

# Mental skills training for hospital physicians: to maintain or improve work ability

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# Who am I?

## Education

- MSc. of Human Movement Sciences
- Completed a 2 year postmaster program to become Applied Sport Psychologist



# Currently

Sport and Performance Psychologist at Team MP (co-owner)

- Athletes and teams of variety of sports
- Business settings (insurance companies, banking, air traffic controllers, National Police)



Finishing PhD research at Coronel Institute of Occupational Health

- Developing a job-specific WHS for hospital physicians and medical residents



# Warming up



# What do they have in common?

(elite) Athletes



Air traffic controllers

Hospital  
physicians



Police & Ambulance



# Performance requirements

## Technical abilities

Passing, controlling the ball, shooting etc.



## Mental abilities

What?

## Physical abilities

Strength, agility endurance, etc.

## Tactical abilities

Positioning, decision-making etc.



# Mentally 'weak' or 'strong'

In pairs, discuss:

What behaviour would you label as mentally strong or mentally weak?

Just 2 movies to help you....



# Mental toughness

- Coping with mistakes
- Keep fighting in lost position
- Coping with pressure
- Continuing when fatigued
- Coping with humiliation by coach/tutor or colleague
- Fear of failure





# Observations in behaviour

- Tasks not performed as normal, wrong actions, actions too early or too late, no action
- Trying even harder, not normal bodily reactions
- Not normal locomotion, change of routine, not reaching normal skill level, needing more time to recover
- **Work-functioning instrument** (Boezeman, Nieuwenhuijsen & Sluiter, 2015)



# 4 Key characteristics of optimal performance (Williams et al, 2010)

## **Concentration**

Directing attention to task relevant aspects and ignoring irrelevant aspects

## **Arousal control**

Reducing tension or anxiety at pressure moments / Psyching up against 'easy' opponents

## **Motivation**

What goals do you reach for? Improving yourself or showing your talent? To excel or not to fail?

## **Self-confidence**

Do you believe that you are able to acquire the skills to reach your goals?



# Football as a high demand job

## Psychological job demands:

Pressure (public, media, coach)  
Quality of output (coping with failure or setback)  
Aggression etc....



## Psychological requirements:

Concentration  
Having a positive attitude  
Attaining optimal arousal  
Motivation  
Achieving appropriate motivation  
Arousal  
Being focused on the task  
Etc.  
Self-confidence

## Psychological health complaints:

Stress / Burnout  
Lack of pleasure  
Depression



# Police as a high demand job

## Psychological job demands:

Pressure (public, media, chief)  
Quality of output (coping with failure or setback)  
Aggression etc....

## Psychological requirements:

Concentration  
Having a positive attitude  
Attaining optimal arousal  
Motivation  
Achieving appropriate motivation  
Arousal  
Being focused on the task  
Etc.  
Self-confidence



## Psychological health complaints:

Stress / Burnout  
Lack of pleasure  
Depression



# Being a physician as a high demand job

## Psychological job demands:

Pressure (public, media, 'boss')  
Quality of output (coping with failure or setback)  
Aggression etc....



## Psychological requirements:

Concentration  
Having a positive attitude  
Attaining optimal arousal  
Motivation  
Achieving appropriate motivation  
Arousal  
Being focused on the task  
Etc.  
Self-confidence

## Psychological health complaints:

Stress / Burnout  
Lack of pleasure  
Depression



# Mental Skills

These 5 aspects can be influenced by training mental skills (Jackson et al., 2000; Williams, 2010):

- Arousal control
- Attention control
- Positive self-talk (thought control)
- Visualisation (imagery)
- Goal setting



# A small preview

Attention control

Imagery

Goal setting

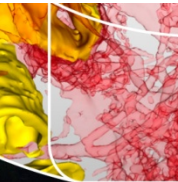
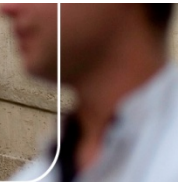
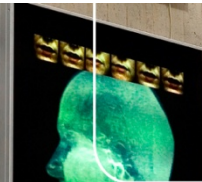
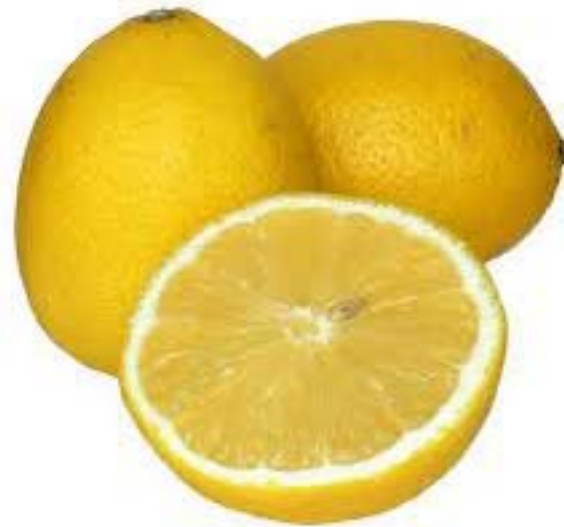


# Attention control





# Imagery



# Goal setting



# Mental skills & Work ability

Mental skills training aims to improve:

## 1. Working in optimal zone of performance

- Concentration
- Gives energy
- Improves performance (affecting quality of care and securing patient safety)
- Increases feelings of self-confidence
- Reduces feelings of stress, etc.



# Mental skills & Work ability

Mental skills training aims to improve:

1. Working in optimal zone of performance

1. Psychological resilience

High resilience associated with lower prevalence of burnout, symptoms of anxiety and depression (McGarry et al., 2013)

Following the biopsychosocial model, an occupational stressor is a stressor when it is perceived like one.



# Previous experience

2012-2016

Dutch National Police:

30.000 police officers

3 day training (theory  
and practice)

Another  
30.000 to be  
expected....



# Background

Optie: Navy Seals

Vanaf min 12:00

