

Current Position Description and Information

Name: Sari Shepphird, Ph.D.

Title: Founder/Director

Current Affiliation: Sport & Perform Consulting and Psychological Services, Inc.

Highest Degree Obtained: Ph.D.

Field or sub-discipline (i.e., I/O Psychology, Neuroscience, Social, Clinical):

Clinical, with an emphasis in performance and sport psychology

1. Please provide us a short description of your current position, and the work you do on a daily basis. This will be made available to the attendees on a handout as part of the webinar resources (no more than 250 words is needed):

Dr. Shepphird provides psychological skills training, personal coaching, and consulting to corporate executives, industry leaders, high-stakes professionals, performing artists, creative artists, athletes, and sports teams. In addition, she facilitates tele-consultation training groups to aspiring performance psychology professionals. Always striving to advance the field, she has founded and chaired local, state, and national committees in performance psychology.

2. In your current job, are there other titles/roles for people doing similar work at other organization, universities, or companies? If so, what are those titles/roles?

Similar titles might be executive coaching, mental skills consulting, mental performance consulting, psychological skills training, performance strategist, and performance psychologist.

3. What skills and abilities did you learn in your training (i.e., graduate school, postdoctoral experience), do you find are most useful in your job/career?

I rely both on my breadth of training as a clinical psychologist and my specialized training in performance and sport psychology on a daily basis. Understanding the “whole person” is key to helping others build the skills necessary to enhance their performance abilities. The psychology of human behavior in performance settings is the specific type of knowledge that I apply in my consulting work, but it is never in a vacuum. Performance psychology is far from

communicating a cookie-cutter set of skills aimed at achieving greater success. It is assisting others in reaching their potential, as performers, and as human beings.

Career Pathway and Past Experiences

4. How did you get the job you are currently in? Please provide a brief history of your career path/journey. Our attendees are interested in knowing more about how one achieves a current position like yours, and what opportunities or experiences help open doors or create opportunities.

I trained in clinical psychology but post-licensure I discovered a means for gaining competency in sport psychology and in the application of sport psychology concepts and principles to performance domains outside of sport. The APA Proficiency in Sport Psychology gave me that blueprint. I have participated in coursework and educational experiences outlined in the Proficiency as well as one-on-one mentoring/consultation that is a part of developing any sub-specialty as a psychologist. Each experience has been invaluable to me.

5. If someone wanted to follow a similar career path to your own, how would you suggest going about it? Please offer specifics/examples whenever possible: (Example: Networking is key. You should join XXXX LinkedIn groups, go to XXXX Meetups and attend XXXX meetings)

APA's Division 47 (The Society for Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology) is an invaluable resource. The Association for Applied Sport Psychology offers similar guidance. There are any number of people who may offer performance coaching, and many do so based on their life-experience or personal success as a past-performer, however, as psychologists we aspire to be ethical and competent professionals. My suggestion is to not set limits on your educational goals and do not settle for a short cut. If you have a passion for helping people overcome obstacles and achieve success, investigate which training path will ensure the highest level of competence you can attain. In so doing, you set the stage for helping others optimize their potential as well.

6. Are there specific resources for open positions in your career field, and if so what are they?

The time is ripe for becoming involved in performance psychology and I see this as a burgeoning field just now coming in to its prime. More companies, teams, and executives are wanting to know the benefits they can gain by working with a performance psychologist.

Whether it is forging your own way in a private or group practice, or working as a strategist and consultant for companies large and small, there has never been a better time to pursue a career in performance psychology consulting.