

# Kick the Stigma

Stephanie E. Rosado

**Abstract:** Inspired by NFL player Dak Prescott’s demonstration encouraging help-seeking in sports, my art piece continues the advocacy within sport social work to “kick the stigma” of mental health and wellness.

**Keywords:** sport social work, subspecialty, athletes, mental health, art

Athletes are often thought of and encouraged to be strong, tough, and resilient. The demand to embody such traits has created a long-standing stigma for seeking help in the athletic community even as mental health concerns and suicide steadily rise (Reardon et al., 2019). Courageous athletes at all levels have spoken out in efforts to remove the stigma. In 2021, NFL player Dak Prescott wrote “Ask 4 Help” on his forearm in his demonstration and effort to help remove the stigma surrounding mental health and help-seeking in sports (Westcott, 2021). His advocacy and my affiliation with the Alliance of Social Workers in Sports (ASWIS) inspired this work.

Sport social work is the practice subfield of social work that promotes social justice and social change by focusing on the unique needs of athletes, their allies, and the communities where they live, at both the individual and environmental level, promoting human and community well-being. (Kratz & Rosado, 2022, p. 857)

Practice specialists such as sport social workers are uniquely equipped to help “kick the stigma” of mental health in sports. Thus, this piece is an artistic representation of just that and an empowering image that demonstrates the ability of athletes to do the same: Kick the stigma.



## References

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**About the Author:** Stephanie E. Rosado, PhD, MSW (she/her) is Adjunct Instructor, School of Social Work, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL ([rosados1@usf.edu](mailto:rosados1@usf.edu), [www.linkedin.com/in/stephanierosadomsw/](http://www.linkedin.com/in/stephanierosadomsw/)).