

# PART-TIME COACH, FULL-TIME SPORT PSYCHOLOGIST

WORKING TO MANAGE YOUR ATHLETES ANXIETY AND EXPECTATIONS

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# ANXIETY

- TRAIT ANXIETY
- STATE ANXIETY
  - COGNITIVE STATE ANXIETY
  - SOMATIC STATE ANXIETY



# STRESS AND THE STRESS PROCESS

- STRESS OCCURS WHEN THERE IS A SUBSTANTIAL IMBALANCE BETWEEN THE PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DEMANDS PLACED ON AN INDIVIDUAL AND THAT PERSON'S RESPONSE CAPABILITY – AND UNDER CONDITION IN WHICH FAILURE TO MEET THE DEMAND HAS IMPORTANT CONSEQUENCES
- SUBSTANTIAL IMBALANCE... FAILURE.... IMPORTANT CONSEQUENCES

# STRESS AND THE STRESS PROCESS

- STRESS PROCESS
  - 1. ENVIRONMENTAL DEMAND
  - 2. PERCEPTION OF DEMAND
  - 3. STRESS RESPONSE
  - 4. BEHAVIORAL CONSEQUENCES



# CAUSES OF STRESS

- LITERALLY THOUSANDS, BUT LET'S FOCUS ON TWO
  - 1. EVENT IMPORTANCE
  - 2. UNCERTAINTY

# IS STRESS NEGATIVE?

- STRESS IS NEITHER POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE. HOW WE PERCEIVE IT MAKES IT SO.
- SINCE THE BODY DOESN'T DISCERN HOW WE PERCEIVE STRESS, THE EFFECTS OF STRESS ON THE BODY ARE THE SAME IRRESPECTIVE OF OUR PERSPECTIVE. WE CAN PHYSICALLY HANDLE A CERTAIN AMOUNT AND THEN OUR HEALTH/PERFORMANCE/ETC. DECLINES.
- DEPENDING ON THE PERCEPTION OF DEMAND: IN MOST CASES, PERFORMANCE IS IMPROVED ON WELL-LEARNED OR SIMPLE SKILLS. HOWEVER, WITH MORE COMPLEX TASKS OR UNLEARNED TASKS PERFORMANCE TENDS TO DECLINE (UNCERTAINTY OR EVEN IMPORTANCE)
- THE PERCEPTION OF DEMAND IS UNIQUE TO EACH INDIVIDUAL — THIS IS OUR CHALLENGE AS COACHES.
  - THE THEORY BEHIND THIS IS THAT THE WAY A PERSON INTERPRETS THE AROUSAL DUE TO THE DEMAND IS WHAT DETERMINES HOW THEY PERFORM THEIR TASKS.



# THE QUESTION IS:

- SO, CAN WE HELP ATHLETES LEARN TO INTERPRET THEIR AROUSAL AS PLEASANT AND EXCITEMENT INSTEAD OF UNPLEASANT ANXIETY?

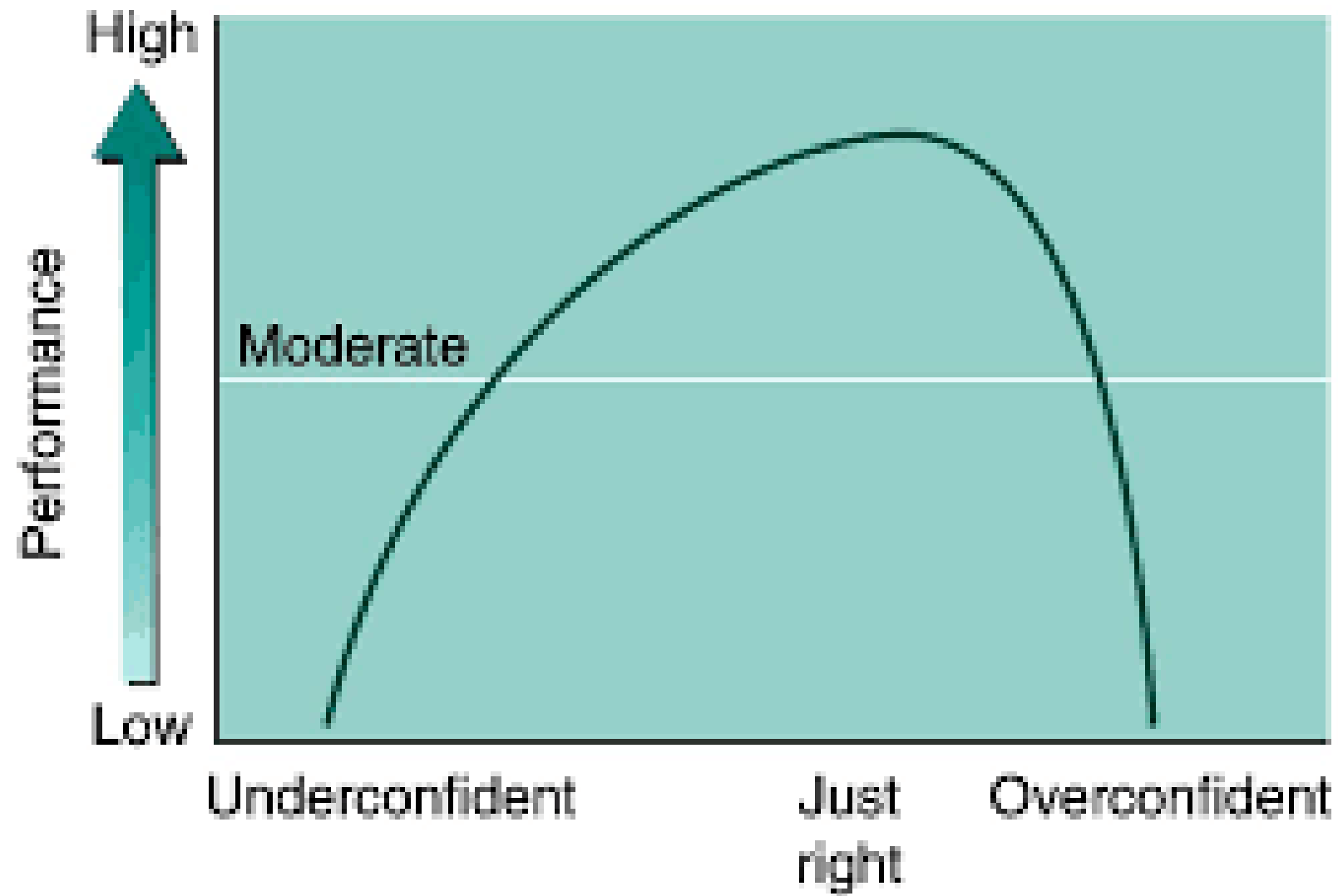
THE ANSWER IS:

- YES, BY IMPROVING SELF-CONFIDENCE AND MANAGING EXPECTATIONS



# SELF-CONFIDENCE

- THE BELIEF THAT YOU CAN SUCCESSFULLY PERFORM A DESIRED BEHAVIOR.
  - BENEFITS OF SELF-CONFIDENCE
    - 1. POSITIVE EMOTIONS
    - 2. INCREASED CONCENTRATION
    - 3. INCREASED EFFORT
    - 4. GREATER GOALS
    - 5. IMPROVED PERFORMANCE
- THERE IS A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONFIDENCE AND PERFORMANCE.





# EXPECTATIONS

- IF SELF-CONFIDENCE IS THE BELIEF THAT ONE CAN SUCCESSFULLY PERFORM A DESIRED BEHAVIOR, IT BECOMES CLEAR THAT ONE'S EXPECTATIONS PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN THE BEHAVIOR CHANGE PROCESS (HOW THEY VIEW THEIR AROUSAL)
  - SELF-EXPECTATIONS — POSITIVE CORRELATION BETWEEN PERFORMANCE & SELF-EXPECTATIONS
  - COACH'S EXPECTATIONS

# COACHES' EXPECTATIONS

- ATHLETE'S HEIGHT, WEIGHT, GENDER, SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS
- OUR EXPECTATIONS INFLUENCE THEIR BEHAVIORS (I.E. THOSE WE EXPECT MORE FROM, WE SPEND MORE TIME WITH).
  - THIS IS DEVELOPMENTALLY PROBLEMATIC
- COACHES' BEHAVIORS AFFECT ATHLETES' PERFORMANCES
- ATHLETES' PERFORMANCES CONFIRM THE COACH'S EXPECTATIONS (BUT THOSE ALSO AFFECT SELF-CONFIDENCE... WHICH ALSO CORRELATES TO PERFORMANCE)



# HOW DOES THIS PLAY OUT IN COACHING?

- REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS THAT ARE TIED TO PROCESS OVER PERFORMANCE.
- BREAK LARGER INTIMIDATING PROCESSES INTO SMALLER MANAGEABLE PIECES.
- BE PREPARED TO GIVE A WHY FOR ANY QUESTION.
- ALWAYS REDIRECT ATHLETES TO A “WIN”
- GIVE REASONS, NOT EXCUSES (WIND MAY AFFECT A PERFORMANCE, BUT IT CANNOT AFFECT EFFORT) WHEN YOU COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR ATHLETES. DON'T BE AFRAID TO BE HONEST IN THOSE REASONS.

# HOW DOES THIS PLAY OUT IN COACHING?

- OUR WILL IS LIKE A MUSCLE, IT CAN BE EXERCISED. PUT THEM IN UNCOMFORTABLE POSITIONS DURING PRACTICE. FORCE THEM TO MAKE DECISIONS TO BE SUCCESSFUL. DESIGN WORKOUTS THAT HELP WITH THIS. MUST START SMALL WITH ATHLETES... REMEMBER YOU ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR A WIN!
- WORK TO COMMUNICATE AN EXPECTATION OF IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ON YOUR TEAMS.
- GIVE THEM A BIG PICTURE. TOO OFTEN WE HOLD THE PICTURE CLOSE AND KEEP THEM IN THE DARK, WHY?