

SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY

FOR GOOD TO GREAT STUDENTS



RATIONALE

This booklet contains the sport psychology programme that will run over the course of the next school year. Within it you can find the different topics that will be covered with explanations as to what they are as well as tasks and strategies that will help to develop them. The aim for this support is to help you to understand and use psychological skills and strategies that can aid and enhance performance.

As part of the programme there will be two workshops bookending each half term meaning that you will have a workshop at the beginning of each term, before half term, after half term and at the end of term. Between these workshops there will be tasks or exercises to be undertaken expanding on the topics and strategies covered. You will be directed as to which tasks you are to do after each workshop.

By the end of this year the workshops and this booklet should help to provide a well-rounded understanding of the psychological skills and strategies you have at your disposal. Once fully filled out this booklet will have provided tips and exercises to establish these aspects and help you to implement them into your sporting performance.

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LEADERSHIP

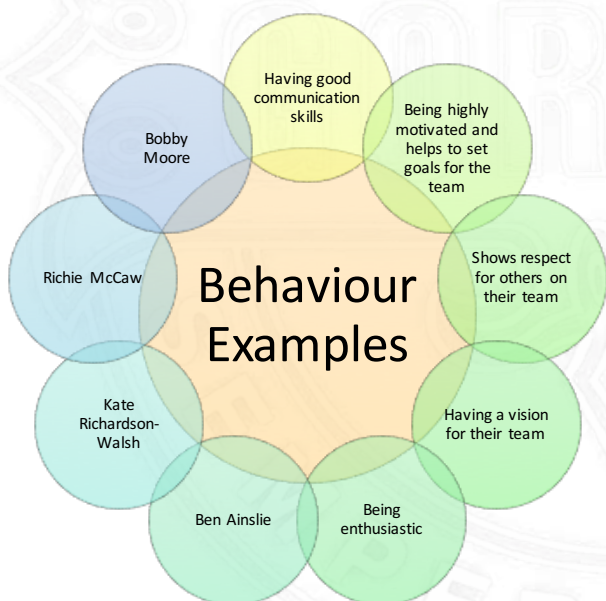
What is Leadership?

Every team needs leadership. In difficult times players are left searching out the leaders in their teams. Leadership may be considered as a behavioural process that influences individuals and groups towards set goals and visions for the future. As such, a leader has the role of ensuring player satisfaction while steering them to success. All sports have leaders influence those around them and improve performance.

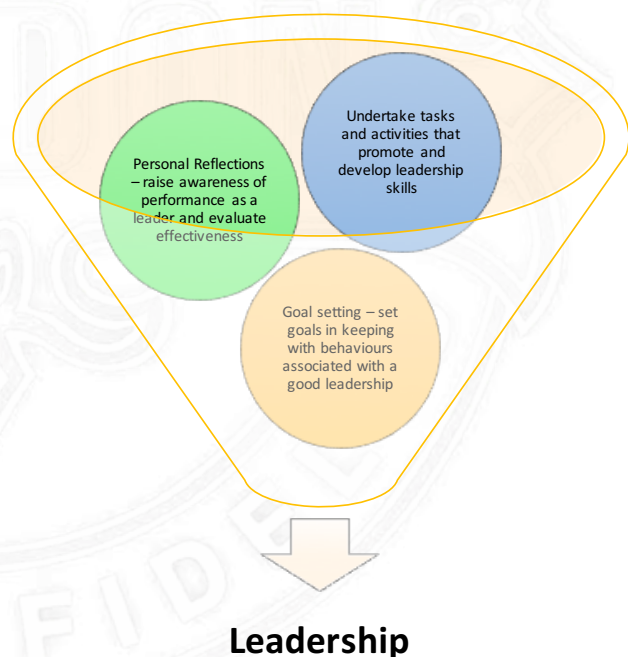
Why is it important?

- Leaders set the example that team members are likely to follow, bad behaviour will be copied.
- Leaders guide the team morale, it is there responsibility to help keep players in a winning mindset.
- Good leaders can keep team morale high.
- They help other athletes to reach their full potential.

Behaviour Examples



How to improve Leadership: Psychological Techniques



QUALITIES OF A GOOD LEADER

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

FIND THE POSITIVES

**LET YOUR ACTIONS
SPEAK FOR YOU**

**HAVE A VISION OF THE
TAKE AT HAND**

**BE A ROLE
MODEL**

**SUPPORT
YOUR TEAM**

RESPECT EVERYONE

BE ENTHUSIASTIC

**BE A GOOD
COMMUNICATOR**

**HELP
MOTIVATE OTHERS**

**WORK WITH
EVERYONE TO FIND
SOLUTIONS**

**BE AWARE OF
INDIVIDUAL
DIFFERENCES**

BE MOTIVATED

INSPIRE OTHERS



GROWTH MINDSET

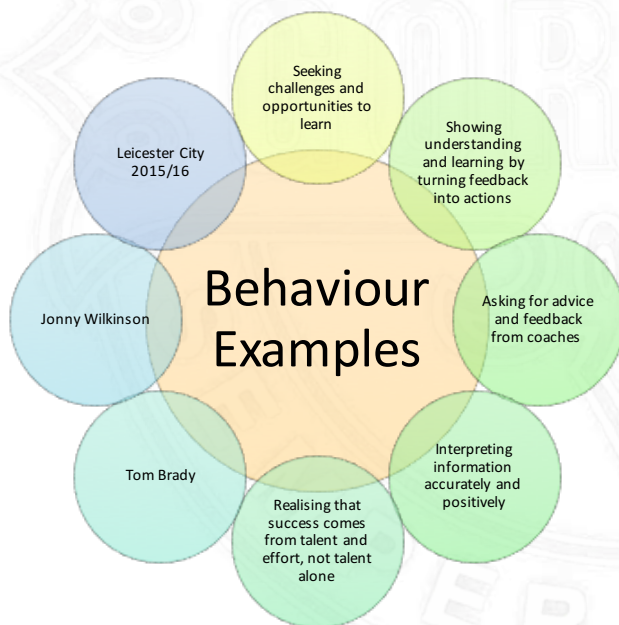
What is a Growth Mindset?

A positive mental attitude towards personal development, both mental and physical. It results in openminded, hardworking athletes with the belief that abilities and outcomes are influenced by hard work. They focus on skill development, effort and challenges to offer opportunities to test and improve themselves.

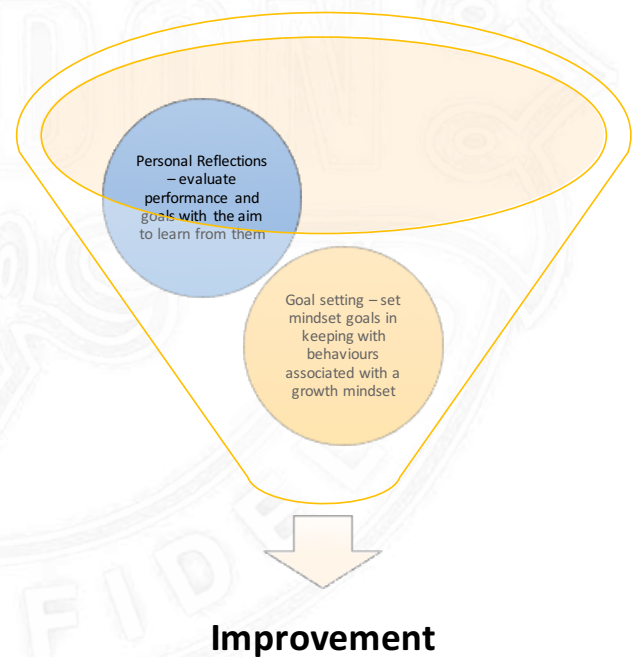
Why is it important?

- Helps you to learn effectively from situations and experiences
- Develops an underpinning positive attitude to the performance development process
- Helps athletes to reach their full potential
- Understand the importance of mistakes for learning
- Encourages the need for persistence, effort and hard work to achieve

Behaviour Examples



How to improve Growth Mindset: Psychological Techniques



THE GROWTH MINDSET



01 Give yourself time to
— overcome the setback



02 Acceptance of the
— setback



03 Regain control of the
— situation



04 Reflect on what has
— happened



05 Identify areas for
— improvement



06 Learn from your
— mistakes



07 Set goals and develop
— a plan to meet those
goals



08 Be constructive
—



09 Challenge negative
— thinking



10 Express emotions and
— talk to someone

GROWTH MINDSET: REFLECTION (WEEK 1)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Reflection of: TRAINING/MATCH/COMPETITION/TOURNAMENT/OTHER _____

Describe the event:

Large green rectangular area for describing the event.

What were your thoughts and feelings?

Before	During	After

What are your positives and areas for improvement?

Positives	Negatives

MOTIVATION

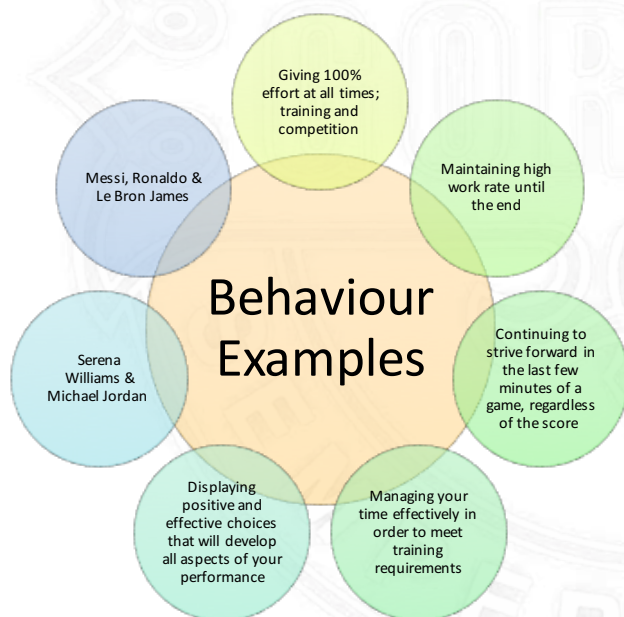
What is Motivation?

The inner drive and determination to be the best you can be. It initiates, sustains or guides an athlete's behaviour and the choices they make, effort they put in, and how persistent they are. Athletes can be intrinsically motivated to improve and grow and extrinsically motivated towards earning external rewards or focusing on outcomes of events.

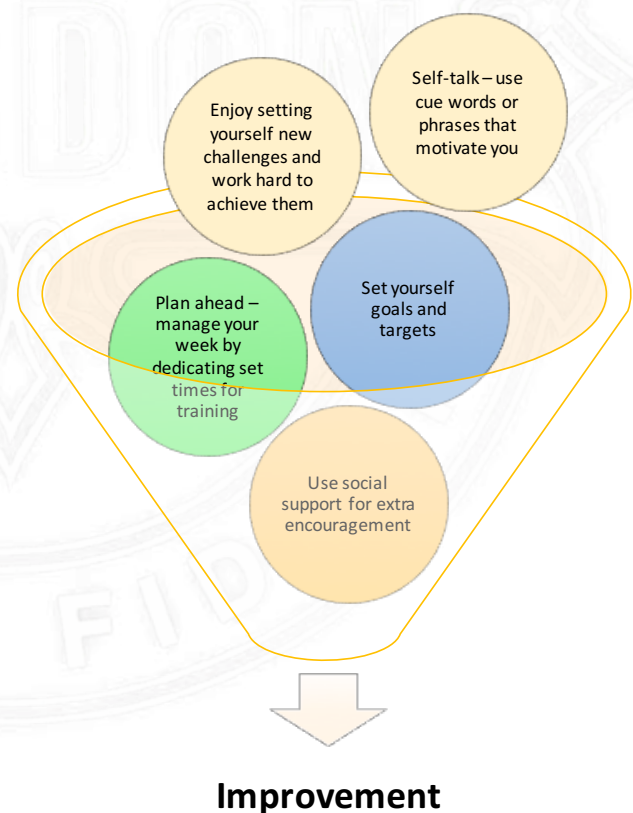
Why is it important?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">It ensures you give maximal effort to achieve your best performances | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Encourages you to be driven to continually improve yourself |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">It's what drives you forwards and enables you to keep going, even when faced with setbacks | <ul style="list-style-type: none">It helps you to make choices that will benefit your development and performance |

Behaviour Examples



How to improve Motivation: Psychological Techniques



TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE GOAL SETTING



01. THINK ABOUT THE TYPES OF GOALS YOU ARE SETTING

Use process and performance goals to help you to focus on the tasks and aspects that are needed to reach your outcome goals.



02. WRITE THEM DOWN

Having your goals written down strengthens your intentions and means you're more likely to succeed



03. MAKE THEM SMART

*S – specific
M – measurable
A – attainable
R – relevant
T – time-bound*



04. CHALLENGE YOURSELF

Difficult goals produce higher performance as long as it does not exceed what you are capable of doing



05. MIX LONG AND SHORT TERM GOALS

Shorter term goals can help keep you motivated and working towards your longer term goals



06. MAKE GOALS POSITIVE NOT NEGATIVE

Set goals in positive terms by focusing on actions and behaviours that should be presented rather than those that should be absent



07. TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

Track your measurable objectives and evaluate your process



08. KEEP YOUR GOALS FLEXIBLE

Goals need to be flexible to allow for creativity to occur and for unforeseen circumstances that could hinder or help progress



09. REWARD YOURSELF

Rewarding yourself will help to reinforce the positive actions you've taken so you can continue doing it

MOTIVATION: GOAL SETTING TASK

Task:

1. Set goals for the next year (long term and short term)
 2. Use process and performance goals to help reach your outcome goal
 3. Try to set tactical, technical, physical and psychological goals
 4. Use the SMART principles to ensure you set effective goals
 5. Create a method for tracking the progress of your goals
-

Reminder of Goals Types:

Process:

Focus primarily on the 'quality' of the skill, technique, strategy, behaviour, etc.

Examples:

- To improve your personal best or win you may need to improve your stride length
- Enhancing your knowledge about your training programme
- Using a pre-event routine before each run

Performance:

Focused on achieving a certain standard of performance or an objective measure.

Examples:

- Running a specific time for a specific distance
- To be on your opponent within two seconds of them having the ball
- To get 80% of my first serves in

Process:

Focused on the end outcome.

Examples:


- To finish top 10 in a race
 - Winning a gold medal at an event
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MOTIVATION: TECHNICAL GOALS

Set Date:

Review Date:

Outcome Goal



Performance



Measurement

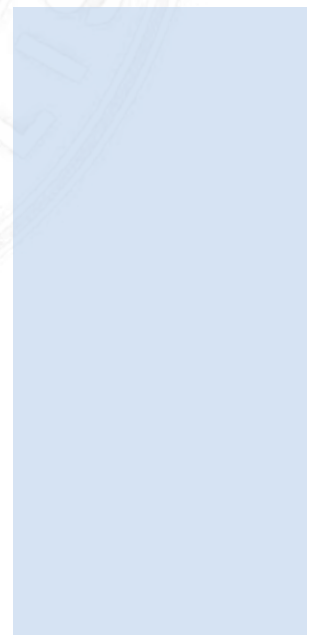


Measurement



Measurement

Process Goal



SELF-CONFIDENCE

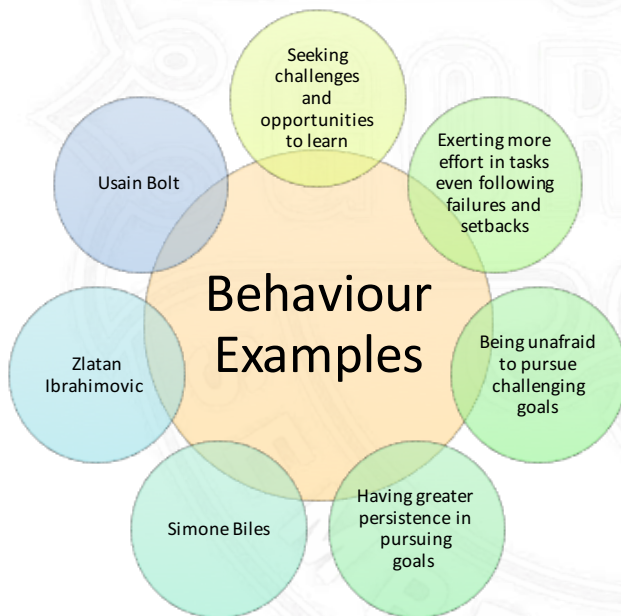
What is Self-Confidence?

The belief an individual has about their ability to produce given levels of performance, execute a task successfully or obtain a certain outcome in sport. Self-confidence is a key differentiating psychological factor between successful and unsuccessful performance in a variety of sporting settings.

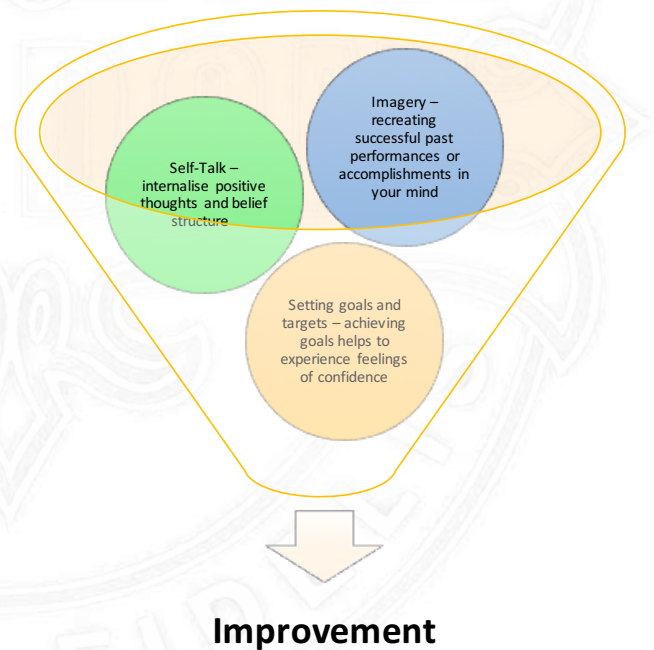
Why is it important?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Having confidence has positive effects on performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourages the need for persistence and effort to achieve tasks which is key for overcoming failures and improving performance |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It's a basic building block for performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-confidence affects the decisions that are made by individuals |

Behaviour Examples



How to improve Self-Confidence: Psychological Techniques



BUILDING YOUR CONFIDENCE



REMINDE YOURSELF OF
YOUR STRENGTHS AND
ACHIEVEMENTS



UNDERSTAND WHAT FUELS
YOUR CONFIDENCE TO HELP
BUILD IT REGULARLY



INVEST TIME AND ENERGY
INTO BUILDING YOUR
CONFIDENCE



BELIEVE IN YOUR ABILITIES
AND TAKE PRIDE IN WHAT
YOU DO



REFLECT REGULARLY TO
HELP LEARN FROM YOUR
MISTAKES



EACH DAY WRITE DOWN 3
POSITIVE THINGS YOU HAVE
ACHIEVED



FOCUS ON YOUR
IMPROVEMENTS



CREATE REALISTIC GOALS
TO HELP DRIVE YOUR
TRAINING



DEMONSTRATE POSITIVE
BODY LANGUAGE



CHALLENGE AND MANAGE
YOUR NEGATIVE AND
UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS



BUILD A STRONG
SUPPORT NETWORK TO
HELP YOU



STOP COMPARING
YOURSELF TO OTHERS

SELF-CONFIDENCE IMAGERY TASK

Tips to Best Learn and Use Imagery

Be calm and relaxed: imagery is most effective when the mind is calm and the body relaxed. If your body feels tense, take a few minutes to relax and get yourself focused.

An internal or external perspective can be used: an internal perspective suggests you see your image as you would through your own eyes. An external perspective of imagery is similar to if you were watching yourself on TV. Both perspectives are important and useful when practicing imagery skills. Practice using both types of perspective.

Use all the senses: athletes can often only use their visual sense when visualising and seeing themselves perform. Sounds, thoughts and feelings are equally as important as they are all part of the athletic experience. Paying attention to the detail of these sensations related to your sport can help make imagery more vivid. Make a conscious effort to experience imagery with all the senses.

Control the mental images: being able to control images - making sure you see and feel yourself perform as you want to perform - is another vital piece of successful imagery.

Use movement: make images more vivid by including movement. This can help to create a body experience to match what is being imagined, strengthening the images itself.

Practice, practice, practice: remember that just like physical skills, mental imagery can only be improved through practice. Spend time every week working on imagery skills. Set aside a particular time of day to use for imagery training,

Integrate into practice: during training there are countless opportunities to use imagery to help your performance, take advantage of these opportunities. For example, image correct technique before doing a new skill.

RESILIENCE

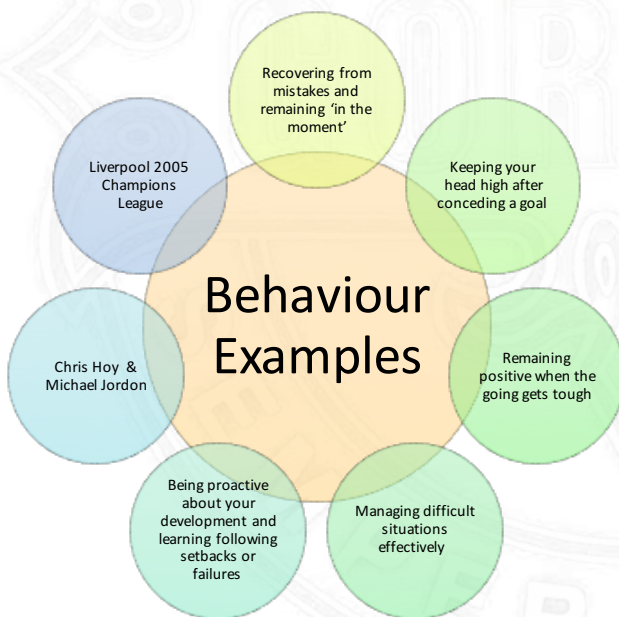
What is Resilience?

The ability to cope and adapt in the face of adversity. It involves responding positively and 'bouncing back' from challenging situations. Resilience is a process that is built up over time through situations that require overcoming adversity and the development of strategies to deal with these situations leading to becoming more resilient.

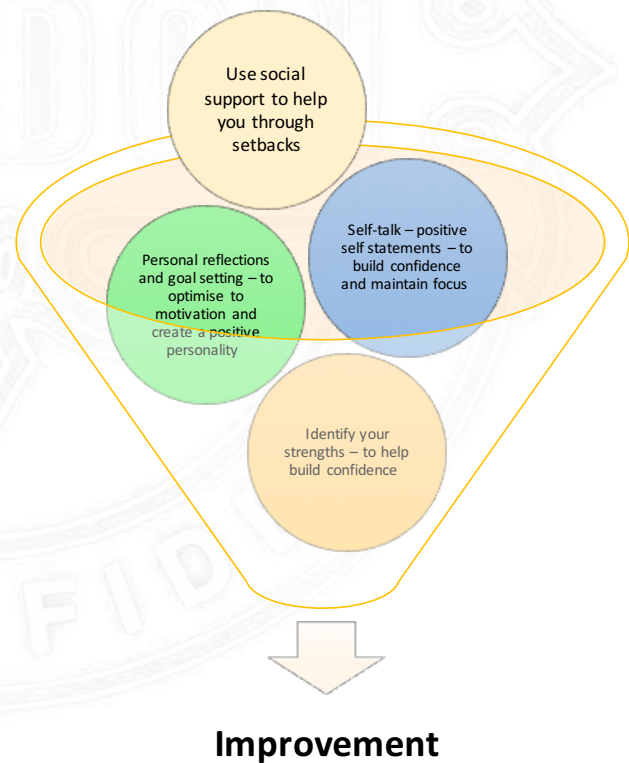
Why is it important?

- Helps you to bounce back quickly following setbacks
- Enables you to effectively manage difficult situations
- Allows you to respond positively to both individual and team setbacks
- It is the ability to grow as a result of mistakes or failures
- Helps you maintain a high level of confidence under pressure

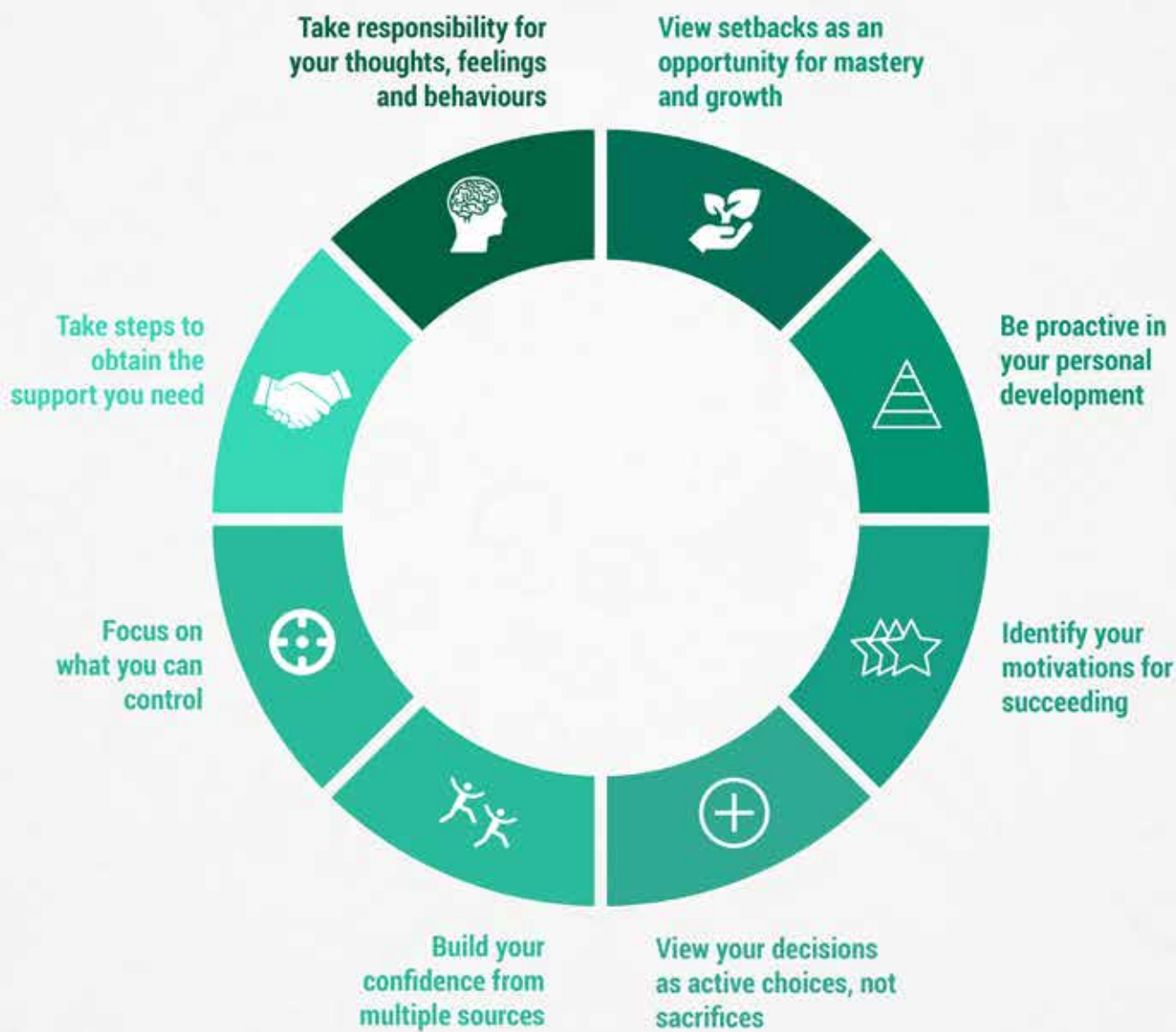
Behaviour Examples



How to improve Resilience: Psychological Techniques



BEING RESILIENT



RESILIENCE TASK

The following exercise focuses on how you respond to situations providing flexible thinking that will allow you to have multiple solutions to potential problems, relieving pressure in tough times.

Start by thinking about times within your sport you may need to have a 'Plan B' or multiple solutions. Also think about times that have been particularly challenging or demanding, especially those that were draining or difficult emotionally.

From these, in the space below, brainstorm ideas of situations that may or could happen to you that you can use in the following task:



FOCUS

What is Focus?

Total concentration on what is important and the relevant cues for performance whilst blocking out distractions. This also involves being able to refocus to the relevant cues if distraction occurs therefore being focused on the present moment or the 'here and now'.

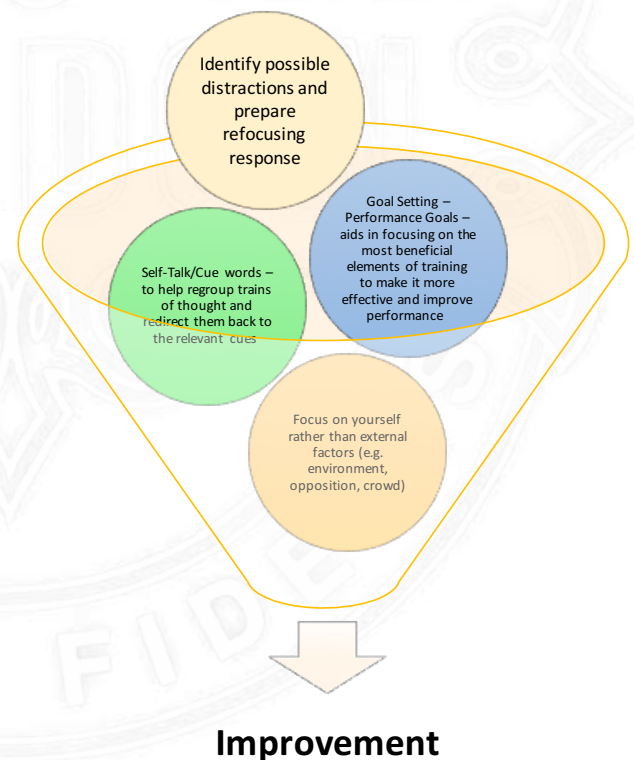
Why is it important?

- Maintaining a clear focus will enable a player to perform optimally
- Distractions can be either internal and/or external in nature and can inhibit a player's ability to perform optimally
- Players are faced with constantly changing cues, being able to focus on relevant and ignore irrelevant (distractions) is an important skill to develop

Behaviour Examples



How to improve Focus: Psychological Techniques



Controlling your thoughts

Use cue words or phrases

Simple words or phrases that remind you of your focus points. Repeating words or phrases will remind you to focus on what you need to

Know what you need to focus on

Identify what is relevant and important for your sport. The clearer you are about what you want to focus on, the more likely you'll be to stay focused on the factors that contribute to your success

Focus on what you can control

You have control over yourself and your own actions and attitudes – keep your focus there. Focus on the process and you increase the likelihood of positive results happening

Remain focused on the present

Attend to what is immediately important, block out past and future concerns that you have no control over

Stay relaxed under pressure

When stressed and anxious it becomes very difficult to focus and control your thoughts. Using strategies to remain calm keeps your focus where it needs to be

Develop effective routines

A routine channels your focus and gets you ready to compete. It helps you maintain your focus on the right things preventing many potential distractions from entering your mind

Use mental imagery

Practice seeing yourself perform exactly as you want to perform, focusing exactly as you want to. This will train your mind to focus on the right things

Stay positive and realise your objectives

Avoid negative thoughts and feelings, they are needless distractions

Be aware of what you are focusing on

Recognise and disengage from distracting and off task trains of thought. Interrupt the train of thought and refocus to the present task

Be even more vigilant when tired

It is easier to lose focus when you are tired so be vigilant in using strategies to maintain your focus

ANXIETY

What is Anxiety?

A negative reaction of a performer to stress, often leading to over arousal and characterised by feelings of nervousness and apprehension. This can also be a result of the interaction between the performer and the environment resulting in an emotional response due to the demands placed on the performer. Anxiety can differ according to the situation or the individual.

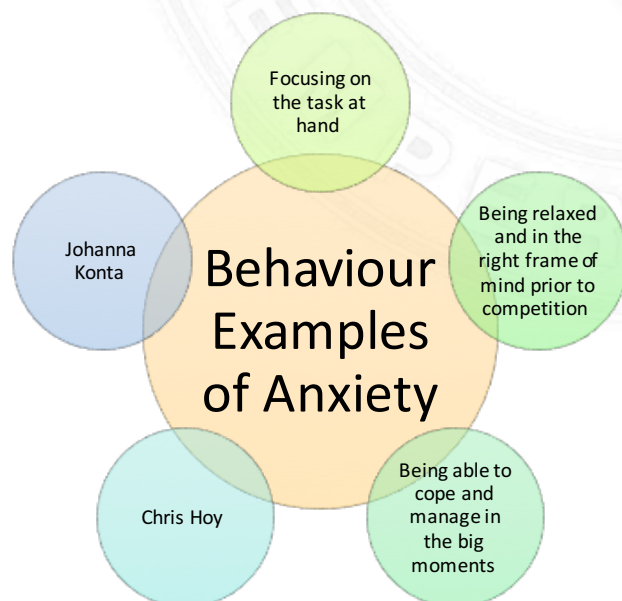
Common symptoms of Anxiety

- **Cognitive Anxiety:** Indecision, confusion, negative thoughts, poor concentration, loss of confidence, irritability.
- **Somatic Anxiety:** Increased blood pressure, sweating, adrenaline boost, need to urinate, muscle tension, loss of appetite, sleeplessness.
- **Behavioural Anxiety:** Biting fingernails, lethargic movements, fidgeting, playing safe, avoiding eye contact.

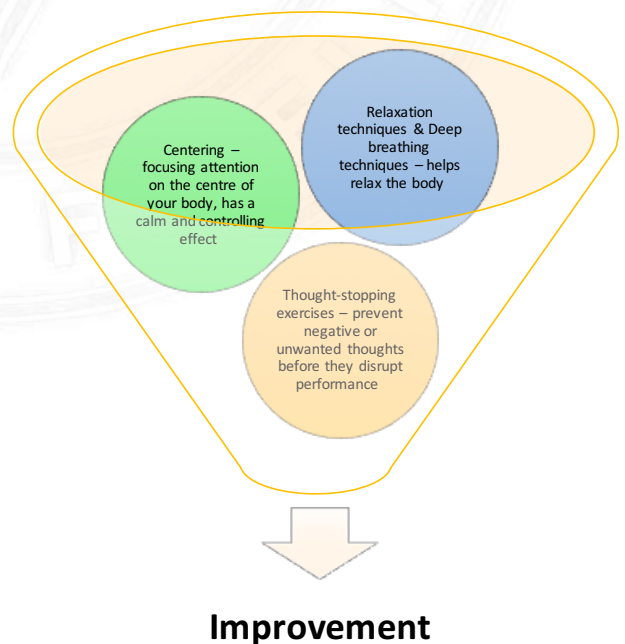
Why is it important to manage Anxiety?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An athlete suffering from symptoms of anxiety will inevitably underachieve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can promote feelings of self-doubt, directly affecting an athlete's ability to cope with the regular stresses of a competitive environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety can have physical and psychological effects which will have a negative impact on performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety can affect an athlete's ability to concentrate on the task at hand
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can affect athlete's so they no longer enjoy doing their sport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can cause freezing at big moments and inexplicable errors

Behaviour examples of managing Anxiety



How to improve Anxiety: Psychological Techniques



ANXIETY: SELF-TALK TASKS

'Stopping' Negative Self-Talk

Just like physical skills that athletes train on a daily basis, controlling self-talk is also a skill. For some athletes who have fallen into a pattern of negative, defeating or distracting self-talk, learning to gain control can be hard. This self-talk is something athletes are often no longer aware of, it seems to happen automatically. Therefore, before changing self-talk, it is necessary to take a step back and become aware of it being thought; it is necessary to identify both beneficial and harmful thoughts. Once this is accomplished, it is important to make a conscious effort to purposely include those thoughts that seem to help performance.

1). Become Aware of Self-Talk

The first step to gaining control of self-talk is by increasing awareness of what athletes tend to say to themselves, in practice, in competition, and in the situations where these thoughts typically occur.

For example, it may be that at the start of a competition when 'Kelly' feels fresh and strong, she tends to have positive, confident thoughts ("I'm going to run a really good race today"). However, towards the end of the competition, when she is fatigued, she questions her ability ("there is no way I can maintain this pace").

A good way to become more aware of self-talk is by recording thoughts in a workout logbook or a 'thought diary'. Keep a record of self-talk during different parts of training. Is your self-talk helpful or harmful?

2). Stop the Negative

Once negative self-talk is identified, the athlete needs to learn to stop it - which is easier said than done. Saying 'stop it' or visualising a big, red stop sign can be good cues to use to help halt negative thought.

3). Replace with Positive

Athletes need to identify positive self-talk in advance and replace the negative thoughts with identified positive ones.

4). Practice Thought Stopping

A final step is to practice, practice, practice stopping and replacing the unhelpful talk. With enough practice, positive and helpful self-talk becomes second nature.

PERFORMING UNDER PRESSURE

Develop a routine to follow

Routines can help ensure you are mentally and physically ready going into a match or competition



Manage your emotions

Use relaxation strategies to deal with nerves and the tensions your emotions can cause

Plan for pressure

Pressure is always going to arise in sport. Prepare and plan for what you are going to do when it happens



Stay in the present

Focusing on the moment you are in allows you to respond to what is happening

Imagine yourself performing successfully

Seeing yourself be successful can lessen nerves and boost confidence



Control the controllables

It is far more beneficial to focus your attention on things that are dictated by you than the uncontrollable factors that are not

Write down your worries

Verbalise your worries so you can recognise and plan how to deal with them, including managing unhelpful thoughts



Focus on performance, not outcome

You have more control over your performance than you do the outcome of the event

Mimic pressure conditions

Try to mimic conditions that will potentially be faced with in competitions - this helps you to get used to the pressure



Practice deep breathing

Focus on deep breathing to get into a rhythm that pulls you back into the present



ANXIETY: PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) can reduce muscle tension often associated with anxiety and stress. In Progressive Muscle Relaxation exercises you tense up particular muscles and then relax them. You can use this technique before going to bed to improve your sleep or to help you relax whilst you are awake.

Helpful tips before starting:

When you are beginning to practice PMR, keep in mind the following points:

- **Physical injuries.** If you have any injuries that may cause you muscle pain, consult your doctor/physiotherapist first.
 - **Select your surroundings.** Find a quiet place that is comfortable for you. Minimise the distractions such as TV and mobile phones. Use soft lighting.
 - **Make yourself comfortable.** Either sit in a chair that comfortably seats your body or in bed where you can lay comfortably.
-

General Procedure:

1. Once you have set aside a time (about 15 minutes) and place for relaxation. Slow your breathing down, taking five slow, deep breaths, focusing on being aware of your breathing. Notice how your abdomen rises and falls with each breath. Allow yourself to relax.
 2. When you are ready to begin, tense the muscle group described. Make sure you can feel the tension but not so much you are in pain. Keep the muscle tensed for approximately five seconds.
 3. Relax the muscles and remain in this relaxed state for approximately 15-20 seconds. You may find it useful to say something like "relax" as you relax the muscle. Then move on to the next muscle group.
 4. After completing all of the muscle groups, take some time to feel how relaxed your whole body is.
 5. If you are performing this to feel more relaxed whilst awake, start to think about your surroundings, the room you're in, time of day, perhaps what you are going to do once you have finished this exercise. When you feel ready, slowly begin to open your eyes, stretch out your body and move into a more comfortable position, either sitting or standing.
 6. If you are performing this to aid sleep, turn your focus to your calm breathing and your relaxed state.
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