



Athlete Mental Health Research Fellows

Advancing Research, Advocacy, and Athlete Wellbeing



www.athletesforhope.org
contact@athletesforhope.org





About Athletes for Hope (AFH)

Athletes for Hope is a national nonprofit dedicated to empowering athletes to make a meaningful impact in their communities through service and advocacy. Our [**Wellbeing Program**](#) addresses the unique mental health needs of athletes at every level — from youth to elite professionals — through education, research, and partnerships.



Position Summary

The Athlete Mental Health Research Fellow will support and expand AFH's mission by contributing to cutting-edge research in sports psychiatry and athlete mental health. This fellowship is ideal for graduate students, early-career clinicians, or researchers passionate about athlete well-being and mental health equity. Fellows will engage in literature reviews, data analysis, grant writing, and the development of evidence-based toolkits and content to shape AFH programming and national initiatives.

Key Responsibilities

- Conduct literature reviews on athlete mental health trends, including depression, anxiety, trauma, and performance-related stress.
- Assist in the design and analysis of research studies evaluating AFH programming impact.
- Collaborate with AFH's Chief Wellbeing Officer and external partners to produce white papers, op-eds, and peer-reviewed publications.
- Develop athlete-facing mental health toolkits and resources grounded in research and best practices.
- Support data collection and reporting for grants and stakeholder communications.
- Stay abreast of emerging research in sports psychiatry, performance psychology, and mental health interventions for athletes.
- Present research findings in webinars, conferences, or educational settings when applicable.

Qualifications

- Graduate student, resident, or early-career professional in psychology, psychiatry, public health, social work, sports science, or a related field.
- Demonstrated interest in athlete mental health, performance psychology, or sports psychiatry.
- Strong writing and analytical skills with experience in academic or professional research.
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively across teams.
- Experience working with athlete populations is preferred but not required.

Fellowship Benefits

- Mentorship from leading experts in psychiatry, public health, and athlete mental health.
- National platform to contribute to meaningful, high-impact advocacy and research.
- Access to AFH's network of athletes, researchers, and mental health professionals.
- Stipend provided (amount commensurate with experience and availability).

Athlete Mental Health

2026–2027 Research Fellows



- Monthly office hours with Dr. Mirhom
- Quarterly guest lectures from people in athlete mental health





Ace Van Atta

- M.S., Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology — University of Limerick
- B.A., Cognitive Science — Johns Hopkins University
- B.A., Psychology — Johns Hopkins University

Ace earned their master's degree in Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology from University of Limerick. They earned dual bachelor's degrees in Cognitive Science and Psychology from Johns Hopkins University, where they also competed on the NCAA fencing team. Ace has a diverse research background and is particularly interested in cognitive phenomenology and personal identity in sport. They founded Ace Performance, dedicated to helping athletes across sports and identities perform at their best. They also have experience working with non-profits dedicated to athlete inclusion and mental health. Beyond research and coaching, they enjoy spending time outdoors climbing and hammocking with friends.

Publications

- Placeholder



Alessandra DiPace

- LPC — Licensed Professional Counselor

Alessandra became a counselor through her passion for helping people navigate life's challenges and feel more connected to themselves and others. She has experience working with life transitions, anxiety, mood concerns, substance use, relationships, identity, career challenges, and neurodivergence. With a background in athletics, Alessandra is especially passionate about mental health in sports and reducing the stigma surrounding it. She believes that mental well-being is just as essential to an athlete's success as physical training and deserves the same level of care and attention. She helps athletes navigate the mental and physical demands of sport while exploring the many identities that make them who they are.

Publications

- Placeholder



Alex Morici

- M.Ed., Clinical Mental Health Counseling/Athletic Counseling — Springfield College, expected 2027

Alexander Morici is a former NCAA Division III/USCAA Division II collegiate basketball player and third-year Clinical Mental Health Counseling graduate student at Springfield College, specializing in athletic counseling. He plans to pursue CMPC and LPC credentials following graduation. Through his experience as a graduate athletic counselor, AmeriCorps volunteer, Special Olympics volunteer, and youth basketball coach, Alexander developed a passion for supporting athletes holistically. His interests center on the intersection of sport psychology, mental performance, and athlete mental health.

Publications

- Placeholder



Allison Irish

- M.A., Professional Psychology — William James College
- B.A., Psychology — Saint Anselm College
- Doctoral candidate, Clinical Psychology — William James College

Allison Irish is a fifth-year doctoral student in Clinical Psychology at William James College. She has clinical experience providing individual and group therapy to student-athletes across youth, high school, and collegiate settings. As a former NCAA Division II student-athlete and co-founder of The Head Game Project, a peer-to-peer mental health advocacy group for student-athletes, she is passionate about advancing athlete mental health through research and clinical practice. Her research examines factors that foster well-being, positive team dynamics, and success among collegiate athletic teams.

Publications

- Placeholder



Anne Venema

- Collegiate Athlete Mental Health & Well-Being, Athletic Identity, Help-Seeking Behaviors, Psychological Resilience, Injury & Recovery, Career Transition, Service-Academy Athlete Well-Being.

Anne Venema is a sports professional focused on athlete development, mental health, and holistic well-being. Her experience spans Division I athletics, student-athlete development, sports administration, and athlete support. She currently serves as a Graduate Assistant at Fairleigh Dickinson University while contributing to athlete development initiatives through PAADS. Her interests include collegiate athlete mental health and well-being, athletic identity, psychological resilience, injury and recovery, career transition, and life beyond sport.

Publications

- Placeholder



Ariana French

- B.A., Psychology — Clark Atlanta University
- M.A., Sport Psychology — John F. Kennedy University
- Certificate in Trauma Studies

Ariana French is a Mental Skills and Performance Coach with more than five years of experience helping athletes and high performers strengthen mindset, confidence, focus, and resilience. She has worked with organizations throughout the Bay Area and currently supports athletes at Bishop O'Dowd High School. Ariana is passionate about helping individuals develop practical mental skills that improve performance, self-awareness, and overall well-being in sport, school, and life.

Publications

- Placeholder



Arlynn Baer

- M.S.W. — New York University

Arlynn Baer, LMSW, is a clinical social worker specializing in athlete mental health and wellness. As Social Work Manager at Row New York, she leads individual and group counseling for student-athletes, provides trauma-informed crisis intervention and psychoeducation, and trains staff while coordinating care with coaches. Her background includes school-based clinical work at Astor Services, youth program leadership at Princeton National Rowing Association, giving her a distinctive blend of clinical expertise and athletics program development. A graduate of New York University's MSW program, Arlynn brings expertise in crisis management, motivational interviewing, and community partnership-building to support young athletes' emotional and academic growth.

Publications

- Placeholder



Barthinia Bates

- NIL pressures and public scrutiny, Policy & governance in athlete wellbeing

Barthinia Bates is a doctoral candidate in Health Services Administration and Policy, specializing in athlete mental health, qualitative research, and applied behavioral frameworks. She holds a BA in Sociology from UCLA and an MS in Psychology/Human Behavior from National University. Her academic work focuses on NCAA student athlete wellbeing, performance anxiety, and structural barriers to mental health access. A former UCLA national champion and Female Athlete of the Year, she brings lived experience as a collegiate athlete alongside professional experience as a youth travel softball head coach. She is committed to advancing evidence based strategies that improve wellbeing across all levels of sport.

Publications

- Placeholder



Carly Kimiecik

- Ph.D. — Social Work
- M.S.W. — Social Work

I am an Assistant Professor at the University of Kentucky College of Social Work. Drawing on experience in sport for development and college athletics, my interdisciplinary work focuses on advancing health, wellbeing, and positive youth development among youth (ages 10–24) and college student-athletes. Guided by community-engaged approaches, I partner with K–12 schools, community organizations, and collegiate athletic departments to co-design initiatives grounded in the lived experiences of young people and communities in sport. My research and applied work focus on mental health literacy, holistic wellbeing, leadership, and civic engagement in sports settings and within communities.

Publications

- Placeholder



Caroline Myers

- LCSW
- Mental Performance Coach

Caroline Myers, LCSW, is a licensed clinical social worker and mental performance coach who works with tactical athletes, corporate leaders, and other high-performing individuals. Her work focuses on resilience, recovery from injury and adversity, grief and loss, and navigating life's transitions. She is particularly interested in helping individuals and teams perform at their best while maintaining psychological well-being across demanding environments. Caroline brings a practical, compassionate approach grounded in clinical experience and a deep understanding of high-performance populations. Outside of work, she enjoys running, reading, painting and spending time outdoors with her family in Colorado.



Chris Gaskin

- MSc Psychology of Sport — University of Stirling, UK, Scotland
- Former NCAA soccer coach — mental skills/tools for athletes to enhance performance and stay in a good place mentally

College soccer coach of 10 years, mental skills/health advocate, mentor, lifelong learner.

Publications

- Placeholder



David Ryan Hutzley

- M.A., Professional Counseling — Seton Hall University, in progress

David Ryan Hutzley is a graduate student pursuing an M.A. in Professional Counseling at Seton Hall University, with a focus on college student-athlete mental health, mindfulness, and performance. A former NCAA Division I rower at Princeton University, he brings firsthand experience navigating the pressures of elite athletics to his clinical training. David currently works in financial services in Boston, where he applies strong analytical and communication skills, and has volunteered extensively with organizations including Special Olympics and FriendshipWorks. He is excited to contribute to AFH's mission of advancing athlete wellbeing through research, advocacy, and education.

Publications

- Placeholder



Delaney Timm

- B.S., Neuroscience — Drew University
- Minor, Psychology — Drew University

Delaney Timm is a Medical Assistant at a psychiatry clinic in Texas, where she contributes to providing compassionate, patient-centered mental health care. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience from Drew University with a minor in Psychology, and sharpened her interest in understanding the brain through independent research. A lifelong soccer player, Delaney competed through college and continues to play today. Her experience with the pressures of high-level sport have shaped her interest in athlete mental health and its impact on identity, relationships, and performance. Through years of coaching and mentoring young athletes in an underserved community, she has seen the power of sport to foster connection, confidence, and belonging.

Publications

- Placeholder



Elizabeth Connolly

- B.S.N., Nursing
- Graduate student, Marriage and Family Therapy

I am an emerging relational and systems clinician, currently in graduate school for marriage and family therapy. Having worked for almost a decade as a registered nurse, I have witnessed patients experience resilience that they never thought possible. In my current role as an MFT intern I help athletes, high performing individuals, couples, and their families elicit systemic change through impactful and experiential therapy. Excellent therapeutic work involves connecting life events, family influences, and personal choices with one's current self. Professional interests of mine include neurodivergence in athletes and teams, family of origin issues, the athlete-coach dynamic, and sport-related trauma.

Publications

- Placeholder



Emily Nothnagle

- M.S.W., Social Work
- B.S., Psychology
- B.A., Music
- B.A., Anthropology
- Ph.D. student, Social Work — The Ohio State University

Emily Nothnagle is a licensed social worker and PhD student at The Ohio State University. A “quadruple Buckeye,” Emily earned degrees in social work (MSW), psychology (BS), music (BA), and anthropology (BA) and was a three-time team captain of the national championship pistol team. As an athlete and researcher, Emily is passionate about destigmatizing mental health and promoting wellness. She has experience in intervention development, implementation, and evaluation, and has worked with youth, high school, and college athletes and coaches. Emily’s research interests include improving mental health outcomes in sport, with an emphasis on risk and protective factors across systems.

Publications

- Placeholder



Erin Rogers

- B.A., Psychology
- Minor, Political Science
- Minor, Public Health
- M.P.A., Public Administration — Sacred Heart University

Erin Rogers is a retired college athlete who is passionate about expanding and educating others on athlete mental health and offering them what she did not have access through growing up in the sports world. I spent my undergraduate years studying Psychology with a double minor in Political Science and Public Health where I was lucky enough to participate on the Women’s Lacrosse team. I then went on to get my Masters in Public Administration at Sacred Heart University where I was able to research mental health programs in local high schools and universities. I am eager to combine my own experience in sports alongside my research studies to help the next generation of athletes have more knowledge, access, and help with mental health.

Publications

- Placeholder



Jeniece Nott

- M.D.
- Ph.D.
- Diploma in Mental Health in Elite Sport — International Olympic Committee

Jeniece Nott, MD, PhD is a Board Certified Child/Adolescent and Adult Psychiatrist with a Diploma in Mental Health in Elite Sport from the International Olympic Committee. As a youth, she participated in soccer at the Region Team Level in the Olympic Development program. She has extensive experience working with high performing individuals in graduate school, law school, dental school and medical school programs. She is passionate about helping to shape well-being in spaces defined by high stakes, high cognitive or physical load and continuous performance evaluation, alongside playing a role in helping individuals navigate mental health challenges in these spaces.

Publications

- Placeholder



John Armistead

John Armistead is founder and CEO of AthletesTogether, a mental performance and wellness platform used by professional, collegiate, and youth sports organizations. He is a former two-sport Division I athlete – football at USC, lacrosse at Richmond – and an Olympic Trials bobsled competitor. He currently leads a quasi-experimental field study across the MLS and NFL, measuring wellbeing and performance outcomes across a competitive season, and writes on athlete mental health for a wide social audience. His research interests center on mental wellness tools as a scalable mechanism for athlete wellbeing.

Publications

- Placeholder



Joycelyn “Jay” Kennedy

- Master of Social Work, Georgia State University.
- Ph.D. in Kinesiology and Health (in progress), Georgia State University.

Joycelyn (Jay) Kennedy is a Licensed Master Social Worker and Ph.D. student in Kinesiology and Health at Georgia State University. Her current research explores how mental health policies and practices are implemented across NCAA institutions, with a focus on organizational structures and administrative decision-making in collegiate sport. With experience as a crisis responder and school-based therapist, Joycelyn has worked directly with youth facing emotional and academic challenges. Joycelyn’s goal is to enhance mental health support in sport by bridging clinical care with organizational policies to create supportive, effective environments for athletes.

Publications

- *Train Smart, Stay Strong: Rethinking Sports Injury Prevention*, [AFH Wellbeing Blog](#)



Karlie Martin

- M.S., Sport and Exercise Psychology

Karlie Martin holds a M.S. in Sport and Exercise Psychology and serves as the Associate Director of Academic and Student Services for Football at Duquesne University. Her work and research focus on athlete mental health, life skills development, and holistic athlete wellbeing. Karlie’s graduate research examined how NCAA coaches intentionally teach transferable life skills that prepare student-athletes for success in sport and life. As a former student-athlete, she is passionate about translating research into practical resources that empower athletes and advance mental wellbeing across all levels of sport.

Publications

- Placeholder



Karuna Lee-Henderson

- M.S.W. — Alabama A&M University
- B.A., Social Work — University of Alabama at Birmingham
- B.A., Communication Management — University of Alabama at Birmingham
- Ph.D. student, Social Work — Alabama A&M University

Karuna Henderson is a healthcare and social services professional with more than 20 years of experience in clinical research, mental health, social work, client advocacy, and academic medicine. She is pursuing a Ph.D. in Social Work at Alabama A&M University, where she earned her MSW, and holds bachelors degrees in Social Work and Communication Management from UAB. Karuna serves as a Clinical Research Coordinator II and Mental Health Clinician. She is also the Founder of Hendurance Leadership Academy for Female Youth and is dedicated to leadership, mentorship, mental health advocacy, youth empowerment, and supporting underserved communities

Publications

- Placeholder



Katerina Paraskevas, MD, MPH

- Master of Public Health, Columbia University

Katerina Paraskevas, MD, MPH, is a physician and Research Fellow with Athletes for Hope. Her work explores the intersection of psychiatry, sport, and public health, with a focus on eating disorders, suicide prevention, and athlete well-being. A certified suicide-prevention trainer with clinical, research, advocacy, and health-policy experience, she is passionate about translating evidence into action and helping build athletic cultures where mental health is protected, conversations are welcomed, and seeking support is recognized as strength.

Publications

- *Eating Disorders and Athletes: Why Awareness Matters*, [Psychiatric Times](#)
- *Heads Up: What Every Young Athlete Should know About Concussions*, [Center for Wellbeing](#)



Katie Bryant

- Bachelor's degree — Regis University
- Master's degree — University of Texas at Austin

I bring more than 20 years of clinical social work experience, including 19 as a school social worker working with high performing students and athletes. My background includes residential and inpatient treatment, juvenile probation, and extensive work with pre-teens, adolescents, young adults, adults, and their families mostly in high performing settings. For 17 years, I have supervised master's-level social work students and clinicians pursuing LCSW licensure. I also maintain a private practice. Originally from Colorado, I earned undergraduate degree from Regis University and Masters from The University of Texas at Austin.

Publications

- Placeholder



Kennedy Collins

- Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Houston Christian University
- Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Houston Christian University

Kennedy Collins is a Licensed Professional Counselor in Texas specializing in sports counseling. As a former athlete, she combines lived experience with clinical expertise to help athletes achieve performance goals, navigate mental health challenges, and grow as both athletes and individuals. She creates a warm, nonjudgmental, and supportive environment where current and former athletes can explore the unique demands of sport, build resilience, and pursue meaningful growth. Passionate about whole-person care, Kennedy is committed to reshaping athlete culture from the inside out, empowering athletes to thrive through triumphs and challenges while cultivating lasting well-being beyond sport.

Publications

- *Stress to Strength*, [AFH Wellbeing Blog](#)
- *Stress in Sports: What It Really Means and How to Discuss With Athletes*, [Psychiatric Times](#)
- *Seasonal Affective Disorder & Athletes: The Winter Shift*, [AFH Wellbeing Blog](#)



Kevin Presbery

- Social Work

My name is Kevin Presbery. A sports enthusiast with an extensive background in the behavioral/mental health field. My interest is the intersectionality of the two.

Publications

- Placeholder



Lacy Duke Nacif Elalaoui

- M.S.W. — Social Work

Lacy Duke Nacif Elalaoui is a licensed master social worker, sports social work professional, and athlete mental health advocate based in Austin, Texas. She brings experience supporting athletes through both clinical and non-clinical social work, with a focus on mental wellness, performance balance, and holistic care. Lacy is especially passionate about creating spaces where athletes can thrive on and off the field. Through her work, she aims to strengthen athlete well-being, expand access to support, and contribute to a culture that values mental health, resilience, and community impact in sports.

Publications

- Placeholder



Linda Oseso

- B.A., Interdisciplinary Studies, Global Health — University of California, Berkeley
- M.P.H., Epidemiology — University of Washington
- Ph.D. student, Implementation Science

Linda is a public health researcher and former track and field athlete. Over 11 years in infectious disease and global health research, she has worked on research assessing barriers and facilitators to engaging diverse and underserved populations in clinical trials and used Community-Based Participatory Research to co-design tools to reduce stigma and build trust. She competed as a collegiate athlete at UC Berkeley, is the Kenyan national record holder in the women's hammer throw and has represented Kenya at three Commonwealth Games. Linda is excited to combine these backgrounds in athlete mental health, with interest in strengthening access to culturally competent systems of support in resource-limited settings. She holds a B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies, Global Health, from the University of California, Berkeley, and an MPH in Epidemiology from the University of Washington and is an incoming PhD student in Implementation Science.

Publications

- Placeholder



Linnea Bacon

- M.S., Sport Psychology — University of Stirling
- Doctoral candidate, Clinical Psychology — University of Nevada, Las Vegas

My name is Linnea Bacon, and I am a doctoral candidate in Clinical Psychology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). My research focuses on mental health and substance use among collegiate student-athletes, with an emphasis on identifying risk and protective factors and improving prevention and intervention efforts. As a Fulbright Scholar, I earned my M.S. in Sport Psychology from the University of Stirling, where I examined sociocultural influences on psychological help-seeking among athletes. At UNLV, I combine research and applied sport psychology through my work with UNLV Athletics and the Optimum Performance Program in Sports (TOPPS) Lab, supporting student-athlete mental health and performance.

Publications

- Placeholder



Lucille Filyaw

- B.A., Criminology
- M.S.W. student — University of Denver

Lucille Filyaw is a Master of Social Work student at the University of Denver with a B.A. in Criminology and experience in counseling and higher education. Her interests center on athlete mental health, sports social work, injury recovery, athlete identity, and the influence of NCAA policies and institutional systems on athlete wellbeing. She hopes to contribute to research and practice that improve mental health support, resources, and policies for collegiate and professional athletes.

Publications

- Placeholder



Lyonel Walker

- Master's degree, Sport and Performance Psychology — University of Denver

Lyonel is a mental performance consultant and researcher with a master's degree in Sport and Performance Psychology from the University of Denver. He has worked with a range of athletes across levels of competition, providing individualized support focused on well-being, performance readiness, and personal development beyond sport. He advocates for athlete mental health and accessibility, working with athletic organizations to advance preventative mental health practices in sport. His work focuses on integrating evidence-based psychological tools into applied settings to help athletes perform at a high level while protecting their long-term well-being and identity. He is committed to building research that reaches athletes earlier and makes mental health support more accessible across the sport ecosystem.

Publications

- Placeholder



Machai Jamison

- Master's degree, Sport & Performance Psychology — University of Denver
- CMPC — Certified Mental Performance Consultant

Machai Jamison is a mental performance consultant with a background in sport and performance psychology, behavioral health, and athlete development. He holds a master's degree in Sport & Performance Psychology from the University of Denver and has experience supporting athletes across youth, collegiate, and professional sport environments. His work integrates mental performance and athlete well-being, with a focus on helping athletes navigate the psychological demands of sport and develop skills that support both performance and personal growth. Machai is also the founder of 1 Lane, a sport psychology and athlete wellness practice focused on advocating for athletes and advancing the role of mental health and performance in sport.

Publications

- Placeholder



Malea Jackson

- Pursuing both a Masters of Education in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and a Masters of Science in Kinesiology, LSU

Malea is a former collegiate basketball player at the University of Illinois Springfield and is currently pursuing dual master's degrees at Louisiana State University—an M.Ed. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and an M.S. in Kinesiology. Drawing on both athletic and academic experiences, Malea is passionate about research in sport psychology, athlete well-being, and mental performance. Malea is dedicated to advancing knowledge on the intersections of mental health, performance, and identity to better support athletes in achieving holistic success.

Publications

- Placeholder



Maura Leverone

- M.P.H.

Maura Leverone is a sports and public health professional with experience spanning national advocacy conferences, non-profit campaigns, and NCAA women's basketball, as a player and coach. She has presented award-winning research, developed resources for Special Olympics, and is an ambassador for Morgan's Message. Maura is passionate about integrating research, education and coaching to strengthen community and health outcomes.

Publications

- Placeholder



Melanie Bachteler

- M.S.
- LAT — Licensed Athletic Trainer
- ATC — Certified Athletic Trainer

Melanie Bachteler, MS, LAT, ATC, is an athletic trainer, wellness educator, and researcher passionate about helping athletes thrive both on and off the field. Her work explores the relationship between mental health, performance under pressure, and long-term athlete development. She is committed to translating research into practical tools that empower athletes, coaches, and organizations to build healthier, high-performing environments that support both mind and body.

Publications

- Placeholder



Nicolette Canada

- M.S., Mental Health Counseling
- Certified Personal Trainer

Nicolette Canada is a Mental Health Counseling graduate student, Certified Personal Trainer, and dedicated athlete wellness advocate. Recognized as the 2026 National AmeriCorps VISTA of the Year with Strong Girls United, she works at the intersection of sports psychology, mental health equity, and youth empowerment. A former NCAA student-athlete and SAAC President at Manhattan University, Nicolette combines clinical internship experience in behavioral health with athletic coaching to drive change in sports. As an AFH Research Fellow, she aims to advance evidence-based mental health support and foster resilience for athletes across all levels.

Publications

- Placeholder



Ofir Horovitz

- Bachelor of Science in Public Health, Global Health from the University of Washington
- Second-year medical student at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Ofir is a second-year medical student at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and is excited to join Athletes for Hope as a Fellow. She holds a BS in Public Health–Global Health from the University of Washington and is currently involved in orthopedic research focused on pediatric musculoskeletal health and recovery. She is passionate about sports medicine, adolescent mental health, and the role of identity in injury and rehabilitation. A lifelong athlete who has experienced multiple knee surgeries, she brings lived experience and a deep commitment to supporting others through the recovery process. Outside of medicine, she enjoys staying active, exploring new coffee shops, and walking her dog.



Percy Takyi

- D.O.
- M.B.A.

Percy Takyi, DO, MBA, is a Psychiatry Resident Physician in Philadelphia with a passion for advancing athlete mental health through research, education, and innovation. His clinical interests include sports psychiatry, performance psychiatry, addiction, and public mental health. He is committed to making evidence-informed mental health education engaging, accessible, and relatable through interdisciplinary collaboration and creative educational initiatives. Dr. Takyi aims to help athletes and communities better understand mental health, reduce stigma, and promote lifelong wellbeing.

Publications

- Placeholder



Dr. Renee Raymond

- Psychologist
- Certified Mental Performance Consultant

Dr. Renee Raymond is a Clinical and Counselling Psychologist who primarily works with high-performance athletes and performers who care deeply about what they do and experience the pressure that can come with it. Her work addresses performance anxiety, confidence, focus under pressure, emotional regulation, injury recovery, burnout, and shifts in identity related to sport or performance. These challenges may lead athletes and performers to second-guess themselves or lose confidence, particularly when returning from an injury or entering a new or higher-level performance environment. Her goal is to help clients feel steadier under pressure, rebuild trust in themselves, and perform in a way that feels sustainable, balanced, and confident.

Dr. Raymond serves as the Mental Health and Performance Lead for Inter Toronto FC in the Canadian Premier League and supports athletes and coaches through the Canadian Olympic Committee's Game Plan program. She also works as an External Medical Consultant in mental health with Canada's National Ballet School.



Sara Tobias

- B.A., Psychology and Anthropology — Middlebury College
- M.S., Psychosocial Kinesiology — Oregon State University
- Certified Personal Trainer

Sara Tobias is a sports nonprofit professional and a certified personal trainer. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and anthropology from Middlebury College and a master's degree in psychosocial kinesiology from Oregon State University. Upon graduating from Oregon State, Sara began her career in development at Coach Across America (CAA), securing vital funding to train and position coaches in underserved communities. She now serves in the role of National Grants & Strategic Partnerships Manager at CAA. Beyond her professional work, Sara is a former athlete herself, having played for Team USA's Women's National Baseball Team.

Publications

- *Stress in Sports: What It Really Means and How to Discuss With Athletes*, [Psychiatric Times](#)



Sofia Santobuono

- M.S.W., Social Work
- RSW — Registered Social Worker

I am a social worker and discharge planner at Trillium Health Partners with a passion for advancing mental health promotion, prevention, and athlete well-being. My interests include athlete mental health, performance, and supporting career and life transitions, with a particular focus on youth. A lifelong soccer player, former high school student-athlete, and competitive club athlete, I continue to play and coach youth soccer. My background includes graduate research, leadership in university athletics, and training in cognitive behavioural therapy and collaborative care. I look forward to contributing to research and advancing athlete mental health through this fellowship.

Publications

- Placeholder



Tenisha Eastman-Dodson

- B.A., Psychology and Africana Studies — San Diego State University
- M.A., Athletic Administration — Idaho State University
- MPE-AA

Tenisha (Tia) Eastman-Dodson is a community engagement professional with a background in psychology, athletic administration, and public history. She holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology and Africana Studies from San Diego State University and a master's degree in Athletic Administration from Idaho State University. Her work has focused on creating inclusive, community-centered programs and advancing equity through education and storytelling. As an Athletes for Hope Research Fellow, she is interested in athlete mental health, wellbeing, and equitable access to mental health resources, with a particular interest in supporting youth athletes and historically underserved communities.

Publications

- Placeholder



Tim Fairbanks

- LISW — Licensed Independent Social Worker
- LEND Fellow alumnus

Tim Fairbanks, LISW, is a licensed clinical social worker and outpatient therapist at Sagent Behavioral Health in North Liberty, Iowa, with experience in athlete mental health, clinical care, school-based support, and substance/problem gambling treatment. He previously worked with University of Iowa Student-Athlete Academic Services, supporting student-athletes across all 21 men's and women's varsity sports through, life-skills, academic support and clinical referrals. A LEND Fellow alumni. Tim has researched and presented topics such as student-athlete suicide, team environments, academics support, ADD/ADHD in athletes, substance use treatment, and neurodivergence. His work focuses on advocacy, mental health access, and supporting athletes' overall well-being.

Publications

- Placeholder



Join the Next Generation of Athlete Mental Health Leaders

Athletes for Hope is seeking passionate emerging professionals committed to advancing athlete wellbeing through research, advocacy, and education.

Help Shape the Future of Athlete Mental Health



To Apply

Send your CV and Cover Letter to
fellowships@athletesforhope.org