



# Insights on Coach Mentorship in Parasport

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# Discussion

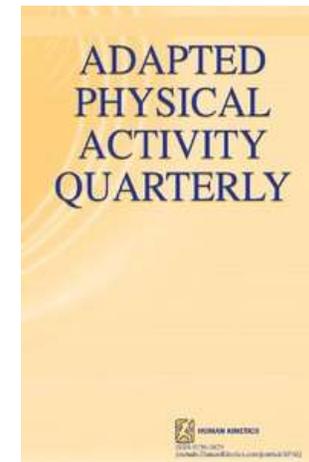
What does mentorship mean to you?



# Literature Review

## Background Information:

- Bentzen, Alexander, Bloom, & Kenttä (2021) conducted a scoping review on parasport coaches.
- Reviewed 44 peer-reviewed articles from 1992 to 2019.
- Most common topics:
  - General coaching knowledge
    - (e.g., Cheon et al., 2015).
  - Being a parasport coach
    - (e.g., Wareham et al., 2017 ).
  - Becoming a parasport coach
    - (e.g., Cregan et al., 2007).



# Literature Review

## Background Information:

### Formal education

- e.g., National Coaching Certification Program of Canada (Nelson et al., 2006).

### Nonformal learning experiences

- e.g., Inclusive Coaching Workshop of UK (Disability Sports Coach, 2020).

### Informal learning experiences

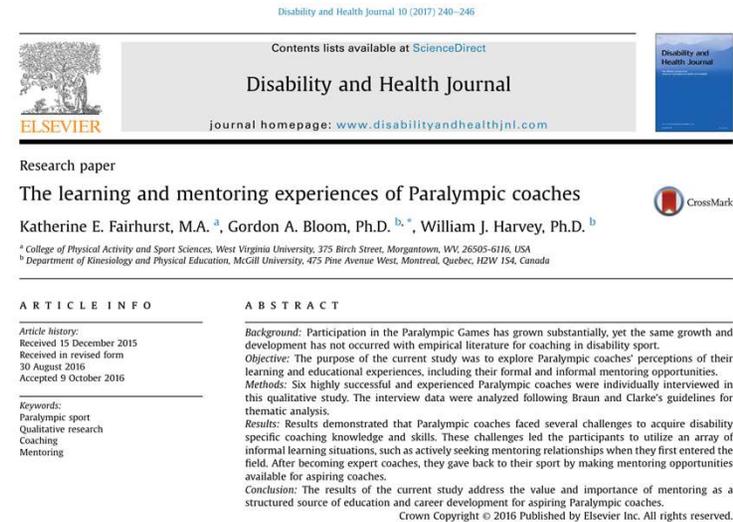
- e.g., Coach mentorship (Fairhurst et al., 2017).



# Literature Review

## Background Information:

- Parasport coaches have considered mentorship their most significant learning opportunity, calling for formal programs (Fairhurst et al., 2017).
- In a formal program, Banwell et al. (2019) found that mentee coaches acquired professional and personal benefits from their mentors.



# Program Objectives

- Pilot and evaluate a multi-sport mentorship program for coaches in parasport
- Provide 20 parasport coaches with mentorship support
- Train Mentors and Apprentices in Transformational Parasport Coaching Workshop (Queens)
- Train Apprentices in NCCP Coaching Athletes with a Disability eLearning

# Program Structure

- October 2020 – September 2021
- Matching
- Monthly meetings between mentor and apprentice
- NCCP
- Honorarium
- Program review led by Dr. Danielle Alexander
- Virtual gameshow social



# Program Structure Continued

Three assignments:

- 1) Communication Agreement
- 2) Learning Plan
- 3) Mentorship Reflection

**Mentoring Agreement**

Meeting Formats - How would you like to meet? Would you like to have some meetings in-person and some over the phone?

Frequency of meetings - Would you like to meet weekly, biweekly, or monthly?

Length of relationship - How long are both of you willing to commit to this relationship? (Some formal relationships can be as short as one month and as long as one year. Please note that for some mentoring programs they will specify the length of the relationship (e.g. 6 months).)

Availability - What days and times typically work for each of you to meet?

Time of meetings - Will your meetings be 15 minutes, 30 minutes, 45 minutes or 60 minutes in length?

Cancellations - What is the best way to notify each other in case a meeting needs to be postponed? Will you use MentorCity messages to notify each other of changes?



**Apprentice Coach Learning Plan**

APPRENTICE COACH	MENTOR COACH
Name:	Name:
Email:	Email:

**PART A) Before You Begin - Tips for Goal Setting:**

Setting goals for your coaching development helps to provide a sense of direction, motivation, clear focus on what you want to achieve as a coach. By setting goals for yourself, you are providing yourself with a target to aim for. SMART goals can be used to help guide your goal setting. SMART is an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely. Therefore, a SMART goal incorporates all of these criteria to help focus your efforts and increase the chances of achieving each individual goal.

SMART Goal Setting	Types of Goals
<b>S</b> Specific (simple, sensible, significant)	<b>Learning Goals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of knowledge or skills in an area of expertise</li> <li>emphasize the process of learning</li> </ul>
<b>M</b> Measurable (meaningful, motivating)	<b>Performance Goals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enhancement of specific performance targets (e.g., learning a new technique)</li> <li>emphasis on application and performance-based outcomes</li> </ul>
<b>A</b> Achievable (agreed, attainable)	<b>Process Goals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>emphasis on behaviours, actions, and strategies used to achieve performance goals (e.g., when to complete the new technique)</li> </ul>
<b>R</b> Relevant (reasonable, realistic, results-based)	<b>Outcomes Goals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>emphasis on results in relation to oneself or others, such as winning a race or achieving a personal best</li> </ul>
<b>T</b> Time bound (time-limited, time-sensitive)	



**Program Evaluation**

Overall, how would you rate this interaction?

Not valuable    Somewhat valuable    Valuable    Truly valuable

Extremely valuable

How has this mentoring relationship helped you grow professionally?

How have you integrated the advice that you received into your daily activities?

What was the most valuable aspect of this relationship?

If there was one thing that you could change, what would it be?

# Program Structure Continued

4 PD sessions:

- 1) Maximize Inclusivity
- 2) Quality Participation
- 3) Transformational Coaching
- 4) Fireside Chat



# Activity – Goal Setting

- Using the sheet provided, you will work through one of the assignments that our coaches complete with their mentor from the program
- You will use the goal setting guide on page 3 to help you work through the table on page 2
- Think about what your goals are for the OPC Summit

# Activity – Goal Setting

Learning Objective	Projected Outcome	Action Steps	Resources Needed	Target Date for Completion	Progress/Status
Goal 1:					
Goal 2:					
Goal 3:					

## Program Participants

- The program offered coaches in Ontario from all levels of experience the opportunity to enhance their development.
- Apprentices are those that have <5 years' coaching athletes with a disability
- Mentors are those that have >5 years' coaching athletes with a disability
- 32 Apprentice coaches Recruited
  - 29 completed the program (91% completion rate)
- 14 Mentor coaches recruited
  - >225 years' experience coaching athletes with a disability

# Program Review



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Exploring coaches' experiences and perceptions of a virtual parasport coach mentorship program

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ARTICLE INFO

**Keywords:**  
 Disability sport  
 Formal mentorship  
 e-learning  
 Coaching

ABSTRACT

Partnering with a provincial coaching association in Canada, we explored the experiences and perceptions of 15 mentor and 29 mentee coaches who participated in a formal virtual parasport coach mentorship program. Data were gathered via focus groups and individual interviews and analyzed using a reflexive thematic analysis. Mentor coaches built a virtual relationship through mutual trust and respect and were perceived by their mentees as supportive, motivating, and knowledgeable. Mentee coaches valued conversations with their mentors surrounding disability-specific knowledge that enhanced their coaching efficacy. Coaches highlighted the need for a greater sense of community within parasport and recommended keeping a virtual component of the program to foster accessibility and learning. Findings provide insight into effective mentorship in parasport for researchers, practitioners, and organizations overseeing this important initiative. Our results will contribute to higher quality experiences for Canadian parasport coaches and athletes and work to progress the growth of parasport worldwide.

1. Exploring coaches' experiences and perceptions of a virtual parasport coach mentorship program

Bentzen et al. (2021) conducted a scoping review of academic literature pertaining to parasport coaches. The authors reviewed the literature on parasport coaching from a variety of data bases (e.g., PsycINFO, PubMed) and charted 44 peer-reviewed articles from 1991 to 2019. Among the results, the authors noted that *becoming a parasport coach* was a commonly discussed topic within the literature (e.g., [Gregan](#) ways (e.g., informal or formal coach mentorship). Sports coach mentorship has received increasing attention over the last 25 years in pursuit of enhancing coach learning and development (Bloom et al., 1998; Chambers, 2015; Jones et al., 2009; Leeder & Sawiuk, 2021; Lefebvre et al., 2020). Much of this research was conceptualized around Kram's (1985) mentor role theory which describes effective mentorship as those who provide career-related (e.g., sponsorship, challenging assignments) and psychosocial (e.g., enhanced competence and confidence) outcomes to their mentees in an informal

To explore the perceptions and experiences of mentor and mentee coaches following a one-year parasport formal coach mentorship program.



Dr. Danielle Alexander



Dr. Gordon Bloom

# Method

## Participants

- 14 mentor and 29 mentee coaches from a variety of parasports and competitive levels.

## Data Collection

- Focus groups with mentees and mentors (five to six per group) at mid-point of the program (Krueger, 2014).
- Individual interviews at end of program: eight mentees, eight mentors (Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

## Data Analysis

- Reflexive thematic analysis of transcript data (Braun & Clarke, 2019).



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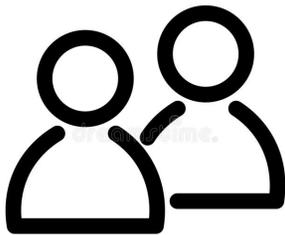
Fonds de recherche  
Société et culture  
Québec

Ontario

# Results

Three overarching themes:

**Outcomes of  
Effective  
Mentoring**



**Disability-Specific  
Coaching Knowledge**

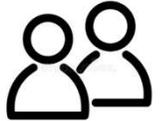


**Virtual Learning  
Considerations**



# Results

## Outcomes of Effective Mentorship



- Mentees described feeling more confident to coach athletes with disabilities (to a certain extent):

Danielle: How do you feel after one year now, how is your comfort level in coaching parasport?

Cassidy: It's probably sixty percent.

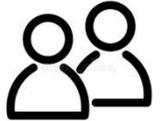
Danielle: What did it start with?

Cassidy: Oh, probably about ten percent [laughing]. Yeah, so it's been a big improvement... The people were so enthusiastic [letting me] know that it's okay if you don't know everything, everybody's learning. I think that was really helpful.

# Results

## Outcomes of Effective Mentorship

- Mentors also described feeling an enhanced sense of support and confidence from the program:



I know this gathering [the focus group] is very beneficial to me hearing about what the other coaches are doing. It validates some of the things I think I'm doing right... at least there's that gauge to say, "oh okay I think I'm on the right track"

Bill, Mentor, Interview



# Results

## Disability-Specific Coaching Knowledge

- Mentee coaches were particularly interested in topics of disability, including classification, inclusive language, and functional ability:

I learned more about classifications of athletes. I figured if you broke your neck at the shoulder blades, from their downward you will be paralyzed - but that's not [necessarily] true. You could be paralyzed but still have function down your arms so it was a learning curve for me because [my mentor] jumps up and down on his chair like there's no problem.

Mackenzie, Mentee, Interview

# Results

## Virtual Learning Considerations

- Although participants desired a human connection, they highlighted benefits of learning online to maximize the inclusivity of the program.

Nicole: I don't think the mentorship would have been possible without it. I'm from a small community and I don't drive. I have [insert disability] so my only transportation would have been on the train. Had it not been for the pandemic, I probably wouldn't have been included.

Eric: I actually think the online piece is invaluable because it greatly opens up your capacity to meet with people who aren't geographically able to work with you.



# Conclusions

- Both mentor and mentee coaches benefited professionally and personally from the formal mentorship program (Banwell et al., 2019; Grant et al., 2020; Koh et al., 2014).
- Mentorship led to increased confidence, yet mentees still require more contextualized disability-specific coaching knowledge (Alexander & Bloom, 2020; Fairhurst et al., 2017; Lepage et al., 2020).
- In conjunction with in-person opportunities, virtual mentorship is a promising avenue for inclusive coach learning and development (Duarte et al., 2021; Grant et al., 2020).

# Impact on Parasport Community

- More trained parasport coaches
- More inclusive clubs
- More programming available for athletes with disabilities
- Equipment availability
- More international opportunities
- Long lasting relationships

# Ongoing Improvements

- MentorCity Platform
- 6 month cycle
- In-person
- Onboarding Webinar
- Future 5-year follow up

# Discussion

What could mentorship look like in my environment?

# Thank you!



# Feedback

Summit Session Feedback



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