

Research Aim	Lived experiences of social support in Paralympic swimmers.		
Interview Section	Questions/Content	Prompts	Aims
Ethics Statement	<p>Firstly, I would like to thank you for participating in this interview. Just a reminder that it will be audio-recorded but all information shared will be kept strictly confidential. You are entitled to stop the interview and the recording at any point or terminate the interview altogether if you wish.</p> <p>You also have the right not to answer a question if you do not wish to. There are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in your own personal experiences, thoughts and perceptions, with the aim of today being to understand your experiences of being an elite para-athlete and your support network.</p> <p>Before we start do you have any further questions?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Can I confirm that you have read and understand the information sheet and signed the consent form?</i> • <i>Are you comfortable?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure full understanding of what is expected of the participant during this interview. • Make sure the participant is comfortable and ready to begin.
Introductory Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can you tell me a bit about yourself? 2. Can you tell me about your sporting background? 3. Can you tell me about your classification and impairment? 4. Can you tell me about your previous Paralympic Games experiences? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Age, where you come from, studying, job</i> • <i>When did you start? How you became involved? What made you start? Why do you swim? Your achievements?</i> • <i>What classification? What impairment? How does it affect you day to day? Use of any aids or prosthesis.</i> • <i>What Games have you been to? Positives/negatives. Successes?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make participant relax and feel comfortable with talking and opening up. • Build rapport. • To gain an insight into the participant's background and their sporting career.
Transition Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is your overall experience of being an elite swimmer? 2. What does your daily/weekly training schedule look like? Can you run me through it? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What does being a para-athlete mean to you?</i> • <i>What aspects of being an athlete do you enjoy?</i> • <i>Any challenges with being an elite athlete?</i> • <i>Benefits/positives/negatives</i> • <i>How many times a week do you train? For how long? Any land based training?</i> • <i>How frequently do you have competitions?</i> • <i>Do you go on any training camps?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start to guide the interview towards experiences of being a Paralympic athlete. • To get an idea of training schedule. • May prompt athlete to bring up support staff (eg. Seeing physiotherapist, psychologist,

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Who goes with you to competitions and training camps in terms of support staff?</i> • <i>What sport/performance based contact do you have outside the pool? What does it involve?</i> 	sports massage).
Social support background	<p>Many studies have demonstrated the importance of social support in maintaining and improving physical and psychological health.</p> <p>For this study we are focusing on social support in elite para swimming.</p> <p>Social support is split into functional support and structural support. There are 4 different types of functional support: emotional, esteem, informational and tangible. Structural support is concerned with your support network and who you talk to and see on a regular basis.</p> <p>These types of support can be provided by different people. They could include family, close friends, partner, teammates, support staff and coaches.</p> <p>Before each question I will define what is meant by each type of support. If you are not clear on what is meant, then please let me know.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Do you have any questions?</i> • <i>If you are unsure at any point regarding the types of support, please ask.</i> • <i>Use the social support definitions sheet provided to guide you if needed.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the participant of the background of the study • Ensure the participant knows they can ask questions if they are unsure.
Main Questions	1. To start with, earlier you mentioned X (support staff), could you tell me a bit about their role and the support they give you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How often do you see this person/use this support?</i> • <i>In what way do they support/help you? In terms of performance? In terms of wellbeing?</i> • <i>Do you feel there are any benefits to seeing this person?</i> • <i>Are there any negatives associated with seeing this person? Any negative experiences?</i> • <i>What influence, if any, do other people have on your seeking of this support?</i> • <i>Do you access different support/go to different people for support in different situations?</i> • <i>Who else supports you in achieving your performance goals?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To talk about the role and support provided by an individual that the participant mentioned earlier. • To determine the providers of support. • To determine the athlete's experiences with support. • Then move on to the next person mentioned by the athlete.
	2. Moving onto functional support, emotional support is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In what way do they provide support?</i> • <i>Can you tell me how important is this form of support to you?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To determine who provides emotional support to the

	<p>defined as ‘the ability to turn to others for comfort and security during times of stress, leading the person to feel that he or she is cared for by others’.</p> <p>Is there anyone who provides this type of support to you?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How often do you use this support?</i> • <i>Why do you use/need this support?</i> • <i>In what way does this support benefit your performance? What about wellbeing?</i> • <i>Are there situations where you access this support more? Why is this?</i> • <i>What influence, if any, do other people have on your seeking of this support?</i> • <i>Have you had any negative experiences with this form of support? Can you give an example of this?</i> • <i>Is there any way this support could be improved?</i> 	<p>participant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To determine how important emotional support is. • To determine in what way emotional support benefits performance and wellbeing. • To determine the situations and factors that influence the seeking of emotional support.
	<p>3. Esteem support is ‘the bolstering to a person’s sense of competence or self-esteem by other people. Giving an individual positive feedback on his or her skills and abilities or expressing a belief that the person is capable of coping with a stressful event’.</p> <p>Is there anyone who provides this type of support to you?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In what way do they provide support?</i> • <i>Can you tell me how important is this form of support to you?</i> • <i>How often do you use this support?</i> • <i>Why do you use/need this support?</i> • <i>In what way does this support benefit your performance? What about wellbeing?</i> • <i>Are there situations where you access this support more? Why is this?</i> • <i>What influence, if any, do other people have on your seeking of this support?</i> • <i>Have you had any negative experiences with this form of support? Can you give an example of this?</i> • <i>Is there any way this support could be improved?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To determine who provides esteem support to the participant. • To determine how important esteem support is. • To determine in what way esteem support benefits performance and wellbeing. • To determine the situations and factors that influence the seeking of esteem support.
	<p>4. Informational support is ‘providing the individual with advice or guidance concerning possible solutions to a problem’.</p> <p>Is there anyone who provides this type of support to you?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In what way do they provide support?</i> • <i>Can you tell me how important is this form of support to you?</i> • <i>How often do you use this support?</i> • <i>Why do you use/need this support?</i> • <i>In what way does this support benefit your performance? What about wellbeing?</i> • <i>Are there situations where you access this support more? Why is this?</i> • <i>What influence, if any, do other people have on your seeking of this support?</i> • <i>Have you had any negative experiences with this form of support? Can you give an example of this?</i> • <i>Is there any way this support could be improved?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To determine who provides informational support to the participant. • To determine how important informational support is. • To determine in what way informational support benefits performance and wellbeing. • To determine the situations and factors that influence the seeking of informational support.

	<p>5. Tangible support is 'concrete instrumental assistance in which a person in a stressful situation is given the necessary resources to cope with the stressful event' (eg. Financial assistance, physical help).</p> <p>Is there anyone who provides this type of support to you?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In what way do they provide support?</i> • <i>Can you tell me how important is this form of support to you?</i> • <i>How often do you use this support?</i> • <i>Why do you use/need this support?</i> • <i>In what way does this support benefit your performance? What about wellbeing?</i> • <i>Are there situations where you access this support more? Why is this?</i> • <i>What influence, if any, do other people have on your seeking of this support?</i> • <i>Have you had any negative experiences with this form of support? Can you give an example of this?</i> • <i>Is there any way this support could be improved?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To determine who provides tangible support to the participant. • To determine how important tangible support is. • To determine in what way tangible support benefits performance and wellbeing. • To determine the situations and factors that influence the seeking of tangible support.
	<p>6. Structural support is the related to your social network: the diversity of social roles and the frequency of social contact.</p> <p>Is there anyone you talk to or see on a regular basis that supports you?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>For example: family, friends, partner, teammates</i> • <i>In what way do they support you?</i> • <i>How important is this type of support to you?</i> • <i>When do you use this support? Are there times when you use this support more?</i> • <i>Why do you use this support? What effect does it have on your wellbeing? And performance?</i> • <i>What role do your teammates play?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To determine who provides structural support and the members of the social network. • To determine in what context this support is accessed. • To determine how important this support is. • To determine how this support benefits participant's performance and wellbeing.
Conclusion	<p>That's all the questions, is there anything else you would like to add about your experiences with any support staff or other members of your support network?</p> <p>The interview has now finished. Thank you for participating in this study, I really appreciate your time and input.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is there anything you would like to ask regarding the analysis of the data or the next steps of the process?</i> • <i>Ensure participant does not need signposting towards any wellbeing services, do so if necessary.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the participant is comfortable with what has been discussed.