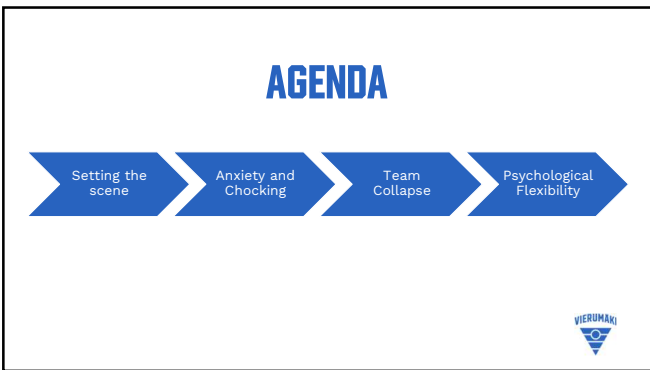




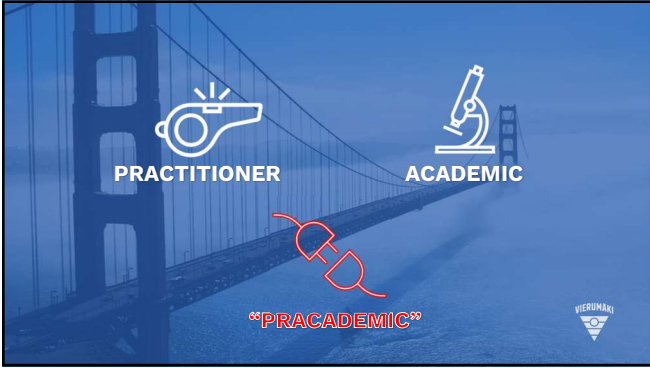
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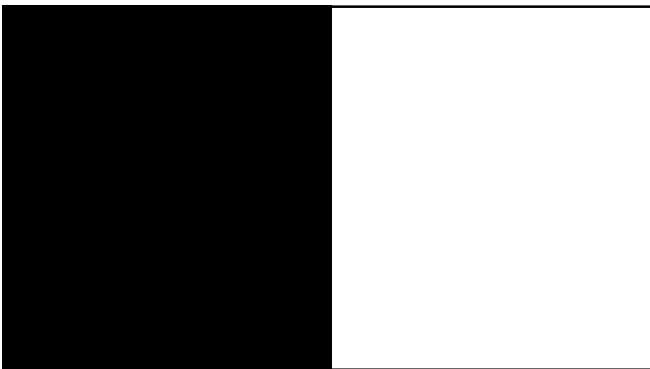
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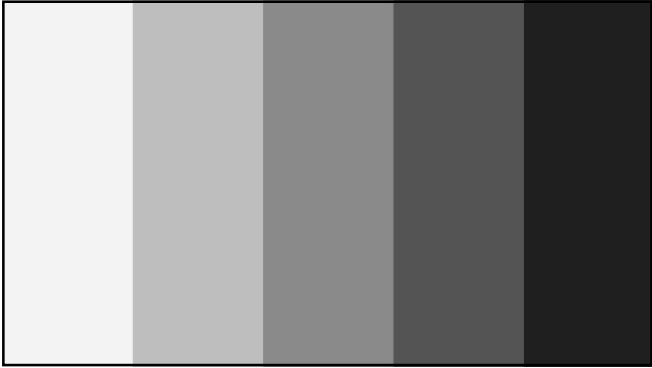
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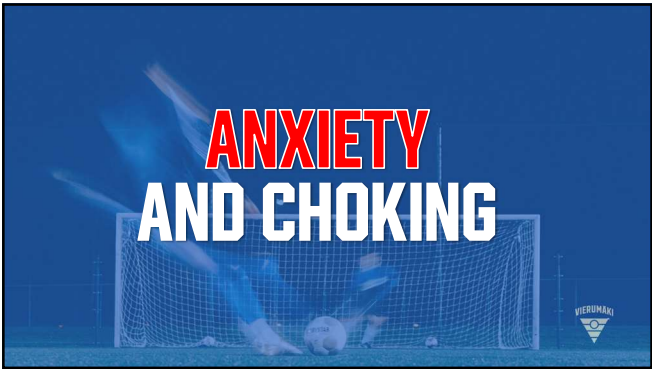
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THE RULES OF THE GAME

Anxiety = an unpleasant psychological state in reaction to perceived stress concerning the performance of a task under pressure. (Baumeister & Showers, 1986)

Choking = occurrence of sub optimal performance in pressure situations. (Hanin, 1997)

Individual Zones of Optimal Functioning Theory - Each individual has an optimal zone of arousal/anxiety where they are able to reach peak performances. (Hanin, 1997)

Gilbert, (2017)

10

DISTRACTION

Choking occurs because **attention shifts from task relevant to irrelevant cues as a result of** heightened anxiety through **internal** (i.e. worries about the score and or its consequences) or **external** (i.e. distracting fans or crowd noise) **distractions**.

SELF-FOCUS

When athletes become **excessively concerned about how the movement is performed** or worry about failing, they experience heightened self-consciousness. This increased self-focus can create anxiety and **disrupt the automaticity** of skilled performance.

ACCLIMATIZATION

As **cognitive resources** become increasingly overloaded when **athletes are not accustomed to high-pressure situations** through practice and experience, leading to diminished performance under stress.

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STRATEGIES TO THRIVE UNDER PRESSURE

- Pre-performance routines (Distraction)**
 - Highly individual
 - Should involve cognitive and physical elements – breathing, imagery, music, warm-up etc.
- Promoting automaticity of motor skills (Self-focus)**
 - Motor learning through analogies – sub-conscious processing and motor control
 - Quiet eye training – final fixation on the desired target prior to the execution of movement
 - Ad hoc distraction – focus on the words of a song, counting backwards, humor
- Exposure training (Acclimatization)**
 - Training under mild anxiety – video-taping and/or presence of audience
 - Ego relevance – Keeping score in practice
 - Habituation – avoiding the distraction by unknown stimuli

(Beckmann & Elbe, 2016; Beilock et al., 2002; Gröpel & Mesagno, 2019; Mesagno et al., 2008; Vickers, 2007)

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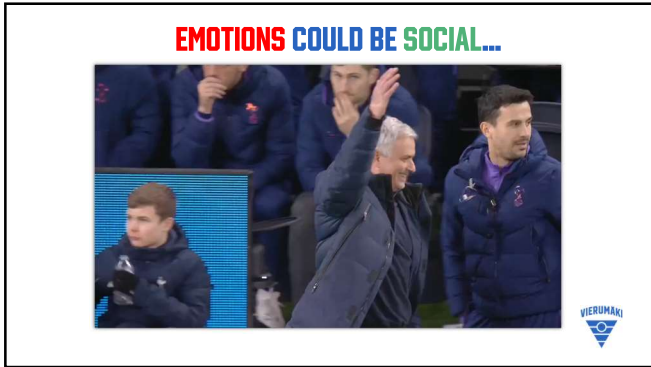
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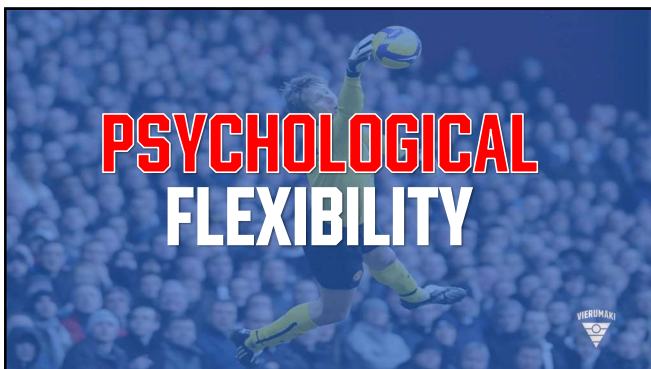
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WHAT DO WE STRIVE FOR? Psychological flexibility = the ability to contact the present moment and to change or persist in a behaviour when doing so serves valued goals.

HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE THIS? Acceptance and Commitment Therapy = acceptance and mindfulness strategies along with commitment and behavior-change strategies (Hayes et al., 2006).

HERE AND NOW

Person
Action
Context

21



A football player with **PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY** is someone who approaches training and performance by being **AWARE** of the experiences that may occur during games and practices by **DIRECTING ATTENTION** towards what's important in given situations and by **ACTING** according to **VALUES** and goals in the context of football.
(adopted from Lundgren et al., 2020)



The diagram illustrates Psychological Flexibility as a central concept within a hexagonal structure. The hexagon is labeled 'Psychological Flexibility' and is surrounded by six interconnected elements: 'Acceptance' (top-left), 'Values' (top-right), 'Committed Action' (right), 'Self-as-Context' (bottom), 'Defusion' (bottom-left), and 'Attention to the present moment' (top). The phrase 'Here and Now' is written above the hexagon. Surrounding the diagram are various icons: a cartoon character with a bomb, a target, a person running, a car, and a person with a bomb. The logo 'VIERUMAKI' is at the bottom right.

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Events that happen to us, don't bother us on their own, it is the **meaning** that we give to them, is something that makes us worry.

Relational schemas are learned and, thus, **new relational schemes can be acquired** to compliment existing ways how individual interprets the situation.
(Hayes et al., 2013)




DO WE REALLY KNOW WHO OUR ATHLETES ARE?

A **holistic** approach to personality in sports – a person across contexts.
(McAdams & Pals, 2006; Mallett & Coulter, 2016)

SPORTS TIMELINE
2019 2021 2024


GROWTH MINDSET
"Failure is an opportunity to grow"
"Challenges help me to grow"
"I can learn from my mistakes"
"I like to be challenged"

FIXED MINDSET
"Failure is the end of the matter"
"Challenges are a waste of time"
"I am a natural talent"
"I can't learn from my mistakes"

Modeling and communicating grounded self-belief and reasonable self-doubt.
(Mallett & Lara-Bercial, 2023)



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The image shows two side-by-side photographs. The left photo is a close-up of a man in a dark suit and tie, looking down. The right photo shows a football player in a red Arsenal kit with 'Fly Emirates' on the front, dribbling a yellow and blue football on a field. The 'Keyframe Sports' logo is in the bottom left corner of the left photo.

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Humans are the only species that can be in a completely safe environment, yet continuously be in state of threat as the mind wanders elsewhere.

Acceptance is not a passive tolerance - instead approaching the moment-to-moment experiences with curiosity. (Hayes, 2008, 2019)

Mental Skills Toolbox

Self-Talk
KUN AIKA ON...

CONCIOUS BREATHING
Inhale - Exhale - Go!

Beckmann & Elter (2008); Nofel et al. (2019)

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Values are showing the direction, not the destination, and should be targeting "approach" rather than avoidance mindset -> "Being a loving parent" - continues and ongoing. ACT encourages larger and larger patters of desired behaviour that is linked to the desired values. (Hayes, 2019)

OUTCOME GOALS

- Desired end result
- Long-term orientation
- E.g. Top 5 in next tournament

PERFORMANCE GOALS

- Particular standard skills achieved
- More directly controllable
- E.g. improving your first serve to 21 in 19 seconds

PROCESS GOALS

- Technique or strategy
- Contingency plan
- Controlled
- E.g. maintaining your form

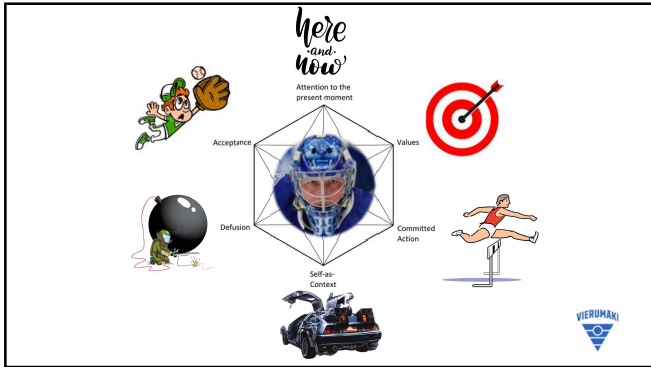
"Could you describe what's most important for you to become the best player you could be and conduct your best practices?" (Lundgren et al., 2020)

"What would be your actions that align with your values?" (Lundgren et al., 2020)

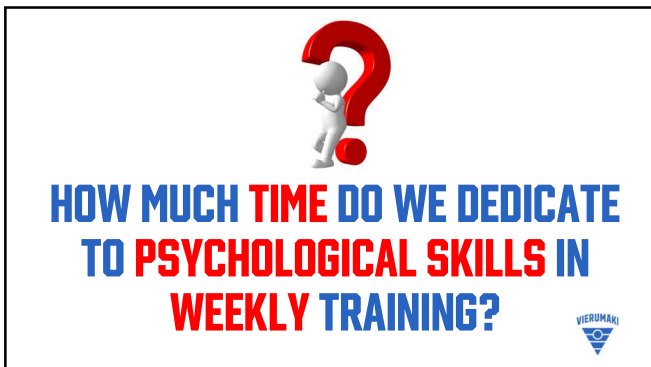
Good Better How

(Farrow et al., 2015; Otto et al., 2020; Todd, 2022)

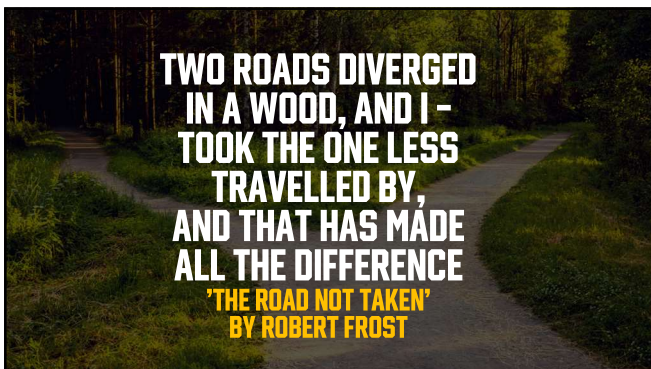
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