

SPP Coaching and Philosophy Statement

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Theoretical Orientation

Terry Orlick describes the journey to excellence as filled with challenges, victories, highlights, lowlights, simple joys, setbacks, personal growth, and ongoing lessons. The autonomy, competence, and relatedness level may fuel the motivation to get through these positive and maybe negative times. The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) offers a clear understanding of the roles and behaviors that weaken or strengthen the motivation of those who pursue excellence. With the help of positive psychology, with assessments that search for strengths or interventions like mindfulness and goal-setting, coaches, parents, and athletes can gain support and structure. Setting clear expectations and goals, consistent rules and guidelines, and providing informational support for engagement and rich efficacy, feedback can build a path for fulfilling needs (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The journey of performance excellence relates to SDT and PP, as to become one personal best, one has to attain the highest standards of excellence, live one's life fully and joyfully, make meaningful contributions to others, and become a positive inspiration to oneself and others. (Orlick, 2015).

SDT helps understand factors that facilitate or undermine intrinsic motivation, autonomous extrinsic motivation, and psychological wellness. The theory assumes that people are inherently prone to psychological growth and integration, thus learning, mastering, and connecting with others. However, as it may not be automatic, it requires supportive conditions to be robust (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Consequently, positive psychology offers assessments and interventions that identify capacities (strengths, interests, and resources), well-being (life satisfaction and psychological well-being), future orientation (balanced time orientation, hope), situational benefactors (time of the day, physical workspace, or social support), and values (personal beliefs and ideas) (Biswas-Diener, 2010).

The practitioner must know the dynamic between motivational needs, motivational climate, and developing a healthy identity. The practitioner must observe and help coaches, teachers, and exercise leaders as they facilitate motivation through the psychological climates they create (Weinberg & Gould, 2018). Competence can be perceived through the lens of ego orientation, comparing performance with and defeating others, or task orientation, comparing performance with personal standards and personal improvement. During the performance years, it is more challenging to maintain high perceived competence for ego-oriented than task-oriented, reducing efforts, ceasing trying, making excuses, and adopting the idea that their ability is fixed (Weinberg & Gould, 2018). The orientation an athlete grows can determine how they pursue excellence and, later on, how they may perceive whether their psychological needs are satisfied. If an athlete becomes ego-oriented and does not achieve more than others, they may undervalue their self-worth. On the other hand, if the athlete is task-oriented, they can see how much was learned and gained from the experiences.

For an individual to embark on the quest for excellence, the length and fulfillment of their journey depend on their mindset and its nurturing. As presented, the Self-Determination Theory presents insights on how an individual's path to excellence can be nurtured. Positive psychology can help target how to nurture such a path. Nevertheless, the individual's mindset has to be set with clear goals and pursuits and account for the mental skills that help the individual continue moving forward. Terry Orlick (2015) shares valuable tenets for those seeking performance excellence. At the core, to achieve performance excellence, one has to have a positive, connected focus. To do so, ongoing learning, commitment, mental readiness, positive images, confidence, and distraction control are the essential cognitive skills to work on. These tenets can also be

enhanced by employing mental skills such as mindfulness techniques and self-talk, to name a few.

For most of these theories and methodologies have worked and proven to be efficient and guiding performance excellence, it is essential to understand that every individual is different, and what works for some may not necessarily work for others. The field of Sports and Performance Psychology has a vast literature of theories and interventions that can fit any particular case. Even though this is a theoretical understanding of performance excellence and the pillars that facilitate the desired outcome, some theories may help some individuals better. An example can be the distinction between emotion-focused and solution-focused approaches. A more practical individual may enjoy a solution-focused approach in which the client describes their preferred future, finding solutions to their problem in instances of success from present and past experiences (Ratner et al., 2012). On the other hand, someone who may reflect on what their “gut” tells them may prefer an emotion-focused approach where they can learn to symbolize and label their emotions and bodily experiences in conscious awareness to reflect on them to resolve problems and develop new ways of behaving, feeling, and thinking (Watson, 2018). As Aoyagi et al. (2017) share, it is crucial to fit the theory to the client rather than the client to the theory.

Ethical Foundation of Consulting and Coaching Philosophy

A Sport and Performance Psychology practitioner must adhere to the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP). An AASP member may fulfill many roles based on their professional training and competence. For these, an AASP member must follow general principles and ethical standards. Within the general principles, competence, integrity, professional and scientific responsibility, respect for people's rights and dignity, concern for

other's welfare, and social responsibility. Furthermore, 26 tenets consider ethical standards and serve as guidelines for ethical practice (AASP, 2011). Furthermore, a practitioner is also encourage to use the American Counseling Association model, the "Practitioner's Guide to Ethical Decision Making," to untangle any dilemma presented.

When practicing, it is essential to(1) educate the client about multiple-role relationships and ethical guidelines, (2) create open lines of communication for further discussions, and (3) develop a strategy for dealing with any future problems that may occur as a result of this relationship (ACA 2014). Because of the complexity of the consulting relationship, consultants should communicate their boundaries clearly with each athlete at the start of a new consultation or the beginning of each season if the athlete is a returning client.

Interventions and Mental Skills Training

In the process of practicing sports psychology with teams and/or individuals, several factors come to play when considering which interventions or mental skill training to implement. Individual personalities, group cohesion, sports, and season time. Regardless of age or skill level, it is generally agreed that the least desirable time to begin the program is after the competitive season has started and the athlete faces a string of competitions quickly. Therefore, the best time to begin psychological skills training is during the off-season or the preseason. During this time, it is good for the athletes to practice their mental skills 15-30 minutes before their sports practice (Williams and Krane, 2021).

Even though many of the psychological skills may be useful to many, when considering interventions or mental skills training, it should be tailored to each individual as their needs may differ. Williams and Krane (2021) share a simple approach to practicing sports psychology

consulting that involves becoming educated about self-regulation, discussing the role of the sports psychology consultant, emphasizing the importance of mental training, the process of assessing psychological strengths and weaknesses, the identification of goals, and the analysis of the demands of the sport.

When incorporating Mental Skills Training, a tentative curriculum involves identifying (1) athletic identity, (2) creating performance routines, (3) introduction goal-setting, (4) self-talk, (5) mental toughness, (6) focus, concentration, and managing distractions, (7) imagery, and visualization, (8) performance states, (9) handling performance errors and setbacks. These concepts interconnect in the process of providing psychological skills for an individual. Within each component, some theories and interventions help achieve the desired outcomes.

Developmental Appropriateness For MST

Like acquiring any physical skill, or mental skills, training may be easier to develop at a beginner stage than to modify poor technique later on (Williams and Krane, 2021). One of the considerations to have is that training programs should recognize that athletes, even at the elite level, need to train, learn, or develop at the same rate. It is essential to provide sufficient time before moving on to the next stage in skill development. Spend equal time with all athletes and assist them in establishing training and competition schedules. Sometimes, special adjustments may be needed based on the athlete population. As an example, very young athletes may need fewer goals, shorter training sessions, simpler verbal instruction, and turning the exercises into games (Williams and Krane, 2021).

Diversity and Inclusion in Coaching and Performance Consultant

In a multicultural world, the sports psychology consultant profession may face barriers to cultural diversity. It is considered a barrier as when considering the empathy a consultant needs to have to build rapport in the consultant-client relationship, a cultural difference may play a bias barrier for the process. For these reasons, a consultant must develop cultural competency by becoming aware of our culture and worldview and how these can impact any session.

Cross-cultural encounters are a key dimension for competency as books, classes, and workshops do not offer the same genuine experience an encounter with an individual with a different cultural background can give. Indubitable global literacy is part of this dimension as the breadth of information extends over the major domains of human diversity (Lee, 2019).

Cross-cultural skill development and commitment to social justice are imperative to becoming cross-culturally competent and embracing advocacy to embrace diversity and humanity.

Therefore, it is essential that a counselor learns about cultural values and acculturation, the dynamics of power and privilege, microaggressions and racism, social justice, equity and inclusivity, help-seeking behaviors, spiritual beliefs, and countertransference (Lee, 2019)

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