity” (15).

By the term, structured, the authors noted that a sporting activity is governed by rules and written or unwritten codes of conduct. For example, many sports take place in a specific area, such as a golf course, boxing ring, swimming pool on the basis of prescribed rules, such as swimmers who swim in a breaststroke competition who knows that they need to touch the edge of the pool with both hands instead of just one.

Most sports are now also governed by professional bodies and thus sports bodies, such as the South African Rugby Union, are managed in a very professional, business like manner. They have hierarchical structures, with clear objectives.

By using the words, goal orientated, the authors emphasize the fact that athletes, coaches and managers have very specific goals, which they aim to achieve. This structure occurs within other team sports as well and is further evidenced by situations where a cricket team’s batting averages and bowling averages are constantly monitored and evaluated. It is within this aspect of sport where individuals experience the most pressure. Performance is constantly monitored and assessed, and most likely compared to those who have to be competed with. As a result of this athletes often set goals that put them under an immediate amount of pressure.

The goal setting and comparisons made with competitors, brings the third principle in the definition - the fact that sport is competitive to the fore. The competition aspect within sport can take on many forms. This is highlighted by McPherson et al. (1989: 16) who refer to the fact that athletes can compete as

- an individual against another individual
- a team member against members of an opposing team
- a team member against another team member (a new member against an older more experienced member)
- an individual or team member against an already set standard, such as a world record.
It is clear that the individual competes on many levels, at all times, not only with opposing team’s or individual’s from other countries, but also against own team members (perhaps to keep their place in the team) and even on occasion competing with themselves. The constant pressure of this competitive aspect of sport is exhausting and challenging for professional athletes making a living out of sport. For many professional athletes’ sport is an ongoing contest, with the overall driver being that of optimal performance, achievement and winning.

The term *ludic* is derived from the Latin word *ludus*, meaning play or game (McPherson et al. 1989 – 17). Even though not all sport is seen as fun and merely a game, sport shares at least 2 elements with all other ludic activities, namely:

- An uncertain outcome and
- Sanctioned display

Goffman (1961) as quoted by McPherson et al (1989: 17) notes that it is these 2 elements that make sport fun. With the outcome of an event being uncertain, the activity maintains a level of suspense and excitement, whereas sanctioned display gives athletes (or participants) a chance to display some of their attributes such as strength, knowledge, courage and self-control all of which are valued in the social world.

The above discussion provides a basis of understanding of what sport involves. Sport is first and foremost an activity in which individuals can participate at different competitive levels. Sport is a structured activity, which is governed by rules and regulations. Sport is goal-orientated, implying that those participating are focused and have a clear sense of achievement and that sport is contest-based and a ludic activity. The contest-based aspect of sport highlights the competitive characteristic of sport where competition can occur at different levels against other athletes from different teams or even athletes from the same team.

From this it can be seen that sport is not simply just an activity which is enjoyed by some individuals. Sport has become an integral part of society, where members of society are involved to varying degrees

- At school level playing for school teams
- Social level, playing for local clubs.
- Provincial level playing for a region

By those that have exceptional talent and the ability to compete at a professional or elite level. This level of competition requires a completely different level of commitment and dedication. When individuals choose to compete at this level, they are on their way to become professional athletes competing on a fulltime basis. The pressures on the individual then increase significantly and appropriate support systems are required.

In the new Strategy for South African Sport (WD Basson: 2004), the levels at which individuals participate have been clearly identified. There is a progression from

- A very basic entry level participation in sport at a young or an old age, via school/college/university leagues, community mass participation and senior citizen projects.
- the next level involves all organized sporting activities through Competition at club level followed by participation at a
  - Junior provincial,
  - Senior provincial,
  - Senior national level, and
  - International level as part of a development continuum through which an athlete has to progress.

It is useful to prepare these individuals from a young age as part of the process to help them cope with and understand the pressures and demands they may face when making the transition to the highest levels of competition.

3.3 Elite Sportsperson and Elite Sport

Considering that these terms are used quite frequently, a description of what these terms entail is necessary. Sport teams and sport types at a provincial and national level are also referred to as elite professional sport teams and sport. The term elite sportsman is utilized widely to describe
those individuals who achieve on a very high level and who have made sport their livelihood (Kerr, 1997: 56).

Elite professional sports provide entertainment and involvement on a global scale and they represent the most competitive domain of all human activities. The pressure on participants in elite sports has significantly increased over recent years, especially as the public and media interest in sport has grown. Fairchild 1994, as mentioned in Kerr (1997: 56) states the following: “…..elite sportsperson influences and shapes our ideas of what we as humans can and ought to be, what we ought to look like, how we ought to behave”. The pressure that society thus places on these individuals is immense and does have an effect at a personal level.

Approximately fifty-five billion television reviewers are attracted to, for example, Formula One Grand Prix motor races during a season. Nearly two-billion people watched the 1998 World Cup Soccer Finals, and the cumulative audience throughout the football world cup competition was thirty-seven billion people. An estimated 6 Billion people watched the Americas Cup 2000. One hundred and thirty-three million people in the United States and eight billion households worldwide watched the super bowl. More recently, with the 2004 Olympic Games, the BBC ensured constant coverage of the games and reported that on each evening during the prime time viewing slot over 6 million viewers tuned in to watch the sporting events (www.bbc.co.uk/sport : 2004).

Elite sports engender passion and hard work, sacrifice and dedication from participating athletes. Participating and succeeding within any one of these sporting areas potentially ensures the athlete of a great deal of wealth provided sustained peak performance is possible. It is important to note that for these individuals sport is more than just something they do; it is their job, their passion and their way of life. These athletes place a great deal of meaning and purpose into their chosen sport and they share a special bond or link with their fans.

An elite athlete is an individual of exceptional talent and commitment. Their goal is to achieve success and they are totally and completely committed to doing so, many of whom will stop at nothing until they succeed. There is a high level of stress and pressure on these individuals to perform, not only from themselves but also from their coaches, sporting bodies, team members
and possibly the most stressful of all, the fans and the media. Family related issues and life away from home brings about further complications.

The elite athlete is also part of an elite sporting organisation or body; MacPherson et al (1989: 259) describe these organisations or bodies as “Occupational Sport Subcultures.” The authors note that there are two aspects to this subculture, namely:

insiders (coaches, players, managers and trainers) and outsiders (league officials, media and fans, sponsors). Both these groups are additional sources of pressure on the individual elite athlete. For example, fans of international rugby value rugby merely for the game and the entertainment value that it brings. The players, view playing rugby as work (fulltime occupation) and the managers and officials view the game as a business. As a result of these conflicting views, the individual athlete has to fulfill various roles simultaneously, thus increasing pressure on the individual and/or team involved.

To ensure that the fans (outsiders of the sub-culture) are kept satisfied, and continue with their support and thereby ensuring that the money keeps flowing in, the athlete has to “play to the audience”. The individual athlete or team is expected to sign autographs, spend time talking to fans and do media interviews in addition to fulfilling its primary obligation–WINNING!

All elite team sports or individual athletes have significant organisations supporting them and performance or lack thereof can be viewed within an organizational context as well as on an individual basis. To ensure effective or peak performance both the organisation and or the individual/team players have to be focused on.

Successful sporting organisations are businesses within their own right. Many of them can be considered successful with significant budgets to achieve. Sporting organisations are extremely competitive and driven by the desire to succeed just as any other business organisation. Professional sports organisations operate within an ever-changing entertainment industry, in which competition for cash and success is fierce and for performance levels to be sustained, organizational excellence is required. The participants or employees of the organisation, the “owners”, players, coaches, managers, marketers, finance department, cleaners, ticket sellers, engineers, referees all form part of a total organisation whose overall performance is subjected to ruthless scrutiny by the fans, media and the nation as a whole.
3.4 Factors Placing Increased Pressure on Individual Elite Athletes

In the world of professional sports there are numerous pressures facing individual athletes as well as teams and these pressures have an impact on an individual or a team’s ability to perform. It is acknowledged that the incredible desire and need to achieve at the highest level, in order to maintain one’s place in the team for example, leads to extraordinary measures to cope or improve performance. This often translates into greater difficulties for the individual. Some of these pressures come from:

- The media
- Fans/supporters
- Coaches / managers and sporting body or organization involved an individual’s fear of losing position on team
- Fear of injury

3.4.1 Media

The media involvement is two-fold. They report on the sport as an event, which is a positive as the sporting event is then advertised to the general public whereby interest is raised resulting in more spectators and consequently more money for the sporting organisation. However, the media also report on individual athletes, more often than not, on their private lives. This aspect would not be as serious a concern should the focus simply remain on the individual and their performance and role within their chosen sport. The media also take athletes and turn them into icons, thereby increasing the demand from the public for more and more information about the athlete and those close to him/her.

The resulting pressure on these individuals is significant. Players and coaches operate in the front–line and are increasingly vulnerable to criticism not only as it relates to performance on the playing field, but also to aspects of their personal lives. Examples of this are seen worldwide. In South Africa the fate of a few Springbok rugby coaches in recent years, whereby the individual coaches have lost their jobs as a result of the team not performing is well known and well publicized.
In the United Kingdom, the footballers have great difficulty in keeping their private lives out of the public domain. Players like David Beckham for example have had their lives threatened as a result of not scoring goals in international and club football games. The response of the media and fans places significant pressure on individuals and teams as a whole and this result in players being subject to huge amounts of stress and sometimes fear. In early 2004, the English football captain, David Beckham had his personal life paraded in front of the entire world. A member of his support staff made claims that he had an affair with her whilst he was living in Spain. Naturally this information created a public frenzy and the story continued to run for well over two weeks. Unfortunately for David Beckham, this had a huge impact on his personal life, and whilst he and his wife tried to keep it out of the media it was clear that this was having a destabilizing effect on their relationship. The pressure that this kind of attention places on an individual athlete is invariably contributes to sub-par performances.

The Hansie Cronje saga is another prime example of how the media can both create and destroy a sports idol.

The way an athlete is portrayed by the media will also impact on sponsorship opportunities for both the sport involved as well as the athlete. The relationship between athlete, sponsor and the media can be seen as mutually beneficial to all concerned. Kew (1997: 40) refers to this mutual relationship as “sponsorship-advertising-media axis. Kerr goes on to explain this axis by stating that the athlete benefits from the financial rewards of the sponsorship and the sponsors benefit from the media exposure of their product (1997: 40). This relationship can be seen clearly in the world of football. David Beckham regularly appears in advertisements for Adidas. While this has had major financial benefits for him personally it has also boosted the image and reputation of the Adidas football product range.

The media often view themselves as the “voice” of the paying public (McPherson et al. 1989:162 – 163). Reporters see themselves as having a right to demand that competent athletes perform to their optimal potential. By creating a specific type of media “hype”, the media often manage to force the retirement or dismissal of a coach or specific athlete.

The media is responsible for creating a super-human image for certain athletes and as a result of which fans start worshipping or idolizing these athletes. Being an elite athlete in the new millennium is comparable to being a Hollywood movie star. The attention of the media and
public is consistent, relentless and sometimes cruel. The elite athlete has to learn how to cope
with this attention and the impact it will have on both personal and family lives.

3.4.2 Supporters

As sport has evolved, so have its supporters. In today’s society, supporters are extremely
serious about their sporting teams escalating to fanatical proportions in certain instances. The
rivalry between sporting fans has become intense and has developed into a social phenomenon –
“hooliganism”. Whilst this behavior amongst fans, can occur during any sporting event it has
been most evident in the sport of soccer. McPherson et al. (1989:300-301) states the following;
“hooliganism is the term describing the unique type of sport crowd behavior of some soccer fans
in England”. Many authors state that hooligans have no interest in the sport itself and simply
use the sporting event as an opportunity to cause disruption. Whatever the cause, the behavior of
the crowd has a direct impact on the athlete.

In today’s society, the supporters of a sport have become more serious and intense and the
pressure on athlete’s to perform is increasing exponentially. During the 2004 Athens Olympics,
the British Long Distance runner, Paula Radcliffe was subjected to an enormous amount of
pressure. She enjoyed an incredible amount of support from the British public and the media and
it was generally accepted that she would win a Gold Medal. However, she failed to deliver and
couldn’t even complete her two events the marathon and the 10 000 meters. This resulted in
great disappointment for her fans, Britain and of course for the athlete herself. There were no
reports that she had been injured and it was generally accepted that pressure from the fans and
media was simply too much to cope with.

3.4.3 Team mates, coaches, management

There is an “occupational subculture” (McPherson et al. 1989) within sport. Every sport is
governed by a sporting body or professional organisation, which is professionally managed as a
profit making business. The fact that sport is no longer simply about the sport and the enjoyment
thereof, has changed the way in which athletes play the game. Participating in professional sport
has become a cutthroat business where winning is an integral part of an athlete’s existence. The
athlete is central to the success of not only the team, but also the coach and the ongoing success
of the body or organisation involved.
If the athlete/team fails to perform – coaches come under pressure from employers, media and fans and could ultimately lose their jobs while the sports body or organisation could lose money and thus financial security. In other words, the athlete/team is central to their success but also that of their coaches and the sporting body they represent. An individual’s relationship with a coach and team members is critical to the overall performance of the team and the individual themselves. A coach is seen as a mentor and confidante to an athlete.

The relationship with the coach is complicated. Some believe that sport is coach-led. This suggests that the focus is on the coach, what their needs are, how they manage the athletes and how they view performance. Bull (2002: 103), states the following, “...there are few relationships in sport more influential or intimate than that between performer and mentor”). Bull (2002:103) further continues to highlight the complexity of this relationship. It is noted that it is an extreme challenge for a coach to translate an athlete’s natural talent into consistent performance. Bull (2002: 103), states that “the challenge might be summarized as having to clarify and understand their own needs, the needs of the athlete and the demands of the sport, and then somehow reconcile and dovetail all three”).

Some authors believe that the role of the coach has become too powerful and influential and that it could lead to the exploitation and abuse of athletes (Compare Kew 1996: 68). The mentioned author goes on to suggest that elite athletes have little or no control over the wider context of their practice. It is further noted that elite athletes have little or no control over training regimens, strategies and styles of play adopted. Kew 1996 states, “...the relationship with athletes is essentially one of trust and crucially one of power” Coaches exert power over training regimes, schedules, diets, dress as well as lifestyle. These facts are further confirmed by a study completed by Yorganci in 1992 and which is quoted by Kew (1997: 69). Yorganci surveyed 149 Scottish athletes and focused on what intrusive influences these athlete’s experienced from their coaches. The following table summarizes the survey result –
Table 2

The Influence of Coaches on Female Athletes (Yoaganci 1992: 69)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASPECTS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE ATHLETES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diet/weight</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress Code</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair style</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Life</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyfriends/sex life</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this study it was also found that 54% of the respondents had experienced various forms of sexual harassment, such as demeaning language, sexual innuendos, unwarranted invitations, intrusive physical contact amongst others.

It is important to note that not all coaches exert this type of negative control over individual athlete’s, however it is vitally important that this potential role be acknowledged and dealt with immediately should it arise.

3.4.3.1 Coaching styles

Bull (2002:107-108) provides information regarding differing coaching styles, which emphasizes the fact that there are coaches who will attempt to exploit athletes as well as others who will place the need of the athletes first. Bull (2002:107-108) confirms three basic types or coaching styles:

- “The Hard Driver”: this individual is seen as being a disciplinarian who preaches a practice of hard work, personal sacrifice and obedience to authority. Athletes are not
consulted on any of the processes and winning is the ultimate priority. It is felt that such an approach to coaching would lead to an un-trusting, possibly fearful relationship between athlete and coach. The athlete is most likely to feel unable to approach the coach with any difficulties they may be experiencing (whether sport related or not) as they would fear the response of the coach. They thus feel unsupported in various aspects and the pressure to achieve is extreme. An elite athlete’s performance could well be influenced by this – inability to discuss concerns will lead to them becoming a greater problem for the athlete who will in turn result in their difficulties becoming all consuming and thus impacting on their performance.

- “The friendly helper”: this individual believes in democracy, the coach will seek out the views of the athlete prior to making any decisions. Discussions are held regularly and there is a positive relationship between coach and athlete. This coach places more value on the quality of the relationships he shares with the athlete’s than he does on winning. Such an approach ensures that the sport remains athlete-centered. The coach is not only there to monitor athlete performance, but also takes into consideration the individual as a whole being and not just as an athlete. An athlete is more likely to seek out support from such a coach and share their difficulties, even if they are not sport related. This brings about an open, honest, trusting relationship where everyone receives the necessary support. Unfortunately, in today’s society, the need and desire to win is great and for many coaches, their job depends on their team winning. As a result of this pressure many coaches struggle to find the balance between the desire to win and the importance of good, trusting relationships with athletes.

- “Thoughtful persuader”: This approach to coaching falls in between the aforementioned two styles. This coach, as is stated by Bull, “manipulates rather than orders” (2002: 107). Such an approach may well work initially, but the coach’s end goal remains that of winning and as a result the importance of forming solid human relationships with athletes taking on a secondary position.

3.4.3.2 Coaching behavior

Coaching style determines or impact on coaching behavior. (Bull (2002: 115). Bull furthermore suggests that there are specific coaching behaviors which can be divided into five categories:
- Training and Instruction: aim to improve athlete performance, training, skills, techniques and tactics.
- Democracy: participation of athletes in decision-making, group goals, group strategies.
- Autocracy: independent decision making by coach, personal authority.
- Social support: concern for the individual athlete (welfare, positive group atmosphere, good interpersonal relationships)
- Reward: rewarding good performance.

Bull (2002: 116) has identified that the needs of an athlete or the type of coaching behavior required will differ from athlete to athlete depending on gender, age, team or individual and whether or not the athlete is a novice or an elite performer. Bull noted that

- Novice Athletes: prefer more rewards
- Elite Athletes: prefer more democratic coaching, and social support
- Team Athletes: prefer more training and instruction, autocratic coaching and rewards.
- Individual Athletes: prefer democratic coaching and social support
- Male Athletes: prefer autocratic coaching
- Female Athletes: prefer democratic coaching and social support.
- Older Athletes: prefer more democratic coaching, social support and training and instruction.

From the above it can be seen that athlete needs cannot be classified under one single umbrella. They all have differing needs. It is the coach’s job to identify these needs and provide support accordingly. However, this is rarely the case. The coach fulfills a vital role and the impact of the way in which the coaching job is done have significant impact on athlete performance.

Considering the above findings it is clear just how powerful the influence of the coach really is. Should the relationship between coach and athlete be compromised for whatever reason, the impact thereof on the athlete is considerable.

3.4.4 Fear of loosing position
Competition in sport is constantly on the increase. Athletes need to work and train harder than ever before to stay on top of their game. Coaches and athletes have to meet new heights everyday, thus making it more difficult to stay on top and in control. Athletes need to perform consistently at high level in order to retain their position on a team or within a squad. Considering that most elite athletes have made participating in sport their livelihood (in other words it has become their fulltime form of employment), the pressure of staying on top is amplified by the fact that should they lose their position in the team or squad, they would in essence loose their livelihood.

3.4.5 Fear of injury

Injury and fear thereof is a reality for all professional/elite athletes. Injury to an athlete results in an inability to train, an inability to compete and for many elite athletes the possible end of a career. The end of their sporting career would equate to that of an average person losing his/her job, loss of income, instability and financial insecurity. These concerns in itself could also impact an athlete’s ability to recover from their injury and ability to perform.

Injury leads to stress, however according to Potgieter (1997:237), stress may also lead to injury. May et al (1985) quoted in Potgieter (1997: 234), asked athletes to complete a Health, Injury, Illness and Performance Survey. One of the main findings was that a high score of life-stressors could be associated with a higher rate of injury. It was also found that stressful life events correlated with the amount of time it took for injuries to heal.

This would imply that personal stressors, perhaps un-sport related, have impact on an athlete rendering them more susceptible to injury and longer rehabilitation times.
Ongoing support on an emotional level is essential to the well being of any athlete. Whilst sport psychologists work with athletes who are injured with the aim of improving their mindset and thus hopefully reducing the time it takes for the athlete to return to optimal functioning, there may well be an aspect of rehabilitation missing. In helping an athlete to cope with and deal with life-stressors outside of their life of sport, recovery from injury could be quicker. An example of this is an athlete having marital difficulties; this will have an impact on performance contributing to increased stress levels. Due to life-stressor (marital difficulties) the athlete becomes unfocused and is not in optimal physical shape and is therefore more injury prone. Injury increases an athlete’s stress levels because of an inability to participate, possible financial problems, increased pressure from coach and team members and ongoing marital problems. As a result of the pressures and stressors there is a lack of focus on the injury and thus recovery time tends to increases, as does the risk of further injury.

3.4.6 Drugs

Athletes are being forced to continually raise standards in order to achieve and participate at an internationally competitive level. Drugs are seen by many as a mechanism to enhance performance levels. Mottram (1996:28), states the following, “There may be many reasons why an athlete uses drugs. If the motivation is performance enhancement, the type of drug used will depend on its pharmacological action and the sporting activity the athlete is involved in. Other reasons may be injury or illness or even social reasons such as relaxation”.

Mottram (1989: 40) furthermore identifies four main reasons for the use of drugs:

- Legitimate therapeutic use: this would include treatment of a fungal infection, such as athlete’s feet. Also for treatment of colds, fever etc. Whilst use of these drugs is clearly innocent, athletes still need to be careful as many of these substances are considered banned substances and therefore cannot be used.
- Performance continuation: when an athlete has injured a muscle or ligament it is common that they would seek some form of palliative treatment; this enables the athlete to continue training during recovery.
- Recreational / social use: this would include the taking of drugs such as marijuana, ecstasy, heroin and on occasion cocaine. Any drug use is dangerous and some athlete’s may turn to recreational drug use to help them relax and unwind. This type of drug use could become increasingly dangerous for an individual and lead to numerous other social problems.

- Performance enhancement: this type of drug use refers to the deliberate, illegitimate use of drugs in an attempt to gain an unfair advantage over fellow competitors. Using drugs to increase performance is considered to be cheating and is taken very seriously within the sporting arena.

Despite athletes being regularly tested for banned substances at competition events many continue to use banned substances to improve performance.

It may be that some athlete’s are forced to take a banned substance in the vain hope that performance levels will be improved. Unfortunately the outcome is rarely positive and usually brings with it numerous other problems for the individual including being banned from participating. The consequences of which are an embarrassment and disappointment not only for the athlete themselves but also for fans, teammates and families. An example of this is the recent events which took place at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. Before the Games had even formally begun, two athletes from the home nation (Greece) failed to turn up for the required drugs tests. The result was that not only were they no longer able to participate in the Games, but there was a clear sense of disappointment and anger amongst fellow countrymen and team members. Worse, the nation as a whole was embarrassed and disgraced.

(www.bbc.co.uk/sport : August 2004).

Once an athlete makes the decision to use drugs as a means of staying on top of their careers they enter a vicious cycle. Once they begin to utilize the substance they become dependant on it and can no longer function without it (just as in recreational drug use). By using performance-enhancing drugs, athletes also open themselves to sustaining injury, as they will be performing at levels above their own physical capacities. Once injured the pressure is again increased because of an inability to participate and a vicious circle results.

Recreational drug use is a reality and is often used by everyday people as a means of coping and escapism. There are times when day-to-day pressures become too much. A lack of skills to cope
could lead to the use of drugs. These could include marijuana, heroin, cocaine or alcohol. All of these are dangerous and detrimental to the individual and they will impact performance. Many elite athletes earn large sums of money, thus making obtaining drugs far easier. In England there is a culture of drug taking and binge drinking among footballers, emphasized by a recently made television drama, “Footballers Wives”, depicting the lifestyles of footballers (www.itv.co.uk/footballerswives).

In team sports a drinking culture often exists between team members. Many refer to this as “team building” sessions and state that such behaviors help the team relax and get to know each other. Whilst this may be the case, ongoing events such as these could be dangerous and lead to other difficulties if not dealt with.

The use of drugs and alcohol impacts on an individual’s ability to cope with life in general and affects relationships with family and friends.

3.4.7 Gender

Throughout history there has always been a divide or split between male and female roles in society. Society has overtime-developed norms with regards to roles of women and roles of men within society. Women have always traditionally been viewed as having the role of homemaker, child-bearer, mother and wife. Men have been viewed as being the breadwinner in the family, the dominant partner and father. As time progressed these gender-role stereotypes have begun to change. Women have begun to play a more active role, outside of the family home, by going to work and earning their own money, educating themselves and challenging men within the business world.

The same can be said for women in sport. MacPherson et al (1989: 220) point out that as attitudes towards women and the roles they fulfill have changed within society, attitudes have also changed within the world of sport. In the 19th Century women participating in sport were viewed as being contrary to the concept of ideal women. During this time participation by women in sporting activities remained restricted and this continued to be the case until the 1950’s, when a debate was started on whether women should be allowed to compete at all. MacPherson notes that despite the changes that have occurred, even in today’s Olympic Games there are uncertainties about women being allowed to compete in events involve strength and endurance, even though women’s records are edging closer and closer to that of their male
counterparts. Despite the social changes which have taken place over the years, MacPherson (1989:229) suggests that there is still an under representation of women in sport. The following hypotheses are stated as to possible reasons why this may be the case:

- continuing prejudices
- lack of power in gender relations and the strength of old boys' networks compared to the lack of power of an old girls network.
- lack of qualified female support staff (coaches)
- lack of time due to issues such as family, home-life
- lack of female role models

Some of these are perhaps no longer as valid as they perhaps were ten years ago. In today’s society there has clearly been a vast improvement in women’s representation in sport and also in societies and the media’s acceptance of this. The 2004 Olympic Games provided many examples of women from all countries and ages participating with distinction. There was good media coverage of all events, including women’s weightlifting. Numerous role models also emerged from the Games, such as Kelly Holmes who won 2 Gold medals, the Russian Pole Vaulter who broke the World Record on three occasions during the final and the many swimmers from all over the world who achieved outstanding results.

Despite the positive changes for women over time, women compete in a male-dominated environment. Most of the sport administrators, coaches, and managers are more often than not male and at times this may result in possible performance related difficulties for female athletes.

For many female-elite athletes their participation may not be their only responsibility. For many of these women child rearing and homemaking may well be a priority as well. This creates another pressure for the athlete and should there be little support at home, their ability to perform optimally will be influenced. As a female operating in a predominantly male environment, it may well be that the individual or specific needs of the female athlete are overlooked or not acknowledged.

Sexual harassment is also for some women, however this is speculation as there is very little documented literature available on this subject. It should be noted however that women would often feel incapable of dealing with such issues. Specifically in the sporting arena where the
perpetrator of the harassment may well be a fellow teammate or even a coach with the athlete feeling intimidated by this and thus not able to confront the issue or solicit support. Should this be the case, the stress of the situation may well result in the deterioration of the athlete’s performance.

3.4.8 Non Sport-Related Concerns impacting on an Athlete’s Ability to Perform Optimally

An interview with the trainer of the Northerns Cricket Team (Mr. Robert Walters) provided for a better understanding of the personal difficulties professional athletes and the following were highlighted:

- **Inter-personal relationships:** this would include any relationships shared with family members; friends, children, spouses, girlfriends/boyfriends, work colleagues and even team members. It was noted that some of the athletes found these relationships difficult to manage all of the time, trying to juggle their commitments to family and friends and team members. It is often necessary for athletes to spend a fair amount of time away from their family and friends and that many find this quite difficult to cope with. This is a specific concern for many sporting teams; example cricket and rugby tours often result in team members being away from home for months at a time. This clearly would have an impact on relationships and could affect an athlete’s ability to remain focused.

- **Financial concerns:** this was highlighted as a concern for many individuals, especially those who were fairly young. This difficulty has two sides to it – a fear of losing only source of income as a result of injury or losing a place in the team. Secondly, younger athletes who may not be used to earning substantial amounts of money may spend it unwisely. Support or advice with regards to this was identified as an important need.

An example of this is the British footballer Michael Owen. Footballers are known for receiving large sums of money but many do not know how to deal with it. Michael Owen became involved in gambling and has developed significant problems as a result of this.
- **Home-life:** this could be directly linked to inter-personal relationships

- **Stress:** this could be from a personal source (family difficulty etc) or it could be directly related to sport (performance related and interpersonal difficulties etc.)

- **Concern for the future:** athletes are acutely aware of the fact that their careers are limited and will inevitably come to an end. Whether this happens sooner due to injury or poor performance or later due to age, the end result is inevitable. Many worry about their future and would benefit from advice and support regarding such issues.

The aforementioned only represents some of the difficulties individual sportspersons are experiencing. The list is endless and differs from athlete to athlete. The important thing is that high performance athletes are not immune to average everyday concerns affecting normal everyday people in normal working environments.

### 3.5 Systems Theory

Society today is idolizing sporting heroes or elite athletes. As a result of this idolization, athletes are often expected to take on “super-human” roles and are envisaged as being distinct and almost untouchable. People seem to forget that elite athletes are simply ordinary human beings. Yes, they do achieve extremely high standards and are remarkable in what they do, but they are no different from the individual who succeeds in the workplace or other areas of life.

In general terms, these elite athletes live in the same world as everyone else, and, therefore, they come across the same difficulties and challenges faced by the general population. For this reason issues such as interpersonal relationships, financial concerns, home-life concerns, stress, workplace concerns and concerns about the future are equally important to athletes.

Systemic theory enables us to understand how and why we can link personal stressors and difficulties to an individual’s ability to function.

According to Becvar and Becvar (1996: 8), the systems theory attempts to direct the
attention away from the individual and the individual’s problems toward relationships and relationship issues between individuals. Many approaches to human sciences and human behaviour is linear in nature. In other words there is a cause and effect relationship; event A causes event B, thus A is blamed for B occurring. This is an approach used by many coaches and sport psychologists. An athlete’s lack of focus or concentration will lead to below par performance, and thus interventions such as visualisation techniques are used to assist the athlete in regaining focus. If the athlete’s only difficulty is that of lack of concentration, this may work. However, these techniques do not acknowledge that there may be other reasons for the athlete’s lack of concentration (relationship difficulties, financial concerns) and little is done to gain an understanding of the athlete’s difficulties. These approaches have worked for many years and still do for some athletes, however when viewing the situation from the systemic perspective, potential pitfalls become clearer and areas of improvement in athlete support can be identified.

The systems theory does not utilize a linear approach. There is instead an emphasis on reciprocity, recursion and shared responsibility (Becvar and Becvar 1989: 9). In other words, a does not cause B, instead they exist in the context of their relationship in which each influences the other and both are equally the cause and effect of each other’s behaviour.

Becvar and Becvar state the following regarding the systemic perspective: “...it is holistic and the focus is on the processes or context that give meaning to events instead of only on the individual’s or the events in isolation....it is person-centered” (1989: 9). From this it can be seen that each individual needs to be viewed holistically. One needs to examine the individual and the problems together within the context from where they come rather than in isolation.

Society can be viewed as being made up of various systems divided into macro and micro systems. The macro-systems are those, which are in existence for all individuals - such as the political system, the economic system etc. Micro-systems on the other hand are those, which will be different for everyone, they are person-specific and different for different people. The micro-systems for each individual needs to be explored. An individual will exert an influence on all the systems with which there is contact and these systems will also exert an influence on the individual.
A general example could be viewed as follows:

**Figure 1  Macro and Micro Systems**

For an elite athlete the diagram would be remarkably similar except for a few additions on the micro-system side:

- team mates
- coach
- sport psychologist

Work as a sub-system could be replaced with the individual’s sporting commitments, however for some athletes work may be a separate system.

Any individual should be viewed in their entirety and any problems experienced should be viewed within the context of the individual’s life from a systemic perspective.
An athlete’s experiences are no different other than they have increased pressure to perform from the media and the general public and any difficulties faced by these individuals are guaranteed to be exposed to the world. Should an athlete be experiencing marital difficulties, this will have an impact on performance and should an athlete be having difficulty performing optimally this will lead to increased stress and pressure which could overflow into the athlete’s personal life.

Considering all of this it is believed that athletes need to be supported holistically, taking into consideration the sports person as an individual and not only as an athlete. By acknowledging that an athlete is more than just an athlete and susceptible to difficulties not directly related to the sporting world, the traditional support package (coaching, sport psychology, technology…) could be extended to include support for more personal and emotional related issues. This will positively enhance performance levels.

The basic premise of EAP is that if an individual is experiencing personal difficulties which if not addressed appropriately, will lead to increased stress for the individual and an impact ability to perform optimally.

In reality these are average individuals who have been given a talent which they are using to make a living, in the same way that an artist makes a living by painting. As they are average human beings, it can be assumed that they too are prone to the stressors and strains of everyday life just like everyone else. However, they have an extra component to worry about – that of the public and the media and the praise or criticism that goes along with their chosen careers. Not only are they vulnerable, but so too are their friends and families. Their chosen career requires them to be away from home fairly regularly which places pressures on family relationships, it is also a highly stressful job and without the right support and coping mechanisms could lead to substance abuse etc. Another important aspect to be considered is that it is often the case that very young individuals possess exceptional talent and are therefore included into a team, where they might be the youngest member by a few years. This leads to other pressures and stressors.

3.6 The rationale for a sport specific EAP
From the above it can be concluded that elite athletes are in no way immune to everyday, real life difficulties. Instead of going to “work” as society knows it, these individuals make a living, by utilizing a special talent they have. They “work” extremely hard to maintain high levels of achievement, but what separates them from the rest of society is that they face additional challenges. These include pressure from the media, sponsors, the public, fans and supporters to name but a few. In addition they also have financial concerns, family and relationship difficulties, future aspirations, and possible alcohol and drug dependencies. The sporting environment acknowledges the need to support these athletes and is providing a range of supporting services related to performance needs from a scientific, medical, and technological perspective. However whilst coaching needs, performance needs, medical needs and sport-related psychological needs are all being met, the more personal and emotional needs are neglected.

A sport-specific EAP would acknowledge that every sport-type have athletes with differing needs and goals and would aim to support athletes with regards to their everyday lives and difficulties faced. The EAP could also be extended to provide services to the athlete’s family, so as to ensure that they too are supported should there be a need. The sport-specific EAP would be athlete-centered and coach-led, but it would operate from a systemic and holistic perspective. The aim would be to compliment the role of the coaching staff and other support staff in their traditional roles.
CHAPTER 4: EMPIRICAL FINDINGS ON NEEDS ASSESSMENT REGARDING THE POSSIBLE NEED FOR A SPORT SPECIFIC EAP

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The empirical study was completed by means of a questionnaire. The target group was a squad of players from the Eastern Gauteng Netball Association. The group represented varying age groups, different levels of playing ability, and employment and home situations. The squad consisted of 39 members and due to the small size of the group it was decided that the entire squad would be used for purposes of the research. Respondents were requested to complete a questionnaire containing questions relating to those issues that could affect quality of performance on the field of play.

4.2 RESULTS

4.2.1 General

4.2.1.1 Age of Respondents (See question 1 of the questionnaire)

The graph below represents the age profile of the 39 respondents who participated in the research.

Graph 1 - The Age Profile of the Respondents.
Discussion of Data

The majority of the respondents or players within the target group were located in the age group between 17 to 21 years. This will have an impact on the type of challenges or life difficulties faced or identified by the group of respondents. Between the ages of 17 to 21, individuals can be seen to be in the middle of 2 different life cycles. At the age of 17, a young person is completing their school education and is in the process of making decisions about their futures - a very indecisive time for many. At the age of 21, a young person might have just finished their tertiary education or they may already be in full-time employment, two different situations that will impact their plans to reach the highest levels in playing netball.

A significant number of the respondents, 8 (21%), were over the age of 37. These players will be impacted by a different set of challenges and stressors in their daily lives, and consequently their netball performance levels. By the age of 37 it can be assumed that many women would have settled down and started a family. As a result of this the individual may face added pressures in ensuring their children and family’s needs are attended to as well as dealing with pressures in the workplace. This may well make playing a sport and performing at the highest levels more difficult as the individual’s time may be limited. Should women have the responsibility of children (whether on their own or with a spouse), these responsibilities could well affect performance levels. It should be noted that different stressors will be relevant for different individuals at different stages in their lives and any support offered would need to be tailored to the individual athlete and where necessary their family’s needs.
4.2.1.2. Marital status of the respondents (See Question 2)

**Graph 2 - The Marital Status of Respondents**

Discussion of Data

The graph categorizes the marital status of the respondents. 67% of the respondents were not married. This is consistent with the fact that the majority of the respondents were between the ages of 17 – 21.

A significant number 28% were married. This provides for an opportunity to link this group to questions relating to family pressure and the role of women within a family context.

4.2.1.3. Number of Dependents (See Question 3 of the questionnaire)

**Graph 3 – Number of Dependents**
Discussion of Data

Fifteen (38%) of the respondents had dependents. The majority of the respondents therefore did not have any dependents. This may impact on level of commitment made to reach the top in a sporting context. Many elite female athletes may well put having children on hold until their sporting career has ended. The ability to manage a professional sporting career as well as bringing up children creates highly stressful situations. For women athletes with children, involvement at a top level in sport becomes problematic without the necessary support structures. It should be noted that each individual’s situation would be different to that of another. For example one athlete may have an extremely supportive spouse who is willing and able to take on the responsibility of childcare while others may not be that fortunate. It is also important to note that the types of difficulties faced, will inevitably vary from male to female. Women still predominantly take on the role of looking after the children and in some instances have to pursue a career as well to make ends meet.

4.2.1.4. Respondents Current Employment Status (See question 4e)

**Graph 4 – Employment situation**

Discussion

The vast majority, 59%, of the respondents were employed full-time and consistent with the age ranges involved. School children (15%) were the next highest in number. The fact that the majority of the respondents are in full-time employment indicates that there may well be issues around the workplace that could cause stress for these individuals. Managing a full-time job, ensuring good performance on the netball field and running a family, can
become a highly stressful situation. As for those respondents who are unemployed financial related issues could become important factors impacting sporting careers.

4.2.1.5. Qualifications Held (See question 5 of the questionnaire)

Graph 5 – Qualifications held by respondents

Discussion of data
From these results it can be seen that the majority (41%) of the athletes had completed their secondary school education, and that 26. % of the respondents had completed a diploma course. From these results it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents would not be focusing only on their chosen sport for their livelihood in that they had plans or aspirations to educate themselves further.

4.2.1.5. Current Employment Status of the Respondents (See question 6 of the questionnaire)
Graph 6 – Employment status and position held within the workplace

Discussion of Data
Thirty-two of the 39 of the respondents (82%) indicated that they were in current employment situations. It was important to highlight the positions occupied by the respondents, as level of position held within the workplace will be associated with different levels of stress that could impact performance levels on the field of play.

The 18% of the respondents employed at a general management level could be susceptible to stress situations that could have a negative impact on performance quality on the field of play. It would be considered highly unusual for an athlete to be able to sustain both a professional sporting career as well as a professional job as is the case with some elite athletes in certain sporting codes. However for high performance athletes in most sporting codes competing at an International, National or Provincial level, the reality is that they have to hold down regular jobs for pure financial reasons. Considering the individual from a systemic perspective, it becomes clear that any stressors at work would impact on their ability to perform in sport and visa-versa. This question will be expanded on at a later stage when the career dimension of the individual is looked at in more detail.

4.2.1.7. Highest Competitive Level Played (See question 7 of the questionnaire)
Graph 7 – Highest competitive level played

Discussion of Data
There is a good spread of players ranging from those who have recently started to play to those that have reached higher levels of competition. The majority of respondents, 64% have already played at a Provincial/National level. This question was aimed at defining the current competitive level of the respondents, as this would have an impact on other related factors. All respondents aim to play at the highest competitive level possible.
4.2.1.8. Number of Years That the Respondents Had Spent Playing Netball (See question 8 of the questionnaire)

Graph 8 – Years spent playing netball

Discussion of Data

Only 38 of the 39 respondents answered this question on the questionnaire. The majority (39%) of the respondents had been playing netball for more than 12 years. As a result, their views on the sport and experiences would be different from those who have only recently started to play the sport. Many athletes participate in their chosen sport for many years, and never fully achieve their dreams. In addition they have to face increasingly competitive situations from younger athletes coming through. This can be both de-motivating and frustrating for the individual and may well impact commitment and subsequently performance levels.
4.2.1.9. Do You Find Playing Netball Stressful? (See question 9)

**Graph 9 – Stress levels of respondents**

Discussion of Data

Sixty-seven percent of the respondents stated that they do not find playing netball stressful. A question is raised as to whether this is the case due to the fact that the majority of the respondents have only competed at a Provincial level, where perhaps the stress is not as great or perhaps the fact that the sport is team based and not an individual sport.

There are many reasons why an athlete may find their chosen sport stressful. Perhaps they only find it stressful at specific times, such as when they have an injury, when team selection processes are being undertaken, there are problems at home or at work, or when they have a key match to play. 33% of the respondents stated that they did find or sort of found playing netball to be stressful.
Discussion of Data

Again the majority of the respondents do not find the training sessions stressful. This could be the result of any of a number of factors: there may be a very good team-coach relationship with athletes intimately involved with their coaching regime; the athletes may find training a release, considering the majority of the respondents are working or studying full-time; there may be a very close team relationship, and thus training is seen as fun or it may be that the level at which the athletes are training is not yet equivalent to that of an elite or full-time athlete. Should an athlete state that they find training stressful, the reason need to be identified immediately in order to provide the necessary support to the athlete.

For those respondents who did identify that they found training sessions stressful, the reasons stated were as follows:

- Fitness levels were difficult to maintain, thus making training harder
- Injury
- The desire to be successful
4.2.1.11 Are You Satisfied With:

4.2.1.11.1 Overall position in the netball situation (See question 11.1)

Graph 11 - Satisfaction in netball

Discussion of Data
Thirty-eight respondents answered this question. The majority of respondents (68%) were satisfied with their overall situation. This would imply that they were content with their current position and role within the team and that they find themselves in a supportive sporting environment. The implication of an athlete not being content could be disruption of the team as well as poor performance from the athlete. Should any discontent be identified it would be essential to understand where this was coming from and why.

4.2.1.11.2 Your Relationships With Team Mates (See question 1.11.2)

Graph 12 - Relationships with Teammates
Discussion of Data
Seventy-one percent of the respondents were happy with their relationships with team members. It is important to note that positive relationships among team members are critical within sport.
Netball is a team sport and positive personal relations are essential for the team to perform optimally. Should there be unsettled feelings within the team it will not function as it should, performance levels could be negatively impacted and stress levels could increase.

4.2.11.3. The Treatment You Receive In the Netball Organisation (See Question 1.11.3 of the questionnaire)

Graph 13 – Satisfaction of treatment within organisation.

Discussion of Data
Fifty-six percent of respondents feel that they are associated with an organisation that is treating them well. The way a sports organisation treats its athletes will have a powerful effect on how the athlete views him or herself and also how they view the organisation. If an athlete feels valued and respected by the parent sports body it is likely that they will strive to achieve more...
4.2.1.11.4 Relationships with Coaches, Support Staff and Managers (See question 1.11.4 of the questionnaire)

Graph 14 – Satisfaction of relationships with coaches, managers and support staff?

Discussion of Data
Sixty-six percent of the respondents are satisfied with their relationships with coaches and team management. The relationship an athlete shares with his or her coach is important. It is a very complicated and delicate relationship, but one that is key to the success of the individual or team. It is also important that the athlete shares good relationships with support staff and managers. Sport involves many professionals and everyone involved has one aim and that is to ensure the athlete is in peak shape and able to perform at the highest possible level. Should an athlete find these relationships problematic, it could very well have a negative impact on their performance quality. Should such difficulties exist, whether personal or professional, they need to be dealt with as quickly as possible.

4.2.1.12. Do You Find The Thought Of:
4.2.1.12.1 Going to training stressful (See QUESTION 1.12.1)
Graph 15 - Is training stressful?

![Graph showing the number of respondents regarding the thought of going to training being stressful.]

**Discussion of Data**

Seventy-one percent of the respondents do not find the thought of going to training stressful. Training is a vital component of any athlete’s life as it is the only way they are able to focus on and improve skills. This is a similar question compared to Graph 10. Training sessions can be long and exhausting experiences and unless they are handled appropriately they have the potential to become negative experiences for the athlete. Should this be the case the athlete may not attend training and as a result performance could be affected. There are numerous causes for training sessions to be stressful, one of which may be a problematic relationship with the coach. Should the athlete not share a positive relationship with the coach, or should the coach use an authoritarian approach to coaching, the result may be stressful and conflict ridden training sessions.
4.2.12.2. Do you find Going to Matches Stressful? (See question 1.12.1)

Graph 16 – Do you find matches stressful?

**Discussion of Data**

Sixty-eight percent of respondents do not find going to matches to be a stressful experiences. It is important to note that athletes have a naturally competitive drive and thus competing in an event is usually regarded as a positive and exciting aspect of the challenge. In certain instances an athlete may find such an event exceptionally stressful if they were uncertain about their ability to compete effectively or if they possibly feared injury. Athlete support staff, such as sport psychologists spends an immense amount of time working with athletes on issues related to competitive situations. Considering this the group surveyed appears to be functioning in a supportive environment. If however viewed from a systemic approach, it could be argued that the 5 respondents who stated that they did find matches stressful may well have reasons beyond the immediate sporting environment. It may be that they are experiencing personal difficulties and thus in need of support of a different nature. Each individual should be viewed as a single entity, what is a stressful situation for one may not be the case for another.
4.2.1.12.3  Do You Find Traveling away from home stressful? (See also question 12.3 of questionnaire)

Graph 17 – Perceived level of stress resulting from traveling away from home?

Discussion of Data
The majority of respondents stated that they do not find this aspect of their sporting career to be stressful. The explanation for this can be found in the respondent profile, which is largely that of being relatively young and single. Spending time away from home is a reality for the athlete, specifically for the elite athlete. This is not an everyday occurrence for many individuals as everyday jobs do not always demand this level of commitment. However for many athletes spending significant time away from home happens very often. For example, touring rugby or cricket teams are often away from home for periods up to 6 months. This may suit some athletes, particularly those who are single and have no commitments; however for those who have families or other loved ones at home a host of related issues are involved. For athletes who have alternative forms of employment being away from home brings about further complications. They may be required to take extensive periods off from work leading to increased pressure situations when they return to the work environment. Again it is important to note that each individual would be different, and each individual will handle being away from home differently. In the case of some athletes it may be that they require increased support around specific issues such as being newly wed, having relatively young children, or having other dependents to look after. Each athlete has to be viewed individually and provided with the necessary support. Whether this support is directed at the individual or whether it is provided to their family members, it is essential that it is put into place. By reducing the pressures placed on
an athlete as a result of their home circumstances the probability that performance levels are negatively impacted will be reduced

4.2.1.13 Have you experienced any serious injuries in netball? (See also question 1.13 in the questionnaire)

Graph – 18 Have You Experienced Serious Injuries in Netball?

Discussion of Data
Just less than half of the respondents have suffered serious injuries. This is high considering the relatively young age of the group and the level of competition engaged in. As they move up the competition ladder level of injuries and the seriousness thereof will increase.

Injury is a serious issue for all athletes. It is something they fear and which they try hard to avoid. The impact of an injury can have long lasting effects, physically and emotionally. In some instances it could bring about the end of an athlete’s professional career. The simple fear of injury could significantly impact an athlete’s ability to perform and attitude could well affect ability to recover speedily. It is therefore important to ensure that appropriate structures are in place to provide athletes with the necessary support to help them deal with this issue.
4.2.1.14. Emotional Impact of These Injuries (See also question 1.14 of the questionnaire)

Graph 19 – Emotional impact of an injury

Did your netball injuries have an emotional impact on you?

Discussions of Data
There is roughly a 50% split between the yes and no answers. Those who had not experienced a serious injury indicated that it did not have an emotional impact whilst those that did suffer serious injury, indicated that it did have an emotional impact on them. As already indicated the impact that a serious injury has on an athlete can be considerable from both a performance as well as from an emotional perspective.

4.2.1.14. Do You Believe That Factors Outside Of The Netball Environment Can Impact Your Own Performance? (See also question 1.5)

Graph 20 – Impact of external factors on athlete, performance
Discussion of Data

Despite the relatively young and inexperienced profile of the group of respondents, 69% indicated that they believed that factors outside of their netball environment can impact on their performance levels. Factors such as: work; home; family; personal relationships and studies all have a significant impact on performance quality. The response to this question supports the need for well-designed sport specific EAP model to maintain and improve performance levels.

4.2.1.15 Do you believe that external factors can also impact on the performance of the team? (See also question 1.16 of the questionnaire)

Graph – 21 Impact of external factors on the performance of a team

Discussion of Data

Seventy-nine percent of the respondents indicated that external factors outside the netball environment could impact on the performance of the team. The success of a team depends on the performance of each and every individual in the team. If one team member experiences difficulties in their personal life, this will impact the dynamics and relationships within the team. This will lead to difficulties at training sessions and match situations which will in turn impact individual and team performance levels. This will bring about pressure being applied by different stakeholders. Again this points to the potential value of a sport-specific EAP to assist athletes to deal with outside factors.
4.2.1.17  Do You Think That Substances (Drugs) Are Being Used By Netball Players?
(See also question 1.17 of the questionnaire)

Graph 22 – Do you think netball players are utilizing substances?

Discussion of Data
Sixty-one percent of respondents did not believe that the usage of drugs in their sport is a problem. The reason for this can again be explained in the light of the youthful and somewhat inexperienced profile of the group surveyed, as well as the relatively amateur level at which netball is played in SA compared to rugby, football and cricket.

Competition intensity in sport is continuously increasing. Athletes are performing at higher and higher levels and the pressure to stay on top of is considerable. Unfortunately many seek alternative means of staying on top, such as misusing chemical substances. This not only impacts on an athlete’s health, but also on team dynamics. The fact that the majority of respondents felt that few players in the group are utilising chemical substances to improve performance levels, may be that they are simply just not aware thereof. It may also be that netball is not physically as demanding as rugby or weightlifting or athletics where extreme demands are placed on strength and endurance. In many sports, specifically team sports, there is often a “drinking culture” and some athletes may be using alternative drugs (alcohol, other recreational substances) in order to help them relax or cope with stressors in their daily lives.
4.2.1.18 Do You Believe There Are Enough Support Structures In Place Within Netball? (See question 1.18 of the questionnaire)

**Graph 23 - Are there enough support structures within netball?**

![Bar graph showing the number of respondents who believe there are enough support structures in place within netball.](image)

**Discussion of Data**

The 79% of the respondents felt that there are not enough support structures in place for netball. As the term “support structure” was not specifically defined care needs to be taken in interpreting this response as respondents could be referring to a wide range of support structures including financial support structures, increased support around coaching or possibly increased support for emotional well being. The type of support structure required will have to be carefully detailed.

4.2.1.19 Do You Feel Comfortable To Approach Coaching, Support Staff And Management When You Experience any Kind Of Difficulty? (See question 1.19 of the questionnaire)

**Graph 24 - Do you feel comfortable approaching coaching staff, support staff and management with any kind of difficulty?**

![Bar graph showing the number of respondents who feel comfortable approaching coaching staff, support staff and management when they experience any kind of difficulty.](image)
Discussion of Data

The 58% of respondents indicated that they are comfortable in approaching coaching and management staff. However, 41% did not feel comfortable. The results reflect that there are occasions where respondents were not comfortable in discussing more personal issues or concerns outside of those not directly linked to netball.

Athletes may shy away from discussing or revealing personal issues to a coach or a manager that could for example affect selection into a team. There is a need for the athlete to have access to a private and independent source of support on matters of a more personal nature. This highlight the need therefore for an external personal related support structure that delivers a service to a sport body but functions independently of the code involved.

4.2.1.20 Do you believe that Netball (As A Sporting Organisation) should recognise the human side in Sport? (See also question 1.20 of the questionnaire)

Graph 25 – Should sport recognise the human side in sport?

Do you believe that netball should recognise the human side in sport in terms of for example interpersonal relationships, trauma, stress, HIV/AIDS, alcohol and substance abuse?
Discussion of Data

Eight-seven percent of the respondents stated that the human side of sport should receive greater recognition.

Individuals are forced to deal with hardships in their everyday and athletes are no exception. Realities such as HIV, substance abuse, stress, and domestic violence also exist in the lives of athletes and they need to be assisted in managing these issues in the same way as employees in ordinary work situations are being supported. If not provided for, performance levels will be negatively impacted. With the necessary support, athletes will learn to deal with non-sport related factors better thereby improving their own as well as their team’s performances levels.

4.2.1.21 Do You Believe That Issues Like Emotional, Spiritual And Interpersonal Relationships Can Impact On Sport Performance? (See Question 1.21 of the questionnaire)

Graph 26 – Do emotional, spiritual and interpersonal relationships impact sport performance?
Discussion of Data

Ninety-four percent of the respondents indicated that issues such as emotional, spiritual and interpersonal relationships will impact sport performance. Considering the relatively young and inexperienced profile of the respondent group, this response emphasises the importance of this perception and the need to provide for mechanisms to deal with it. The responses once again emphasises the need for a professionally designed sport related EAP service. It will be important to consider how and to whom support options are to be provided as each sporting code will require different support packages shaped by factors such as age, gender, race, stage of development and level of competition involved.

4.2.1.22 Do You Believe That Netball Players Should Be Emotionally Coached And Supported In The Same Way As They Are Being Coached Physically? (See question 1.22 of the questionnaire)

Graph 27 – Emotional coaching versus Physical coaching?

Discussion of Data

A substantial majority, 84% of the respondents stated that they felt that netball players should be emotionally coached and supported in the same way that they are being coached physically. This response reinforces the need for support structures outside of the traditional characteristically sport related support structures that are the norm – coaching, training, and guidance on diets, sport psychology, and bio kinetics. A sport related EAP initiative could provide for a significant breakthrough in improving sport performance.

Athletes are impacted by many factors in their daily lives. From a systemic perspective, all individuals are affected by a number of factors emanating from the environment within which
they function. Each system exerts an influence on the other thereby ultimately also impacting on each other.

The same would apply to an athlete. They have physical needs and requirements that are generally fulfilled by the coach, GP, therapist, psychologist, and biokineticist. They should, however, also have access to another group of professionals which up until now have not generally been part of an athlete’s support base. If an athlete is experiencing difficulties within his/her home life, work environment, social environment, specific support should be available to help them cope and manage the situation with the objective of minimising the negative impact on performance levels. There is an emerging need for a multi-faceted, multi-disciplinary approach to support athletes outside of the traditional packages offered.

4.2.1.23 Is Sexual Harassment A Reality in Netball? (See also question 1.23 of the questionnaire)

Graph 28 - Sexual harassment in netball

Discussion of Data

Ninety-two percent of the respondents indicated that sexual harassment is not part of the netball environment within which they function. This can be explained in terms of the fact that netball is a women’s sport with very little (if any) influence from men. It is woman’s sport run by women. Lesbianism was not explored.

However, sexual harassment in all forms is a reality in everyday life and affects many individuals both in and away from the workplace. The impact of sexual harassment on an
individual is traumatic and support mechanisms to deal with these situations have to be made available.

The world of sport is not immune from sexual harassment related issues. Sport management is generally male dominated and there is a real possibility that female athletes could become victims. Sexual harassment is a subject not easily dealt with without support and in the sporting arena it could be even more complicated because of the more intimate relationships that exist. When an athlete is harassed by a fellow teammate, coach etc, they may be reluctant to approach anybody because of the consequences involved. This once again emphasises the need for a specialized independent source of support being made available to ensure that the situation is professionally dealt with minimum impact on performance and relationships.

2.1.24 Do You Believe Cultural Differences Can Impact On Sport Performance?

Graph 29 – Impact of cultural differences in sport

Discussion of Data
Fifty-eight percent of respondents stated that cultural differences could impact on sport performances. In a South African situation this is reality that cannot be ignored. Netball is a team sport, and optimal performance is related to healthy understanding and relationships between team members. This is not always easy; as different cultures practice different religions and have different values. Some form of intervention will be required to deal with this issue.

In a South African sporting situation different cultural backgrounds are important. Debates on issues such as representivity and quotas for example impacts negatively on team dynamics and
subsequently performance. Athletes need help, guidance and support off the training field to deal with these complexities.

4.2.2 Personal Dimension

These questions have been included to identify whether or not any of the respondents were showing signs of potential emotional difficulties and also whether or not they were aware of these. These questions could be included in a needs assessment or an individual treatment assessment in order to ascertain whether or not an individual suffers from stress, anxiety or other personal difficulties.

4.2.2.1. Do You Believe That Personal Happiness Is Important For You To Perform On The Netball Court? (See question 2.1 of the questionnaire)

**Graph 30 - Personal happiness versus performance**

Discussion of Data

Ninety-four percent of respondents agreed that personal happiness was important to enable them to perform on the netball court. Aspects such as emotional well-being, ability to deal with stress, family relationships, workplace issues etc, all combine to impact an individual’s personal state of happiness.
The group acknowledges that their personal happiness exerts an influence on their ability to perform. A support structure focused on the whole sportsperson incorporating his/her family will make a positive contribution.

4.2.2.2. Do You Take Certain Steps To Work At Your Emotional Well-Being? (See question 2.2 of the questionnaire)

Graph 31 - Is emotional well being considered to be of importance?

Discussion of Data
Sixty-one percent considered personal well-being as important enough to take steps on their own to deal with it. This indicates the need for support in this area to be made available as part of a wider support base. The content and nature of the kind of support to contribute to emotional well-being will differ from athlete to athlete. For some it would entail exercising regularly and staying on top of their fitness levels to ensure they were able to perform optimally. For others it could mean spending time ensuring their spiritual needs were met. Others may use counseling services or just making sure they spend time with their family and friends. The support provided will have to be based on a detailed analysis of the group’s needs so as to ensure that all requirements are met.
4.2.2.3. Do You Believe That Personal Problems Can Negatively Influence Your Health And Well-Being And That These Can Impact On Your Performance? (See question 2.3 of the questionnaire)

Graph 32 – Potential negative influence on health and its impact on performance

Discussion of Data
Eighty-percent of respondents stated that personal problems could have a negative impact on their health and also impact their ability to perform. Personal difficulties (marital problems, family difficulties, death, financial concerns, illness…) are all issues that every individual may have to deal with at some point or other in their lives. Basic EAP in the normal workplace has shown that personal problems affect an individual’s ability to stay focused and perform productively. The issue is no different for an elite athlete. For many, sport is a fulltime occupation and any personal difficulties will detract from their ability to concentrate and to remain focused. The situation is more complex for those athletes that not only participate at a highly competitive level in sport but also have to maintain full time jobs.
4.2.2.4. Have You Ever Had Any Emotional Problems Such As Depression
Or Anxiety? (See question 2.4 of the questionnaire)

Graph 33 - Emotional problems (i.e. depression or anxiety) experienced by netball players

Discussion of Data
This question was asked in order to gain an understanding of the number of respondents who
were actually aware of the fact that they had emotional difficulties or anxiety. 46% of the
respondents stated that they had experienced problems in this regard. Equally important would
be to ask questions to establish how many of these difficulties have remained undiagnosed and
how many would interpret feelings of depression and anxiety down to merely symptoms of
stress. More appropriately designed support packages will allow for such difficulties to be
diagnosed more adequately thereby ensuring more effective and lasting interventions.

4.2.2.5 Have You Ever Consulted With A Professional About Personal And
Emotional Problems? (See Question 2.5 of the questionnaire)

Graph 34 - Have you ever consulted a professional about personal and emotional
problems?
Discussion of Data

The majority of respondents, 76%, indicated that they had not consulted any professionals for help. Again this may be a reflection of the young age profile and the inexperience of the responding group. It could also be for a number of other reasons. Either the athletes do not feel their emotional difficulties are of such a nature that they require the input of professionals or that the stigma that society attaches to mental problems or depression and anxiety, makes them reluctant to do so. On the other hand they might feel that they have adequate support from family and friends. Another reason may well be that some individuals do not know where to access this help or are not comfortable to do so because in a world where athletes are seen as “super-fit, super-strong and super-human” it may be perceived as a sign of weakness.

4.2.2.6. Do You From Time To Time Struggle With Concentration? (See question 2.6 of the questionnaire)

Graph 35 – Concentration difficulties

Discussion of Data.
Forty-one percent of respondents confirmed that they do struggle to concentrate at times. Those who were not sure may well not be aware that they are experiencing concentration difficulties. This issue should not be overlooked. The importance of remaining focused is critical in sport and the ability to concentrate has a major influence on the result of competitive situations. The traditional role of the sport psychologist is to assist athletes with visualization techniques and to help them improve their concentration. Whilst this support is valuable and clearly is positive for
the athlete, it is felt that once concentration problems are identified how are they dealt with? Why will an athlete be struggling in this area?

A number of factors can impact an athlete’s ability to concentrate -
- Exhaustion
- Stress
- Illness
- Pre-occupation with other difficulties

Once the root cause is identified, a suitable solution can be found. For some athletes the causes may not be sport related thereby necessitating the need to access alternative sources of support outside the normal range of support services available to athletes.

4.2.2.6 Do You Sometimes Struggle To Make A Decision? (See question 2.7 of the questionnaire)

**Graph 36 - Difficulty experienced with decision-making**

Discussion of data
Despite the respondent profile it is clearly an issue within the group. 79% confirmed that they did sometimes experience difficulties taking decisions.

Inability to make decisions is one of the most telling signs of stress. Should this be a difficulty for an individual, further investigation is required into the source thereof and providing appropriate support to deal with it. Stress can lead to many other difficulties, including an
individual reverting to drugs and alcohol. Stress prevents any individual from functioning normally and it would undoubtedly impact an athlete’s performance quality.

4.2.2.7 Do You Feel Energised When You Wake Up In the Morning? (See question 2.8 of the questionnaire)

**Graph 37 - Morning energy levels**

<table>
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<th>Energy Level</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sort of</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion Of Data**

Seventy-one percent of the respondents stated that they did feel or sort of felt energized in the mornings. This compared to a 28% who stated that they did not feel energized. This may be a reflection on the particular profile of the responding group – young and largely unattached. A lack of energy is another sign that an individual is under pressure or stressed. All these questions should be included in needs assessment so as to identify whether or not an individual is suffering form stress. A stress management programme in sport as part of a wider more diverse support package is necessary.
4.2.2.9 Do You Sometimes Feel A Loss Of Interest In Life (See question 2.9)

Graph 38 – Loss of Interest

Discussion of Data
A loss of energy is another indication of stress or anxiety and the athlete will need help in identifying stress/anxiety sources for it to be dealt appropriately. The responses reflect that 82% of the respondents have experienced a sense of loss of energy, indicating a degree of stress or pressure despite the lower levels of competitive intensity involved. Should this stress not be defined and dealt with appropriately the long-term effects on the individual, their families and in this instance also team members and subsequently the quality of sport performance will be affected.

2.2.10 Does your appetite change regularly, leading to weight loss and weight gain? (See question 2.10 of the questionnaire)

Graph 39 – Noticeable changes in appetite
Discussion of Data
Changes in appetite and weight gain or loss could be indicative of an individual operating at higher than normal stress levels. From the research results 53% have indicated that they have experienced changes in their appetites. This would suggest some form of intervention to identify and deal with the sources of stress to ensure that performances are not negatively impacted.

4.2.2.11 Do you feel you sleep well? (See question 2.11 of the questionnaire)

raph 40 - Sleep patterns

Discussion of Data
Disturbed sleep patterns are also considered a sign that an individual could be subjected to some form of stress. The majority of the respondents, 82% are not experiencing problems of this nature.

Summary
The questions related to this section, highlighted that the respondents as a group were all experiencing stress in some form or another. This can be related to personal difficulties or their sport experiences. However it is present and if not defined and dealt with it will increase. Increased stress and unresolved issues will impact future performance levels of the group.
4.2.3 HOME DIMENSION

These questions all focused on the respondent’s experiences at home. What difficulties they encountered and how their home lives impacted on their sporting careers and visa-versa.

4.2.3.1 Are you satisfied with your current situation at home? (See question 3.1)

Graph 41 - Satisfaction with home life

Discussion of Data
Seventy-four percent of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their current situations at home. From a systemic perspective, an individual is made up of the sum of its parts, and with regards to individuals, families are one of these parts. If an individual is unhappy within their home life situation, it is likely to contribute to stress levels. This will in turn impact on their ability to perform at work and also their ability to perform optimally in the sport arena, thereby impacting on their own and consequently their team’s achievement.

The majority of respondents are satisfied with their home life situations, reflecting the youthful and unattached profile of the respondent group.
4.2.3.2 Do you believe in sharing good relationships with your family at home? (See question 3.2 of the questionnaire)

**Graph 42 - Importance of good family relationships**

Discussion of Data
All of the respondents indicated that sharing good family relationships are important. This means that all respondents place a high level of importance on this aspect of their lives. Good family relations indicate a good quality home life. If an individual’s home life experiences are positive, home will be seen as a source of support rather than a source of unhappiness and stress. Positive relationships with loved ones indicate that an individual has access to a strong emotional support base. Should an individual be diagnosed as being under stress but are operating from a positive home environment, the problem may lie somewhere else.

4.2.3.3 Do you sometimes experience your home environment as stressful? (See question 3.3 of the questionnaire)

**Graph 43 - Is home at times a stressful place?**
Discussion of Data

Seventy-six percent stated that they did or sometimes found their home environment to be stressful. Stress at home could be caused by any number of things, and thus it would be essential to identify the causes of such stress in order to deal with them. As mentioned above, a positive home environment would provide the individual athlete with the ability to remain focused on their sporting careers and thus perform consistently well. Should this environment be experienced as sometimes stressful, which is clearly the case for the majority of respondents, the reasons for this stress have to be identified and dealt with.

The following questions could help identify the cause of the potential stress.

4.2.3.4. **Do you find your responsibilities at home stressful? (See question 3.4)**

**Graph 44 – Home responsibilities**

![Graph showing the percentage of respondents finding home responsibilities stressful]

Discussion of Data

Twenty percent stated that they did find their home responsibilities stressful, whereas 41% stated that they sort of found these aspects stressful. From a systemic perspective, if an individual has responsibilities at home which are translating into pressure, the result may be that this impacts on their ability to concentrate effectively on performance related activities. Such pressures need to be identified and defined in order to provide appropriate and active support to individuals involved.
4.2.3.5  Do you experience time away from home as difficult? (See question 3.5)

Graph 45 - Impact of traveling away from home

Discussion of Data

Twelve percent stated that they found traveling away from home stressful. The fact that so few respondents found this aspect of their sport problematic could be linked to the previous question, relating to home responsibilities. The majority stated that they did not find their home responsibilities stressful. This may be because of a good support base at home which makes it easier to be away from home.

The life a professional athlete entails spending time and on occasion, significant amounts of time, away from home. This brings about pressure on the individual, particularly someone with a young family or someone that has just entered into a new relationship or new work situation.

From the responses of the selected group of respondents this was not considered to be a major issue once again reflecting the youthful and largely unattached profile of the responding group surveyed. Support, however, has to be made available to established elite athletes and their families when they are away from home for long periods. In this way family related problems can be constantly monitored and dealt with as and when they arise. This provides athletes with the peace of mind that things are being looked after at home, allowing them to concentrate on the job on hand – to win.
4.2.3.6 Do you believe that you need strong support systems at home to cope with stresses of playing netball competitively? (See question 3.6)

Graph 46 - Is support needed to at home to help athlete play competitive sport?

Discussion of Data
Seventy-four percent felt that a strong support system within their home life is required to enable to compete effectively. As in standard workplace EAP where support is offered to an employee’s family it will also have to be done in the case of a sport related EAP. This is currently not part of athlete support structures in place. It will have a major long-term effect on sport in general if the families of athletes are provided with support systems when their loved ones are out their bringing personal glory and honour to the country.

4.2.3.7 Is your role as a woman clearly defined in your home setting? (See question 3.7 of the questionnaire)

Graph 47 - Role of woman in the home
Discussion of data

Ninety-seven percent of the respondents are of the opinion that the role of being a woman is clearly defined within their home. What this definition entails would depend greatly on the individual and their understanding of the role of a woman.

Historically society has dictated many roles for a woman. With the increasing number of opportunities for women in the workplace and also the changing roles of women, it means that women can now participate in sport more actively and at higher levels than before. However women are still often expected to work, care, and take responsibility for the home and children, on top of their responsibilities such as work and achieving on the sport field. This increases general stress levels and therefore the ability to perform consistently well at the highest levels of competition. Without new and creative support structures to deal with this situation the overall situation for women will become even more constrained and conflict ridden.

4.2.3.8. Are your responsibilities as a woman, wife, mother, sometimes interfering with your participation in netball? (See question 3.8 of the questionnaire)

Graph 48 - Do responsibilities of being a woman interfere with netball

Discussion of data

Fifty-nine percent feel that there is some level of interference. Again this question is related to not only society’s view on the role of women but also on the views of the family involved.
There is a clear split within the responding group on this issue. This once again reflects the marital status and responsibility profiles of the responding group. Only those who have related responsibilities will respond positively to the question asked. Each individual is different and each individual’s circumstances will differ which requires a person specific approach. This question highlights the need for sports organisations to be particularly sensitive to issues facing women in sport and to ensure that appropriate support structures are established.

4.2.3.9 Do you experience crises regularly in your life? (See question 3.9. of the questionnaire)

Graph 49 - Regularity of crises

Discussion of data
Fifty-two percent of respondents stated that they regularly experience crises in their lives. An individual’s definition of what a crisis is will vary depending on the nature of their life experiences.

Regular exposure to crisis situations and a lack of control over these crises brings about additional stress. In a sporting context, support structures, to assist athletes when these crises emerge has to be in to place because of the potential negative impact thereof on performance.
4.2.3.10 Do you experience daily hassles at home that create negative stress and influences your health and attitude? (See question 3.10 of the questionnaire)

Graph 50 - Daily hassles

Discussion of data
The term “daily hassles” was not fully defined and could thus have included any aspect of an individual’s life and the interpretation thereof. However, 61% appeared to be affected suggesting the need for support structures to identify and deal with these issues as part of a broad support service structure.

4.2.3.11 Do you think that some kind of support system would be able to assist you in dealing with home issues that impact general functioning? (See question 3.11 of the questionnaire)

Graph 51 - Is support needed to help assist with home issues?
Discussion of data

Eighty-five percent of the respondents identified a need for such a support structure. The question focused specifically on “home issues” and thus it could be said that this is an area where athletes may well feel they need support in addition to the normal more directly sport related sport structures in place. There appears to be an acknowledgement from the respondents that their home-lives have an impact on their general functioning and thus on their ability to perform at the highest possible levels.

4.2.4 CAREER DIMENSION

This aspect of the questionnaire focuses on another dimension of an individual’s life - the work environment - and how this could influence other areas of ones life.

It should be noted that only 35 of the 39 respondents responded to questions in this section.

4.2.4.1. Do you believe one should share good relations with fellow employees? (See question 4.1 of the questionnaire)

Graph 52 - Relationships with fellow employees

Discussion of data

Ninety-four percent of the respondents indicated that they believe in sharing good relationships with fellow employees.

Good relations in the workplace are essential for the mental well-being of individuals. Any friction or conflict situations will lead to increased stress related situations. This in turn would affect the ability to cope at work and also relationships at home and off course performances on the sport field for those elite athletes having to hold down a regular job.
4.2.4.2 Are you comfortable in your work situation? (See question 4.2 of the questionnaire)

Graph 53 - Experience of work

Discussion of data
Seventy-four percent of the respondents stated that they were comfortable with their work situations. As has been noted individuals interfaces with many components of the system within which they operate. If difficulties are experienced in any of these areas (work, sporting career, family), it will impact the ability to function optimally. Should an individual not be comfortable at work, this could result in higher stress levels which could lead to poor performances.

4.2.4.3 Do you find the thought of going to work stressful? (See question 4.3)

Graph 54 - Is work stressful?
Discussion of data

Only 35 respondents answered this question.
Sixty-two percent of the respondents indicated that they do not find going to work stressful.
Should work be a stressful experience, it may well be that this stress will impact on other aspects of an individual’s life. A negative work experience could lead to feelings of depression and anxiety, which can have a major impact on other performance related activities, including performance on the sports field. A support structure to monitor a high performance athlete’s circumstances at work and a system to provide support when needed, will contribute positively to an athlete’s performance level.

4.2.4.4. Do you believe that interpersonal relationships at work can have an impact on your general emotional functioning? (See question 4.4)

Graph 55 - Impact of interpersonal relationships

Discussion of data

Eighty-five percent of the respondents confirmed the need for positive personal interrelationships at work for optimal emotional functioning.

4.2.4.5. Do you believe that work stress and emotional issues at work can impact on all areas of your life? (See question 4.5)
Discussion of data

Only 35 respondents answered this question. 91% of the respondents stated that work stress and other emotional issues had an impact on all other areas of their lives. This is an indication of acceptance that the various systems in which an individual operates impact on one another and that if something goes wrong in one area, it is likely to cause a knock-on affect in another. A much more holistic approach to support structures is therefore required in order to focus on all aspects of an individual’s life, to ensure that root causes of their difficulties and problems are isolated and dealt with.

4.2.4.6 Have you ever seen or experienced bullying by a fellow employee? (See question 4.6 of the questionnaire)

Graph 56 - Impact of stress at work on personal life

![Graph of impact of stress on personal life]

Discussion of data

Only 35 respondents answered this question. 91% of the respondents stated that work stress and other emotional issues had an impact on all other areas of their lives. This is an indication of acceptance that the various systems in which an individual operates impact on one another and that if something goes wrong in one area, it is likely to cause a knock-on affect in another. A much more holistic approach to support structures is therefore required in order to focus on all aspects of an individual’s life, to ensure that root causes of their difficulties and problems are isolated and dealt with.

4.2.4.6 Have you ever seen or experienced bullying by a fellow employee? (See question 4.6 of the questionnaire)

Graph 57 - Bullying at work

![Graph of bullying at work]

Discussion of data

Only 35 respondents answered this question. 91% of the respondents stated that work stress and other emotional issues had an impact on all other areas of their lives. This is an indication of acceptance that the various systems in which an individual operates impact on one another and that if something goes wrong in one area, it is likely to cause a knock-on affect in another. A much more holistic approach to support structures is therefore required in order to focus on all aspects of an individual’s life, to ensure that root causes of their difficulties and problems are isolated and dealt with.
Discussion of data

Only 35 respondents answered this question. Seventy-one percent stated that they had not seen or experienced bullying in their respective work environments. 28%, however, have experienced bullying in one form another. Bullying is a reality of life, which is not often acknowledged, specifically within the adult world of work. Individual’s, who are bullied, may view themselves as weak and may be too embarrassed to seek out support or they may simply be too scared to do so. Bullying creates feelings of anxiety, distress, fear and stress and can make the working experience intolerable.

Should this become an issue for a high performance athlete it could become a source of distress and diversion which requires immediate assistance. Only an appropriately designed support system will be sensitive enough to pick up and respond to potential problems in the working environments of high performance athletes.

4.2.4.7 Is sexual harassment a reality in the work setting? (See question 4.7)

Graph 58 - Sexual Harassment at work

Discussion of data

Only 35 respondents answered this question. 51% considered sexual harassment to be a reality in the workplace. It is important to acknowledge the potential effect that this has on an individual and thus to ensure the need for ongoing support. Many workplaces may not have sufficient support structures in place for staff and thus an athlete may not receive the support
required at work. The stress and anxiety related to this could result in decreased concentration and depression translating into negative impact on performance levels.

4.2.4.8. Have you ever been a target of sexual harassment? (See question 4.8 of questionnaire)

**Graph 59 - Sexual harassment and the individual**

![Graph showing the number of respondents who experienced sexual harassment](image)

**Discussion of data**

Only 35 of the respondents answered this question. 85% of respondents have never been personally subjected to sexual harassment. This is therefore not a problem area to deal with in this particular group of athletes.

4.2.4.9. Have you ever been subject to any form of racism at work? (See question 4.9 of questionnaire)

**Graph 60 - Racism**

![Graph showing the number of respondents who experienced racism](image)
Discussion of data

Only 35 respondents answered the question. Eighty-two percent had not been subjected to any racism. The response may be due to the cultural profile of the responding group and it should not be concluded that racism no longer exists in South Africa.

All over the world today, racism or discrimination is a reality. Whether this be related to race, religion, gender or age it exists and many individual are subjected to it. The resulting elevation in stress and anxiety levels creates negative experiences spilling over in all other aspects of an individual’s life.

4.2.4.10  
Do you believe there should be a support system and assistance available to deal with interpersonal conflict, harassment, racism and general emotional issues arising out of the work environment? (See question 4.10)

Graph 61 - Need for support system for issues arising within the workplace

Discussion of data

Only 35 respondents answered this question. Eighty-two percent felt that there is a need for such a system. Despite the fact that the group as a whole is not generally impacted by any of the factors probed there is a large number of respondents who is in favour of a support structure to deal with these issues. This recognises the importance of these factors and the real possibility that they could, at somepoint in time require a support structure to deal with these issues.
4.2.5 General

The last section of the questionnaire asked the respondents to identify specific causes of stress as well as areas they felt they would benefit from further information. The need for a sport specific EPA was also probed.

4.2.5.1 Would you like to learn more about: (see questions 6.1.1 – 6.1.5)

4.2.5.1.1 Drugs

Graph 62 - Seeking more information about drugs

Discussion of data

This question identifies that 74% of the respondents would like to obtain further information on drugs. It is felt that should a team identify a similar need for information, that wherever possible this information be provided. It may be that coaching staff are not providing enough info about the actual emotional and physical effects that these substances have on an individual, as they may prefer to focus more specifically on the issue of banned substances from a pure sport perspective and how they impact performance... Clearly there is a need for this and it should be addressed.
4.2.5.1.2 Alcohol

Graph 63 - Seeking more information about alcohol

Discussion of data
Sixty-four percent stated they would like to receive further information relating to alcohol. These results can be linked to the discussion mentioned relating to drugs. It should be acknowledged that in many sports, specifically team sports, there is a potential for the development of a drinking culture amongst athletes. Perhaps improved lines of communication and increased knowledge on the subject may well reduce the impact that these drugs could have on an athlete’s life and performance.

4.2.5.1.3 Sexual Harassment

Graph 64 - Seeking more information about sexual harassment
Discussion of data

The impact of sexual harassment has been discussed in previous section... From the response to this question 74% appears to support a need for more information on the subject. It should be kept in mind that many individuals may not want to come forward because of the consequences of doing so. Distribution of information and support structures in a highly confidential environment is an important factor.

4.2.5.1.4 HIV/AIDS

Graph 65 - Seeking more information about HIV/AIDS

Discussion of data

Seventy-six percent stated that they would like further information. HIV/AIDS is a harsh reality SA society today. It is a disease, which affects anyone regardless of race, age, gender etc. In contact sport such as rugby and boxing this issue cannot be ignored. Athletes have to be informed about these issues, as does their families and support systems are required. For many individuals the realities associated with a family member or friend being diagnosed with the disease is awesome. Without the necessary support structures an individuals ability to function will be severely impacted. The consequences of an athlete in certain codes being infected are of great concern. General information in-group set-ups, is useful, however increased individual and family support has to be considered as increased support could help direct the impact on the athlete and thus limit interference with their performance.
4.2.5.1.5 Life skills

Graph 66 - Seeking more information about life skills

Discussion of data

Eight-seven percent identified a desire to hear more on this subject. Life skills are those essential skills that help individuals cope and manage their lives more effectively and efficiently. They could include aspects such as:
- Financial planning
- Stress management
- Career planning
- Conflict management skills
- Effective communication skills

All these are aspects, which could help improve an individual’s life and thus reduce their stress levels. It is an intervention, which can be done in a group environment and could even extend to include aspects of team building. The majority of respondents expressed a need for this intervention and it is felt that such a request should not be overlooked. Athletes are not super-human, they may possess a gift or talent, but they are still normal people with everyday problems.
4.2.5.2 What do you feel is the biggest cause of your stress? (See questions 6.2.1 – 6.2.5)

Graph 67 - Identification of biggest stressor

Discussion of data
Forty-three percent of the respondents stated that financial concerns were their biggest source of concern. Work follows with 25% as the next greatest cause of stress. It should be noted that not all athletes will experience financial problems, specifically those elite athlete’s participating in high profile sports such as football, where sponsorships are big and salaries in most instances are more than adequate. For an elite athlete forced to retire early however, financial concerns may become a reality. Any support programme offered should be geared to deal with a wide variety of issues and difficulties, recognising that an athlete’s sources of stress are not only sport related.

4.2.5.3 Do you believe that emotional issues can influence you in every area of your life? (See question 6.3 of questionnaire)

Graph 68 - Impact of emotional issues.
Discussion of data

Eighty-four percent of the respondents are of the opinion that emotional issues can influence most areas of their lives. Human emotions are very real and very powerful, without the right support they could become all consuming and lead to greater difficulties. The systemic perspective emphasises that an individual need to be viewed in a holistic manner.

The respondents were also asked to comment on how they managed some of their emotional issues. Amongst the responses were:

- Being calm
- Share the problem with others
- Think positively and confidently
- Seek out help

4.2.5.4 Do you know what a Netball Performance Enhancement Programme is? (See question 6.4 of the questionnaire)

Graph 69 - Are you aware of a Netball assistance programme?

Data discussion

Only 35 respondents answered this question. 71% stating that they were not aware of what such a programme is. This question highlighted the fact that there is no such concept as a sport enhancement or netball enhancement programme in existence. If there is such a programme, the respondents were not aware of its existence and it could be assumed that they would therefore not be able or willing to access it. Should such a programme ever be designed for specific sporting codes, the marketing of it among athletes, their families, coaching staff and support staff would be essential. The scope, functioning and purpose of the programme would need to
be carefully defined (as with any EAP programme). To ensure the success of the programme, support from athletes and other sport staff would be a critical to the success thereof.

4.2.5.4. Do you think the Netball Association should provide a support assistance programme that can help you with personal, work, home and study concerns? (See question 6.5 of the questionnaire)

Graph 70 - Should the netball association provide support

Discussion of data
Ninety-four percent stated they felt there should be such a support programme in place. There is an overwhelming feeling towards the need for such a program. It could therefore be concluded that support for such a program would be forthcoming. General feedback is that there will be significant for such a programme on a much broader basis.

4.2.5.6. If a support system or assistance programme was offered to you in a confidential way, would you use it? (See question 6.6 of the questionnaire)
Graph 71 - Would you utilise a support programme?

Discussion of data

The need and support for such a programme is underwritten by 92% of the respondents. Careful planning, needs assessment, applicability and marketing will have to be undertaken when considering other sporting codes as each sport-type is likely to have different need sets and thus different support needs.

4.2.5.7 Do you think that addressing personal, work and home problems can lead to higher sport performance? (See question 6.7)

Graphs 72 - Can addressing personal issues enhance sport performance?
Discussion of data

Ninety-seven percent agreed with this statement. It is generally acknowledged that are impacted by a large number of different environmental factors. Individuals operate in many different systems on a daily basis and each of these systems exerts their own characteristic influences. Any disturbance in any one of these systems will lead to disequilibria and subsequent difficulties in other systems. Without a highly diversified and highly capable support base the individual will find it increasingly difficult to cope and to perform optimally.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The empirical research component of the study was based on the responses of a group of potential elite netball players to questions relating to specific areas of their lives –

- Career (work)
- Sport
- Personal/Home
- General

The participating group’s profile was that of being female, relatively young, predominantly unattached, recently qualified, occupying middle management and lower positions within their work/career environments and a commitment to reach the highest possible competitive levels in sport. These characteristics contributed to a particular response profile.

The literature search consisted of two components. The one component focused on

- elite segment of sport in more general terms,
- position of the elite athlete therein with a view to complement/support and assist in the interpretation of the information gathered from the netball group and
- extend to which the basic principles of EAP are part of the traditional support services in elite sport.

The second component of the literature search was targeted at obtaining a general overview of EAP with a view to shape a framework for a sport specific EAP based on the empirical results of the research and the insights gained from the literature survey on elite sport.

5.1 Career Dimension
( Employment situation and how working life impact other areas of life)

5.1.1 Conclusions regarding career dimension

The majority of respondents indicated that they:

- consider good relationships with fellow employees as important
- are comfortable in their current work environments and
• are currently not finding going to work stressful

These responses could be the result of the profile characteristics of the group of respondents with the majority being under 26 years old, single, and recently qualified (grade 12 and degree) and operating at below general management level.

The majority of the group has furthermore not:
• experienced any form of bullying in the workplace
• experienced any form of racism in their respective work environments
• been subjected to sexual harassment at work

However, the majority of respondents have indicated:
• that they consider sexual harassment to be a reality in the workplace today
• that work stress and poor quality interpersonal relationships can and will have an impact on general emotional functioning and other areas of their lives and
• that there is a need for support systems within the work environment dealing with potential interpersonal conflict, sexual harassment, racism and general emotional related issues that may arise out of the work environment.

While some elite athletes are in the fortunate position of not having to hold down a regular job, there are many for whom it is a necessity to do so. Any form of stress in the workplace in these situations could lead to some form of distress (anxiety and depression), which will impact the quality of performance on the sports field negatively.

5.1.2 Recommendations regarding career dimension

It is recommended that a sport specific EAP is implemented providing for:
A component of the overall program that will monitor and provide feedback on the group’s work environment with respect to:

• working relationships at all levels
• job dissatisfaction
• work demands
• interpersonal skills
• stress and other related issues with a view to provide for early identification and resolution of work related personal concerns which may affect performance on the field.

5.2 Sport Dimension
(Level of competition, length of playing career, playing related stress factors, sport organization related issues, injuries, substance abuse, support structures, emotional issues, interpersonal relations)

5.2.1 Conclusions regarding Sport dimension

The majority of respondents have progressed up to provincial/national level on the Competitive ladder and have been playing Netball for less than 10 years. Everyone in the group is aspiring to play at the highest possible level of competition.

The group therefore is representative of players who are essentially at the starting points of their careers with an already achieved measure of success at a representative level. This will contribute to high levels of commitment and a desire to make sacrifices in order to achieve.

The majority of the group furthermore did not find competition or training or the thought of going to training, stressful. This again could again be in line with the youthful nature, the desire to achieve, and the general marital status (less responsibility) of the group.

The majority of respondents are furthermore satisfied with their overall situation in Netball. This will contribute to elevated levels of enthusiasm, self-worth and pride in the organisation to which they belong. Combined with:

- the declared positive quality of interrelationships among players, coaches, and administrators
- the comfortableness with approaching coaching and support staff with any kind of difficulty
- the keenness and commitment to attend and enjoy training sessions and
- the majority of respondents not finding going to matches or being away from home on these occasions stressful,

it is unlikely that the quality of performance of this group in the competitive arena will be negatively impacted by these factors. This, however, could change as the profile of the group
changes.
The quality of the existing supportive environment that the group find itself in as well as:

- their levels of preparedness,
- the quality of declared interpersonal relationships,
- the youthful and the largely unattached profile of the group,

explains the attitude towards the challenges associated with competing and being away from home. As the marital status changes and responsibilities in the work place increases, the associated problems of being away from home and work on sporting duties, will see overall stress levels increasing with a potential negative impact on individual and team performance levels.

Approximately half of the respondents have suffered serious injuries and have indicated that these injuries did have an emotional impact. The relatively short time span of an athlete’s sporting career and the high incidence of serious injury is a concern for most athletes.

Injury is a serious matter for all athletes but an almost inevitable part of sport. The impact thereof can have long lasting effects and which in some instances, could prematurely end an athlete’s career. The simple fear of injury could significantly impact an athlete’s attitude and ability to perform. With the right support, however, physical and mental recovery periods can be substantially shortened and positively dealt with.

The majority of respondents have indicated that external factors will impact individual and subsequently the team’s performance. An individual is made up of the sum of its parts and any environment (social, home, work) with which there is interaction can and does exert influence over one another. If a team member experiences difficulties in their personal lives the dynamics and relationships within the team will be disturbed leading to potential difficulties at training sessions and match situations. The result is sub optimal team performance.

Some of these external factors include substance abuse. This is a direct consequence of the level and intensity of competition and the magnitude of commercially related forces emphasising the importance of winning. Participants in higher profile and
more commercially important sporting activities (e.g. Olympic Games, rugby, cricket, football) are particularly prone to using potentially harmful substances to enhance performance levels. In addition to improve performance certain athletes are also prone to use chemical substances, including alcohol, with the aim of relaxation or to cope with daily stressors or pressures. In many sports, particularly team sports there is often also a tendency towards a “drinking culture”.

The respondents also highlighted that in their opinion cultural differences in their environment could impact performance. Different cultures translate into different religions, different values and in particular appreciation of the need for transformation/representativity related issues, a critical issue in SA sport. All these factors if not addressed will impact team dynamics and ultimately performance levels.

The majority respondents in the group indicated a

- Need to recognize the human side of an athlete
- Believe that issues like emotional, spiritual and interpersonal relationships can impact sport performance and
- A need for emotional coaching and support in the same way they are being coached physically.

Individuals are forced to deal with hardships everyday of their lives and athletes are no exception. Realities such as domestic violence, HIV, substance abuse, sexual harassment, eating disorders and so on cannot be ignored in the world of the athlete.

The majority of respondents have indicated that there is not enough support structures in netball in place to deal with these and other related problems.

5.2.2 Recommendations regarding Sport dimension

It is recommended that a sport specific EAP is implemented providing for the inclusion of a component of the overall support service program that will monitor and provide feedback on the group’s sporting environment with respect to:

- regular assessments of individual progress towards higher competitive levels and their future goals.
• trends and reasons for individuals finding training sessions and competitions stressful.
• trends in the quality of personal relationships with coaching staff, team members and management.
• availability of physiotherapists, sport psychologist, and medical practitioners to deal with and intervene on injury related problems.
• regular assessments of the impact of being away from home
• regularity of higher level competition increasing personal commitments outside the sporting environment
• changes in an individual athlete’s personal circumstances e.g. domestic violence, sexual harassment, substance abuse, and possible eating disorders
• cultural related issues which could lead to under performance.

5.3 Personal / Home Dimension
(Impact of personal happiness, emotional well-being, concentration difficulties, decision making, energy levels, sleep patterns, role within the home, impact of support structures at home, overall support system).

5.3.1 Conclusions regarding Personal/Home dimension

An overwhelming majority of respondents confirmed that their personal happiness would have an impact on their ability to perform on the netball court. From the results it can also be concluded that personal difficulties impact an individual’s health and mental well-being and in turn will have an effect on performance level.

The aforementioned conclusions can be viewed in direct relation to the systems theory as well as the basic premise surrounding the concept of EAP in general. This being, that should an individual be experiencing difficulties within their personal lives which they cannot manage themselves, these difficulties will cause stress which will have a direct impact on his/her ability to function at an optimal level. Personal difficulties experienced by an athlete, inevitably leads to being pre-occupied and with their ability to perform optimally reduced.

The respondents were asked to consider specific factors, which are usually identified as clear links to stress. These factors are as follows:
- ability to concentrate
- ability to make decisions
- energy levels
- general interest in life
- appetite

The majority of the respondents acknowledged difficulty with issues such as concentration, decision-making, general energy levels as well with their levels of general interest in life. Most respondents had also experienced changes in their weight.

Although responses varied, most of the respondents indicated that they experienced difficulty in at least 1 or more of the issues listed. Each one of these will contribute to elevated stress levels. Stress is defined by Bull (2002:203) as:

“A stimulus in the form of demands placed upon the individual by the environment”

Identification of stressors in the multiple environments is essential to the overall well-being and functioning of an athlete.

A major consequence of ongoing stress on an individual, both in the workplace and on the sporting field, is that of physical and psychological burnout. According to Bull (2002: 160), burnout most commonly arises in professions whereby individuals become emotionally exhausted by caring for others, such as nursing, social work etc. He identifies that burnout can also affect coaches, trainers, psychologists and anyone who is committed to their professional roles. Bull describes burnout as: “…a loss of idealism, energy and purpose. The loss of physical and emotional energy may also be accompanied by negative attitudes and the belief that less is being accomplished” (2002: 160). This underscores the importance of identifying stress in an individual before it degenerates into a far more serious issue. The emotional impact of something like burnout on an athlete could seriously impact performance levels, self-image, and ability to cope with other life stressors.

For many athletes and in specific elite athletes, traveling away from home for significant periods of time is an essential aspect of their chosen careers. The majority of respondents in the netball group did not find this aspect of their sporting career to
be particularly stressful. The reason for this is that many of the respondents were not yet competing at a level where they are expected to travel far away from home for any significant period of time on a regular basis. In addition the majority of the respondent group was also fairly young without dependents which further reduce the pressure on being away from home on a regular basis. For those respondents with good family support networks, traveling away from home will also be less stressful.

For many elite athletes, specifically those with young families, being away from home is a difficult part of their sporting career. South African Rugby and Cricket teams for example, are often away from home for periods of up to 6 months at a time. Not only does the individual need to maintain high levels of focus on performance levels but they also have to cope with the emotional stressors of not being able to deal with problems that may arise at home.

Some of the direct results of athletes having to travel far away from home for significant periods of time include:

- missing out on important life events within their families (children’s schooling, watching children grow-up)
- not always being present at events such as marriages, births etc
- for those athletes who still work or who run their own businesses, being away for a period of time increases the stress
- marital problems
- sickness

Being away from home furthermore has a very direct impact on individual relationships. More than often it leads to significantly increased levels of stress and pressure culminating in the ultimate destruction of the relationship.

The majority of the respondents considered personal happiness as important and directly related performance quality on the netball field. An overwhelming majority clearly felt that personal difficulties could negatively impact not only on their performance but also on their health.
5.3.2 Recommendations regarding home/personal dimension

It is recommended that a sport specific EAP be implemented providing for:

- a component dealing specifically with identified stressors for individuals. An assessment tool should be utilized to assist a practitioner in identifying whether or not an individual is presenting with any symptoms that are stress related. Following this a component of the programme should provide practical advice and support to individuals on how to combat stress. If the situation for an individual presents as being more serious a coordinated package of support should be made available immediately.

- The impact of traveling away from home on the individual and family members should be acknowledged and provided for. The sport specific EAP should provide the opportunity for individual athletes to discuss and address their concerns as well as providing the family of the individual with an opportunity to access support even when the athlete is away.

- The EAP should acknowledge the identified link between an individual athlete’s sporting and home lives. The impact that the home environment has on an individual should be noted and acknowledged and support focused specifically on related issues should be made available when required.

5.4 General Aspects
(Other sources of stress, impact of emotional issues, need for a support and assistance programme, utiliation of support programme, impact of personal, work and home related problems).

5.4.1 Conclusions regarding general aspects

The respondents identified a need for more information in a number of areas. These included:

- drugs
- alcohol
- sexual harassment
- HIV/AIDS
- Life skills

In today’s society education and knowledge is power. It allows individual’s to make informed decisions about their own and their family’s lives. Many adults in today’s society have had little
access to information on issues such as AIDS, drugs and alcohol. This may reflect the significant number of respondents expressing a need for more information on these issues.

In reality coaches and other professionals in sport do not have the time to focus on these issues as their focus is primarily on the first order performance needs of the athlete and/or team.

All of the above issues are everyday realities in everyone’s lives today and it is no different for an elite athlete. It should not be assumed that just because they are successful, high achievers are not exposed to the everyday difficulties of life.

Substance abuse is a dangerous reality and for an elite athlete even more so, as they are often tempted to seek out ways of enhancing performance levels. Ever so often leading to the end of a sporting career.

HIV/AIDS is another harsh reality, particularly in contact sport like boxing and rugby for example. It is a disease that does not discriminate it could affect the individual athlete or his/her family.

The majority of respondents expressed a need for a support package for netball dealing with issues that are related to the netball player’s personal, home and work environments. The respondents consistently identified the need for such a programme and also suggested a link between family life, work life and performance on the field. The majority of the respondents also indicated that should such a support programme become available they would utilise it because it would impact quality of performance on the field of play.

5.4.2 Recommendations regarding general aspects

It is recommended that a sport specific EAP be implemented providing for:

- opportunity for information dissemination sessions in a group setting to improve knowledge on specific topics that are not necessarily sport related.
- an initial needs assessment on the group of individuals or team members to ascertain which specific areas or subjects they require further information on.
- information sessions run in a non-intrusive manner, possibly linking into team-building sessions and using guest speakers.
• further assessment to be carried out with other sporting codes to ascertain an overall opinion of the need for such a support package.
• issues such as gender, age, and sport type to be taken into consideration.

5.5 Summary – Elite Sport

The “working environment” of the elite athlete, particularly those within the professional arena (e.g. rugby, cricket, football, boxing, and tennis) is uniquely and significantly different to that of normal “work places”. It is a “work place” that is highly goal oriented and where the performances of a wide range of role players, but athletes in particular, is constantly monitored and assessed. It is a highly competitive environment with the ultimate objective, sometimes at any cost, being to WIN. The nature and intensity of the competitive aspect of sport is exhausting and challenging for elite athletes. The “workplace” of athletes is highly structured and disciplined and governed by a complex set of sport specific rules and regulations.

Elite sport is no longer simply an activity, which is enjoyed by some individuals; it has become an integral part of society. The higher the level of the competition the more visible it becomes and the greater the pressure on individual athletes and teams to perform. The environment within which elite athletes functions represents one of the most competitive environments of all human activities and the pressure on having to perform is consistently on the increase. The awareness of being constantly watched, discussed and criticized by the general public and the media is a daunting thought for most athletes.

For elite athletes, sport, is more than something they just do, it is a job, which has the tendency to consume their entire being. The associated pressure on these individuals to perform comes from a variety of sources including the media, coaches, managers, administrators, sponsors, fans, family and fellow team members, each with a different agenda.

In addition to the pressures to consistently perform and to continuously improve performance levels there are a range of additional factors that impact an athlete’s performance quality –
• Injuries and the fear of injuries and the consequences of being unable to play, threat of losing position in team, bringing about the end of sporting career, and loss of income.

• The pressure to revert to harmful chemical substances and other “illegal” methods to improve quality of performance and the consequences thereof to an athlete’s health and the public disgrace and rejection associated with being “caught out.”

• Inter-relationships with teammates, management, coaching, and medical staff. The relationship between an elite athlete and a coach in particular, is unique in that few other relationships in sport are more influential and intimate. In most instances an athlete’s future is in the hands of the coach with the athlete having very little control over training regimes, schedules, strategies, techniques, and style of play adopted. This extend of power could lead to a range of possible intrusive influences including various forms of sexual harassment like sexual innuendos, unwarranted invitations and intrusive physical contact in the case of female athletes. This type of negative control over the individual, particularly from the power base occupied by the coach, brings about a range of stressors that could impact negatively on performance.

• From a female athlete perspective gender inequality related issues are a reality in a male-dominated sporting environment, which brings about an additional set of stress factors.

• Interpersonal relationships involving family members, friends, children, spouses, girlfriends/boyfriends, fellow employees can become difficult and problematic as elite athletes try to juggle commitments to family and long hours on the training field, special diets, team gatherings, and long and protracted periods away from home on international tours.
Financial problems and concerns as a result of below par performance, injuries, possible loss of place in team, reaching a premature end to a sporting career (which is acknowledged to be limited) and the uncertainty associated with the development of new sources of income or finding non sport related career opportunities. The future for most elite athlete is at best uncertain.

The structures provided by the sport system to support elite athletes are essentially designed to support the athlete’s physical needs to optimize and improve performance on the field of play. The professionals providing these services are generally qualified sport scientists, sport medical practitioners, sport technologists, sport psychologists, dieticians and opticians.

Very little, if any, support is available to deal with problems, factors and situations that impact the athlete emotionally. The impact of interpersonal relationships in the immediate sporting environment, at home and in the work environment on performance levels, is left largely unattended. The immediate family of the athlete and the problems that they encounter as a result of the athlete’s elite activities are generally not considered.

5.6 Summary – Employee Assistance Programmes

EAP has emerged or developed from a large number of different types of workplaces based on policies by which personal and emotional employee related problems inside and outside of the workplace that have the capacity to impact job performance, are identified and treated. It is recognised that potential human problems are not isolated and it is accepted that problems experienced by employees in the workplace are interrelated - one will inevitably lead to another. An increased amount of stress at work could lead to potential difficulties at home further increasing the employee’s stress levels, which then could translate into problematic behavior.

EAPs ensure the involvement of a multidisciplinary group of professionals (psychologists, medical practitioners, and social workers, psychiatrists) to deal with a wide range of personal and work related problems. It is seen or at least considered to be a definite part of every working environment with employees having a right to
have access to relevant support services in the workplace. Core EAP activities include –

- Expert consultation and training of appropriate persons in the identification and resolution of personal job-related employee problems.
- Confidential, appropriate and timely problem assessment services, referrals for appropriate diagnosis, treatment and assistance. As well as
- the establishment of linkages between the workplace and outside professional and follow-up services.

In addition various program types are included into an EAP e.g.

- Educational Programmes – providing information to employees on issues such as HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, substance abuse, domestic violence, and financial planning.
- Preventative Programmes – dealing with issues such as workplace conflict, sexual harassment, racism and racial conflict, and bullying in workshop situations
- Assessment Programmes – carried out to ensure the implementation of the right programmes to meet the unique requirements of a specific organization

Initially EAPs were seen as being designed and implemented purely for the well-being of the organisation. Whist they were aimed at identifying and responding to employee problems this was done with the well-being of the organisation in mind. It is acknowledged that personal problems affecting employees will affect performance at work and hence be bad for the organisation.

Historically the focus was on the individual as purely a worker whose sole purpose was to do a job and be productive. Referrals came from supervisor level; programs were limited in focus and weren’t seen as a potentially uplifting experience for the employee. It also did not appear to show any improvement in employee/employer relationship and was perceived as a management tool to measure job performance with the only aim to improve the productivity of the organization. It was seen as a
way to instill discipline and fear in employees and ran along strict rules and boundaries cast in stone.

Later EAPs became more open and comprehensive providing for self-referral by the employee thereby making the process more voluntary and confidential. By extending the program to a broader range of problems including those that are familial, vocational, behavioral and psychological and psychiatric in nature, a wider range of potential employee related issues or problems are covered.

The inclusion of worker families makes the service more viable and useful to both employer and employee. Employees are treated by a councilor from a professional multidisciplinary team who explores problems so as to identify the underlying issues involved. Once identified various other types of support are offered to the employee and his/her extended family. The support provided is reviewed and progress monitored over an extended period of time to ensure that change is occurring.

The name of the employee is not disclosed or discussed with management, as it is not seen as punishment, it is a source of help and assistance and it is completely confidential. The presenting problem is treated and the process is taken further on the premise that the individual forms part of a larger system and that the problem is indicative of other issues in the employee’s life. The support is long term as it is aimed at changing the employee’s life.

These EAPs are designed to provide a comprehensive service to employees to assist them in problems related to the workplace, to educate and support with a view to improve overall quality of life and the ability to function more effectively and productively both at home and in the workplace.

5.7 Overall Recommendation

The overall objective of the research was to gain insight into the emotional needs of a group of potential elite netball players and elite athletes in general and to determine whether a sport specific EAP can play a role in sport. The research conducted suggested that the application of basic EAP principles suitably modified to the
requirements of sport’s “workplace” would be of value to sport. The reason for this is that sport has traditionally focused on supporting the physical needs of athletes by using sport science, technology and sports medicine to perfect technique, build stamina, improve fitness, and optimise condition, speed, strength, coordination, and overall health status. In addition to this psychologists worked on the athlete’s power of concentration, ability to relax and focus and soft performance enhancement techniques.

The elite athlete functions in an environment characterised by a multitude of impacting forces many of which affect his/her emotional state. Interpersonal relationships (family, spouses, children, girlfriends, boyfriends, fellow team members, fellow employees) injuries, concern about the future, financial concerns, however, cannot be ignored or left unattended to. During the study it was suggested that a sport specific EAP may be the missing link to further improve performance levels of elite athletes.

Currently a purposely designed sport specific EAP is not part of the existing program of support services available to elite athletes. Based on the information gathered such a program will address a major shortcoming in existing programs which are essentially focused on the physical needs of athletes. The design and incorporation of a sport specific EAP will be a major contribution towards fulfilling both the physical and emotional needs of elite athletes. This will ultimately impact the quality of individual and team performance in the same way that productivity and performance levels have been impacted in the traditional work place.

The nature and extend of existing support service infrastructures and the commitment to addressing the physical needs of athletes provides an ideal platform for introducing a viable a sport specific EAP. Particularly considering the extent to which the emotional needs of athletes and their immediate families have been neglected.

The implementation of such a program will acknowledge the athlete as an individual functioning in an unusually complex multi-dimensional competitive “work place” characterized by unusual and interrelated factors. Such a program will also recognise
that every elite athlete and his/her family require support in the problems encountered in everyday life. These problems and difficulties are invariably amplified in the highly competitive and challenging “win at all cost” world of sport and if left unattended will ultimately impact negatively on performance levels.

The following definition can serve as the basis for constructing such a program -

A set of policies and program procedures by which a sport organisation legitimately intervenes in identifying and responding to broad personal and emotional problems including familial, vocational, interpersonal, behavioral psychological and psychiatric problems of elite athletes and their families.

Under the direction of professional health, other mental staff, and social workers with a good understanding of elite sport, the program address comprehensive current and prospective biopsychosocial progress, prevention, assessment, treatment, case management and referral.

The guidelines to be used in designing a sport specific employee assistance programme are –

1. Different sport codes have different needs as a result of the differing nature of different sport types, gender and cultural composition related issues. These should all be carefully considered on a sport for sport basis.

2. Every elite athlete should be presented with the option of participating in such a program on a confidential basis. Marketing of the concept should include the elite athlete as a prime target. Athletes will have to be guaranteed as to the confidentiality of the program.

3. The well established and tried and tested basic principles of EAP should be adhered to including implementation, program support, record keeping and confidentiality.

4. Self-referral is essential; however, referrals from the coach or team managers are equally important as long as feedback is restricted to the athlete. Utmost confidentiality will be a key success factor.
5. EAP service providing entity has to ensure the participation of a team of professionals that are familiar and knowledgeable about the sport environment.

6. The traditional position of power that coaches, managers and Presidents of sport organization enjoy over elite athletes should not be further enhanced through the program.

7. Implementation of program will require specially designed training packages for staff and personnel on basic EAP principles in a sport environment.

8. Elite athletes have to be considered as a highly specialized group of “workers” with very specific needs in a unique working environment.

9. Program needs to be extended to coaching staff, technical support staff and team management on a confidential basis.

10. The high social profiles of elite athletes will require even higher levels of confidentiality than provide for in normal EAPs as a result of damage that can be done when intimate personal details find their way into the media.

It is recommended that the Netball group is used as a pilot to design, develop, implement, monitor and refine a sport specific EAP program based on the recommendations made and to extend it into a needs analysis for higher profile sports like rugby, football, cricket and tennis.

5.8 Overall Conclusion

The Goal of the research study was to identify Guidelines for a Sport Specific EAP with the associated Objectives to:

- gain insight into the needs of elite athletes,
• establish the nature and characteristics of existing support services,
• determine the potential benefits of such a program and
• to establish whether a traditional EAP can be used or adapted as a basis

The objectives and goals as initially outlined have been achieved through the responses obtained from the group of Netball players as well as the literature surveys conducted on the sporting environment and EAP.

The Research Questions posed:

Question 1: Will an athlete be able to perform at an optimal level on the Netball field if they are experiencing personal difficulties?

Question 2: Is there a need for a sport specific EAP in Netball?

Question 3: Is a sport specific EAP viable?

have been answered.

Responses to the Netball questionnaire showed that the majority of players indicated that personal problems have a direct influence on performance levels and those issues such as personal happiness and other external factors impact their ability to perform optimally. Personal problems will impact sport performance.

The vast majority of respondents to the questionnaire also indicated a need for such a program based on the fact that no other similar structure exist and that existing support structures do not fulfill in the personal needs of athletes. The literature survey conducted produced no evidence of structured sport specific EAPs.

Based on the historical success and contribution of EAP to the general workplace, the clear need for a support system to deal with the emotional needs of elite athletes, the nature of existing support networks of support services involving specialists attending to the physical needs of elite athletes, the ever increasing demands on higher quality results and the associated emotional stress involved, and the growing realisation among coaches of the need for addressing the emotional and personal
needs of those in their care, will be the main driving forces to implement a sport specific EAP.

Those with business interests in high profile athletes – sponsors, promoters, and advertising agencies will see this as an opportunity to improve the performances of the of the people they have an invested in, and act accordingly.

The introduction of a sport specific EAP will bring about a refreshingly new dimension in the way that sport cares for its most important asset – the athlete. By addressing the emotional needs of the athlete in tandem with his/her physical needs, performance levels will be enhanced, the quality of life of the athlete and his/her family will be approved and playing careers are likely to be extended. At the same time it will pioneer the application of EAP in a new area.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Neuman, W.L. 1991. **Social Research Methods – Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.** Allyn and Bacon: United States


UK EAP Association. 1998. **Standards of Practice and Professional Guidelines for Employee Assistance Programmes.** UK EAPA.


ANNEXURE 1

NETBALL IN DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS

(Please complete the questionnaire in as much detail as possible.)
### GENERAL

1.1 **Age?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-26</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>27-31</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>32-36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 and above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2 **Marital Status?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional marriage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3 **Dependants?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.4 What is your current situation?

- Still at school
- University student
- College student
- Full time employed
- Part time employed
- Unemployed

1.5 Highest qualification obtained

- Grade 8-10
- Grade 12
- Diploma
- Degree

1.6 Define your position in the organization where you are working (if applicable).

- Frontline employee
- Student/Trainee
- Supervisor/Line Manager
- Office based/Clerk
- General Management
- Executive Management

[Checkboxes for full-time and part-time positions]
## SPORT DIMENSION

### 1.7 Highest competitive level played

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1.8 Year’s participation is sport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 and more</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1.9 Do you find playing Netball stressful

- Yes
- Sort of
- No
1.10 Do you find training stressful?
   Yes □
   Sort of □
   No □
   If yes, in what way?

1.11 Are you satisfied with your
   1.11.1 Position in the overall Netball situation
       Yes □  Sort of □  No □
   1.11.2 Your relationships with team mates
       Yes □  Sort of □  No □
   1.11.3 The treatment you receive in the Netball organisation
       Yes □  Sort of □  No □
   1.11.4 Relationships with coaches, support staff and managers
       Yes □  Sort of □  No □

1.12 Do you find the thought of?
   1.12.1 Going to training stressful
       Yes □  Sort of □  No □
   1.12.2 Going to matches stressful
       Yes □  Sort of □  No □
   1.12.3 Traveling away from home to netball stressful
       Yes □  Sort of □  No □

1.13 Have you experienced serious injuries in netball?
   Yes □
   No □
1.14 Did these injuries have an emotional impact on you?
Yes ☐
No ☐

1.15 Do you believe that factors outside of the Netball environment can impact your own performance?
Yes ☐
Sort of ☐
No ☐

1.16 Do you believe it can also impact on the performance of a team as a unit?
Yes ☐
Sort of ☐
No ☐

1.17 Do you think that substances (drugs) are being used by Netball players?
Yes ☐
Sort of ☐
No ☐

1.18 Do you believe there is enough support structures in place within Netball?
Yes ☐
No ☐
1.19 Do you feel comfortable to approach coaching and management when you experience any kind of problem at Netball?
   Yes ☐
   No ☐

1.20 Do you believe that Netball should recognise the human side in the sport e.g. interpersonal relationships, trauma, stress, HIV/AIDS, alcohol and substance abuse etc?
   Yes ☐
   No ☐

1.21 Do you believe that the issues like emotional, spiritual and interpersonal relationships can impact on sport performance?
   Yes ☐
   No ☐

1.22 Do you believe that Netball players should be emotionally coached and supported like they are being coached physically?
   Yes ☐
   No ☐

1.23 Is sexual harassment a reality in netball?
   Yes
   No

1.24 Do you believe cultural differences can impact on sport performance?
   Yes
   No
PERSONAL DIMENSION

2.1 Do you believe that personal happiness is important for you to perform on the Netball court?
Yes ☐
No ☐

2.2 Do you take certain steps to work at your emotional well being?
Yes ☐
No ☐
If yes, What?
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

2.3 Do you believe that personal problems can negatively influence your health and well being and that it can impact on your performance?
Yes ☐
No ☐

2.4 Have you ever had any emotional problems like depression or anxiety?
Yes ☐
Sort of ☐
No ☐
2.5 Have you ever consulted with a professional about personal and emotional problems?
Yes ☐
Sort of ☐
No ☐

2.6 Do you from time-to-time struggle with concentration?
Yes ☐
Sort of ☐
No ☐

2.7 Do you sometimes struggle to make decisions?
Yes ☐
Sort of ☐
No ☐

2.8 Do you feel energized when waking up in the morning?
Yes ☐
Sort of ☐
No ☐

2.9 Do you sometimes feel a loss of energy to do your duties?
Yes ☐
Sort of ☐
No ☐
2.10 Does your appetite change regularly, leading to weight loss and gain?

Yes  □
Sort of □
No □

2.11 Do you feel you sleep well?

Yes □
Sort of □
No □

**HOME DIMENSION**

3.1 Are you satisfied with your current situation at home?

Yes □
Sort of □
No □

3.2 Do you believe in sharing good relations with your family at home?

Yes □
Sort of □
No □

3.3 Do you sometimes experience your home environment as stressful?

Yes □
Sort of □
No □
3.4 Do you find your responsibilities at home stressful?
   Yes □
   Sort of □
   No □

3.5 Do you experience time away from home as difficult?
   Yes □
   Sort of □
   No □

3.6 Do you believe that you need strong support systems at home to cope with stresses of playing Netball competitively?
   Yes □
   No □

3.7 Is your role as women clearly defined in your home setting?
   Yes □
   Sort of □
   No □

3.8 Are your responsibilities as women, wife, mother (if applicable), sometimes interfering with participating in Netball?
   Yes □
   Sort of □
   No □
3.9 Do you experience crises regularly in your life?
   Yes □
   Sort of □
   No □

3.10 Do you experience daily hassles at home that create negative stress and influences your health and attitude?
   Yes □
   Sort of □
   No □

3.11 Do you think that some kind of support systems can assist you in dealing with home issues that impact general functioning?
   Yes □
   No □
CAREER DIMENSION

4.1 Do you believe one should share good relationships with fellow employees?
   Yes □
   Sort of □
   No □

4.2 Are you comfortable in your work situation?
   Yes □
   Sort of □
   No □

4.3 Do you find the thought of going to work stressful?
   Yes □
   Sort of □
   No □

4.4 Do you believe that interpersonal relationships at work can have an impact on your general emotional functioning?
   Yes □
   No □

4.5 Do you believe that work stress and emotional issues at work can impact on all areas of your life?
   Yes □
   No □
4.6 Have you ever seen or experienced bullying by a fellow employee?
Yes ☐
No ☐

4.7 Is sexual harassment a reality in the work setting?
Yes ☐
No ☐

4.8 Have you ever been a target of sexual harassment?
Yes ☐
No ☐

If yes, how was it dealt with?
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

4.9 Have you ever been subjected to any form of racism at work?
Yes ☐
No ☐

If yes, how was it dealt with?
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
4.10 Do you believe there should be support system and assistance available to deal with interpersonal conflict, sexual harassment, and racism and general emotional issues arising out of your work environment?

Yes ☐
No ☐

GENERAL

5.1 Would you like to learn more about:

5.1.1 Drugs ☐ Yes ☐ No

5.1.2 Alcohol ☐ Yes ☐ No

5.1.3 Sexual Harassment ☐ Yes ☐ No

5.1.4 HIV / AIDS ☐ Yes ☐ No

5.1.5 Life skills ☐ Yes ☐ No

5.2 What do you feel is the biggest cause of your stress?

5.2.1 My job ☐
5.2.2 My family

5.2.3 Financial concerns

5.2.4 Health concerns

5.2.5 Participation in Netball

5.3 Do you believe that emotional issues can influence you in every area of your life?
   Yes □
   No □

How do you manage these emotional issues?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

5.4 Do you know what a Netball Performance Enhancement (NPE) programme is?
   Yes □
   No □

5.5 Do you think that the Netball Federation should provide a support and assistance programme like this that can help you with personal work, home and study concerns?
   Yes □
   No □
5.6 If a support system and assistance programme was given to you in a very confidential way, would you use it?
Yes □
No □

5.7 Do you think that the addressing of personal, work, home and study problems can lead to higher sport performance?
Yes □
No □

Thank you for your time & cooperation
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Department of Social Work

Participant’s Name: …………………………………
Date: …………………

Principal Investigator: Tamsyn Basson
University of Pretoria

Personal Address:
146 Mill Bridge
Halstead
Essex, United Kingdom

Informed Consent

1. Title of Study: Guidelines for a Sport-specific EAP Programme
2. Purpose of the Study: The rationale for this research project is to explore the problems experienced by
   sportsmen and women that may be an indication of the viability of an EAP for the mentioned sector.
3. Procedures: I will be asked to complete a questionnaire which will focus specifically on my personal
   experiences as a netball player, on whether or not external factors have an influence on my ability to
   play the sport at my optimal level. The process will take no longer that approximately 30 minutes to 1
   hour and will be completed at one of my training sessions.
4. Risks and Discomforts: There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this project. I will be
   given as many breaks as I want during the testing session.
5. Benefits: I understand there are no known direct medical benefits to me for participating in this study.
   However, the results of the study may help researchers gain a better understanding of how other factors
   influence my ability to perform in my chosen sport and what types of support may benefit me.
6. Participant’s Rights: I may withdraw from participating in the study at any time.
7. Financial Compensation: I will not be provided with any financial compensation.
8. **Confidentiality:** The questionnaires may be completed anonymously and thus I need not identify myself on my questionnaire. Should I wish to place my name on the questionnaire I may do so, however I understand that the results of questionnaires will be kept confidential unless I ask that they be released. The results of this study may be published in professional journals or presented at professional conferences, but my records or identity will not be revealed unless required by law.

9. If I have any questions of concerns, I can call Mrs Susan De Bruyn. At (012) 362 1352 at any time during the day or night.

I understand my rights as a researcher subject, and I voluntarily consent to participation in this study, I understand what the study is about and how and why it is being done. I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

_____________________________  ______________
Subject’s Signature       DATE

______________________________
Signature of Investigator

Student: University of Pretoria

Annexure 3
2003-10-21

Dear Sir

We hereby wish to confirm our consent for Tamsyn Basson to conduct a research project in Netball South Africa’s Gauteng East Province to establish the need for a sports related EAP program among the provinces senior players.

Yours faithfully

[Signature]

Netball South Africa
Dear Respondent,

Thank you very much for attending this session and for agreeing to participate with this research project, your input is greatly valued.

I would ask that you please complete the questionnaire attached to this letter. Once you have done so, please hand it back to the organizer, Mrs Susan De Bruyn. She will ensure that all the questionnaires are safely kept and returned to myself. I remind you that this process is completely anonymous and you do not have to provide your name unless you personally choose to do so.

Should you have any questions that arise from the questionnaire, please discuss these with Ms De Bruyn, who is fully briefed on the questionnaire and should be able to answer any queries you may have.

Thank you once again for your assistance in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

Tamsyn Basson