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Using assessments to facilitate mental performance consulting

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OUR DISCUSSION TODAY



TOPICS AND HIGHLIGHTS

- Statistics in youth sport
- Utilizing assessments to guide applied practice
- The importance of this research as consultants

YOUTH SPORT

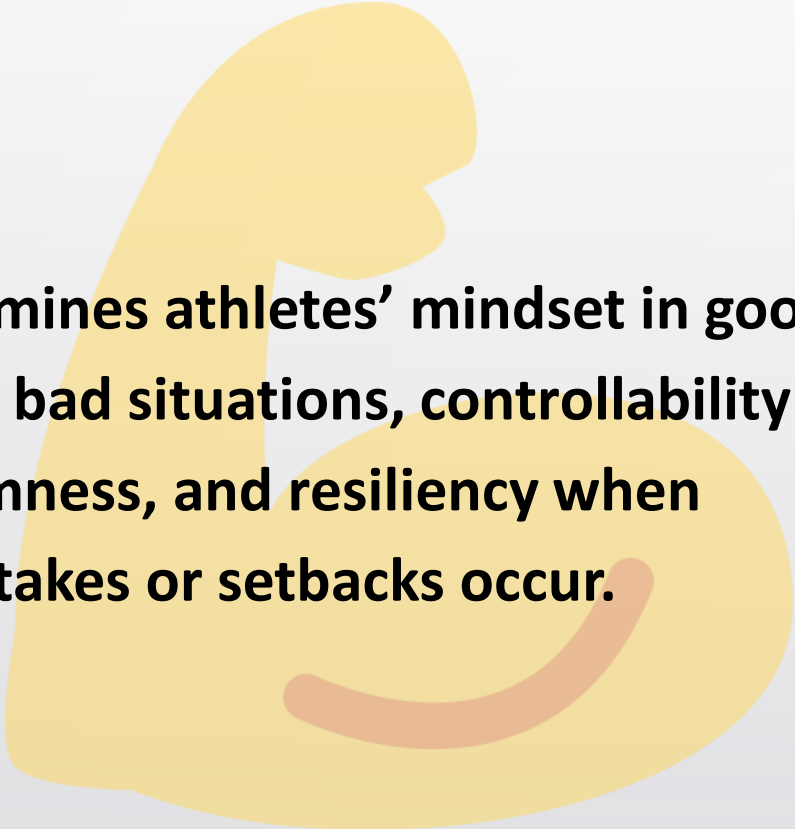
- Youth participate in sport for different reasons, such as to have fun, to learn new skills and improve those skills, to do something they are good at, and for the excitement (Weinberg et. al., 2000).
- In recent years we are seeing an increase in drop out between in the “big four” sports (Bogage, 2017).
- The reasons for this decline are often due to factors such as perceived competence, lack of enjoyment, anxiety, injury, and perceived negative dynamics (Balish, McLaren, Rainham, & Blanchard, 2014; Witt & Dangi, 2018).
- With this trend, we are beginning to use assessments to guide practice and education of mental skills in the applied setting.

ATHLETIC SKILLS COPING INVENTORY (ACSI)

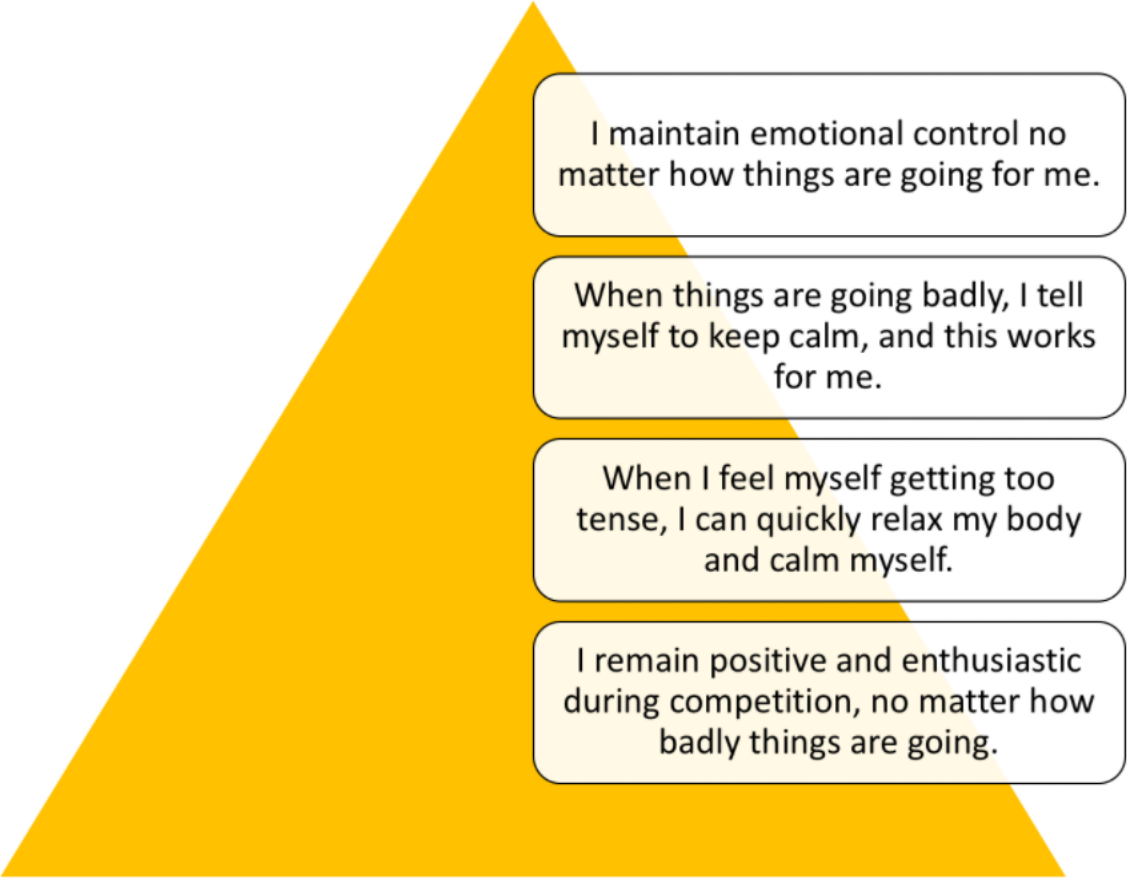
(Smith, Smoll, Schutz, & Ptacek, 1995)

- Multidimensional measure of psychological skills
- Twenty-eight items with seven subscales measured on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "Almost Never" (0) to "Often" (3)
- Sub scales include:
 - Coping with Adversity
 - Coachability
 - Concentration
 - Confidence and Achievement Motivation
 - Goal Setting and Mental Preparation
 - Peaking Under Pressure
 - Freedom From Worry

COPING WITH ADVERSITY



Examines athletes' mindset in good and bad situations, controllability and calmness, and resiliency when mistakes or setbacks occur.



I maintain emotional control no matter how things are going for me.

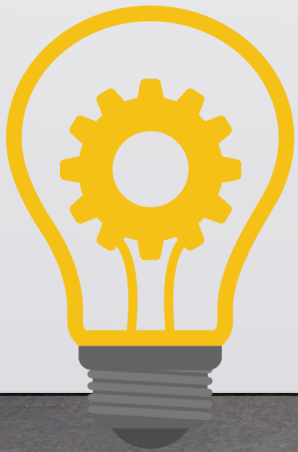
When things are going badly, I tell myself to keep calm, and this works for me.

When I feel myself getting too tense, I can quickly relax my body and calm myself.

I remain positive and enthusiastic during competition, no matter how badly things are going.

CONCENTRATION

This subscale measures athletes' attentional focus, in both training and competitions settings, and when adversity hits.



I handle unexpected situations in my sport very well.

When I am playing sports, I can focus my attention and block out distractions.

It is easy for me to keep distracting thoughts from interfering with something I am watching or listening to.

It is easy for me to direct my attention and focus on a single object or person.

Goal Setting and Mental Preparation

Determines if athletes set goals, mentally prepare, and think about accomplishing tasks well.

On a daily or weekly basis, I set very specific goals for myself that guide what I do.

I tend to do lots of planning about how to reach my goals.

I set my own performance goals for each practice.

I have my own game plan worked out in my head long before the game begins.



HOW DO WE USE THIS ASSESSMENTS TO GUIDE PRACTICE?

THEORY TO PRACTICE



Theory to Practice

- Consultants can use the data from assessments to guide future sessions to focus on skills needed by the athletes.
- Look for deficiencies and shape sessions to strengthen those skills
- Try to help athletes individualize activities to make the skills more effective for the specific individual
- Collaborate with coaches and to ensure the mental skills are being practiced in training



COPING WITH ADVERSTIY

If scores are lower in this sub scale, implement strategies/skills for enhancing mental toughness, self talk, and/or relaxation.



CONCENTRATION

If this area is deficient, using strategies/skills, such as focus cues, breathing, and/ or imagery.



GOAL SETTING AND MOTIVATION

To enhance these skills, strategies, such as performance routines, imagery, and/or tracking the progress of goals can be beneficial

IMPORTANCE

FOR ATHLETES, COACHES, AND CONSULTANTS

TO EDUCATE

- To educate coaches, parents, and athletes on the importance of mental skills on performance, injury prevention, development, and enjoyment of sport

TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION

- To keep athletes interested and engaged in sport
- To motivate athletes to continue participation
- To help coaches and parents keep a positive atmosphere for growth and enjoyment

TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE

- As consultants, assessments can help increase effectiveness
- Guide sessions in order to tailor skills to needs of team/athlete
- Adapt introduction of skills based on level and age

TO INTRODUCE SKILLS EARLY

- If youth athletes are taught mental skills at a young age, it can help them build the habits of implementing the skills naturally into sport/performance.
- Youth athletes can use the skills throughout sport and it can also move into other performance based areas (i.e. school)

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Thank you



QUESTIONS?

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