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Canadian University Sport Coaches' Experiences Participating in a Social Learning Space on Topics Related to and Impacting Coach Mental Health

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Although high-performance coaching can be rewarding, it can also cause considerable performance, organizational, and personal stress, which over time, can diminish coaches' mental health. There is a growing recognition that collective and community-based interventions that extend beyond the individual level are needed to support mental health, such as a social learning space. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to understand university coaches' experiences participating in a season-long social learning space on topics related to and impacting coach mental health. Specifically, 10 Canadian University coaches engaged in six monthly sessions throughout one competitive season on topics related to mental health. Data collection consisted of pre- and postseason individual, semistructured interviews. Data were analyzed abductively using a reflexive thematic analysis. Results revealed that coaches reported positive experiences from participating in the social learning space, including the sense of community it created and the quality of the knowledge provided by the invited speakers. The environment encouraged sharing and provided insights into mental health, leadership, and the coach–athlete relationship. Coaches also acquired new resources, improved personal well-being, and enhanced coaching effectiveness. Overall, this initiative empowered coaches to become advocates for mental health—both for themselves and for their athletes and networks.

Keywords: coach education, coaching, mental health, social learning, university sport

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In alignment with the Transparency and Openness Promotion Guidelines (Nosek et al., 2015) and in accordance with the APA's recommendations for transparency in empirical research, the authors report the following details regarding their study's design, materials, data, and analysis: The study's design, including the sample size and all manipulations, was determined prior to data collection. The authors report these details in the Method section of this article. The authors report all adopted procedures, including the interview guides. All relevant citations of previous works referenced throughout this study are fully disclosed. Access to the raw data is restricted to ensure participant confidentiality, in accordance with ethical guidelines approved by the institutions research ethics board. The interview guides used in this study are available upon request. Interested researchers may contact the corresponding author, Siobhan Henderson, to obtain copies of these materials. A general description of the analysis procedures is provided in the Method section of this article. This study was not preregistered and the study was approved by the research board at the corresponding author's institution. All participants provided informed consent prior to participation.

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