

Name: Dr. Susan Cardillo-Cunningham, LCSW

Position: Member at Large

December 8, 2025

I am Dr. Susan Cardillo-Cunningham, LCSW and am honored to be considered for the role of Member-at-Large with the Alliance of Social Workers in Sports (ASWIS). I bring nearly 30 years of experience with the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF), where I have advanced individual and community well-being through trauma-informed practice, racial justice initiatives, and interdisciplinary collaborations. My career has centered on building the types of partnerships and infrastructures that align closely with ASWIS's mission to strengthen the bridge between social work and athletics through practice, research, and policy.

In addition to my administrative leadership roles at DCF, I am the founder of Supporting Courageous Change Counseling and Consulting, where I provide clinical services rooted in evidenced-based, culturally responsive care. I also serve as an adjunct professor in the School of Social Work at both Southern Connecticut State University and University of Connecticut. Teaching master's level social work courses such as practicum seminar, crisis intervention, grief and loss and advanced practice with individual groups and families has further strengthened my commitment to preparing social workers to engage confidently and competently across diverse practice settings.

While I am new to sport social work, my clinical experience and doctoral research have deepened my investment in the growing specialty. My doctoral research examined the barriers and facilitators of help seeking behavior by college student athletes facing mental health struggles. The findings highlighted persistent stigma around help seeking and the critical role of social support networks, factors that reinforce the need for stronger integration of social work within athletic systems. Presenting this work at the ASWIS 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium solidified my desire to contribute more actively to the organization's mission.

Through my doctoral research, I have also come to learn that there is a need to expand awareness of sport social work in Connecticut. I would like to be part of the efforts to create and integrate programming for athletes across the state. With my background in systems leadership, clinical practice, training, and research, I hope to help emphasize the sport social work specialty and strengthen regional and national partnerships that align ASWIS' vision of integrating social work into all realms of sport.

Serving as a Member-at-Large would give me the chance to bring more visibility and resources back to Connecticut. Being part of the ASWIS Board would help me build stronger partnerships with local universities, athletic programs, and community organizations so that sport social work can grow here in a meaningful way. I would love the opportunity to bring my experience and enthusiasm to support the mission and vision of ASWIS in every way I can.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan Cunningham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Susan" and last name "Cunningham" clearly legible.