

# Promise 2025 – AG / SC Presentation Abstract

**title:**

**Mental Health in Paralympic Sport: Building a Collaborative Future**

**Presenters:**

Amanda Gatherer Mental Health Expert Panel / Psychologist, UK Sports Institute  
Susan Cockle Mental Health Lead / Psychologist, Canadian Paralympic Committee

**Abstract:**

This presentation explores the distinct mental health challenges, barriers, and needs experienced by Paralympic athletes, and offers actionable recommendations to improve awareness, inform best practices, and foster ongoing international collaboration in the Paralympic sport environment.

Drawing on their extensive experience as mental health professionals in Paralympic sport, Amanda and Susan will present key psychological and systemic factors affecting athlete mental health and well-being. As lead mental health support personnel for Team Canada and Paralympics GB across multiple Paralympic Games, they bring deep insights into the nuanced realities of classification, identity, and societal expectations. Real-life case examples will underscore the importance of para-specific education, support structures, and targeted interventions.

The session is designed to broaden perspectives, deepen understanding, and provide attendees with practical takeaways for further reflection and application. In addition to reviewing emerging research and clinical data, Amanda and Susan will propose consensus-based approaches grounded in both evidence and lived experience.

They will also outline plans for developing an International Consensus Statement on mental health provision in Paralympic sport—an initiative being developed through collaboration before, during, and after the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Raise awareness of some of the key mental health challenges and systemic barriers faced by Paralympic athletes.
- Improve understanding of the importance of para-specific mental health education and provision.
- Explore pathways for international collaboration and consensus-building in mental health support.
- Gain practical insights for implementation in clinical, coaching, and organizational contexts.