

UNIT 9

PSYCHOLOGY & SPORTS



Content

Definition & Importance of Psychology in Physical Education & Sports;

Developmental Characteristics at Different Stages of Development;

Adolescent Problems & their Management;

Team Cohesion and Sports;

Introduction to Psychological Attributes: Attention, Resilience, Mental Toughness





Learning Outcomes

At the end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Identify the role of Psychology in Physical Education and Sports
- Differentiate characteristics of growth and development at different stages.
- Explain the issues related to adolescent behavior and Team Cohesion in Sports
- Correlate the psychological concepts with the sports and athlete specific situations

Discussion

Read the newspaper clipping given below regarding the role of Sports Psychology in an athlete's performance.

In a First, Psychologist on Tour with India's Women's Hockey Team

BENGALURU: In a much-appreciated move, the Sports Authority of India has assigned a psychologist to travel with the Indian women's hockey team as they head to Spain, and for subsequent matches.

A career in sports can be incredibly stressful, and not just because there's a pressure to perform. Players often experience homesickness, loneliness, the mental effects of incapacitating injuries, and the after tremors and competitive failure, to name a few. Unaddressed, these things could wreak havoc in a player's life.

A psychologist off the pitch can certainly work on improving group dynamics and addressing individual concerns. But a psychologist who's on the pitch can, in chief coach Sjoerd Marjine's words, "analyse how the group dynamics are when we play consecutive matches and how the players react to victory and defeat." This opportunity, which had been missing previously, can now provide a better understanding of the team and what issues to work on.

Discuss in your group

- Think of a sports team from your school/state/country.
- Are they confident of winning, and often win over teams said to be stronger than them?
- Is the team repeatedly making the same mistakes/ losing constantly?
- Are athletes more at risk of mental health issues than the general public? Why/why not?
- Do all athletes have similar problems, or do they differ according to their age or gender?

Based on the news clipping and your discussion above, can you think how a sports psychologist can help improve the performance of athletes?

Present your ideas to the class.

Sportspersons often display different behaviour on the field. Let us consider the following cases.

Case 1: Luis Suarez, an International soccer player, began his career in Europe with Groningen in Holland. In the career of this Barcelona striker there have been three biting incidents on the sports field. The first occurred while he played for Ajax Amsterdam in a game against PSV Eindhoven. Suarez bit midfielder Otman Bakkal. The second incident was when Suarez bit Branislav Ivanovic while playing for Liverpool against Chelsea in 2013. The third incident was when Suarez bit Giorgio Chiellini during the World Cup in Brazil in 2014 while Uruguay played Italy.





In his book, *Crossing the Line*, Suarez attempted to justify the action by saying, “The adrenaline levels in a game can be so high; the pulse is racing and sometimes the brain doesn’t keep up. The pressure mounts and there is no release valve..... I was frustrated because we were drawing what was a very important game, and we were on a bad run. I wanted to do everything right that day, and it felt as though I was doing everything wrong. The pent-up frustration and feeling that it was my fault reached a point where I couldn’t contain it anymore.”

Case 2: MS Dhoni, popularly known as Captain Cool, has always remained composed under pressure and carried India out of delicate situations single-handedly. Whether he was chasing or defending a total in a cricket match, Dhoni, unlike others, was usually seen to be cool and unflappable, concentrating on guiding his teammates to deal with pressure. Unlike the brash aggression of some of the other players, Dhoni did not lose his cool on the field. In an interview Dhoni revealed that he, too, experienced the same emotions as the other players frustration, anger, disappointment, but he rather focused his energy into thinking what should be done. “Whatever the format may be, I get into the process of what can be done now, depending on the situation. In Test cricket, you get a slightly longer duration to chalk out your plan. In one-day cricket, you do have some time constraints and in T20s, everything happens very quickly. So the demands are very different,” Dhoni explained. “I would say I feel equally frustrated, angry and times, disappointed as well. But for me, none of these are very constructive and what is more important for me is that what needs to be done right now, that mostly matters. And once I get into that process of thinking I manage to handle my emotions in a much better way. I am like everyone else, but I tend to control my emotions better than others,” Dhoni added.

Games and sports have always occupied an important place in human life and have flourished in all cultures since times immemorial. However, even a non-trained sportsperson, who is not involved in competitive sports, needs a psychological commitment to participate in regular physical exercise. It is this involvement keeps her/him physically and mentally healthy and helps her/him pursue day-to-day tasks with confidence. This sense of well-being and enhanced confidence provides the intrinsic motivation to the individual to participate in physical activities. Sports psychology not only benefits an individual or a sportsperson but also benefits a group, a mass and the whole society.

9.1.1 DEFINITION AND CONCEPT OF PSYCHOLOGY IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS



Extension Activity

Choose any two sports of your interest and complete the table below

Names of Athletes	Name of the Sports	Region they belong to	International Competitions/ Medals won	Factors that led to their success

Knowledge of psychology helps not just athletes to achieve optimal performance but also addresses the needs, objectives and quality of action to achieve excellence and highest performance in any competition.

Let us first try and understand the meaning of the terms sport and psychology. The term Sport can be described as physical activity for the purposes of recreation, health, competition and education. The term Psychology, on the other hand, is derived from the Greek word psyche meaning soul and logos meaning study. So, psychology was considered as study of soul.

So, psychology was considered as study of soul. This concept was promoted by Greek philosophers under the branch of Philosophy as they believed that the soul was the essence of a person, and it decided how the individual behaved. It was during the late 19th century, that philosophers shifted their interest towards trying to understand how the body is influenced by what is “inside the body” - the mind, and by the events “outside the body” - the environment. They started inquiring about the link between the body and the mind. Psychology, then, came to be explained as a study of the mind.

Later, this description of psychology as ‘a study of mind’ had to be rejected due to lack of observational experiences under controlled conditions. This initiated a new pathway for psychology which is scientific in nature, and includes those behaviours which can be observed and measured. Thus, J.B.Watson explained psychology as a study of observable and overt behaviours that can be measured scientifically. The concept was further challenged after the introduction of computers, which promoted expansion of research opportunity with precision. It led to the new concept of psychology as a study of memory, reasoning, problem solving and other cognitive process. Therefore in the modern context, psychology is a science about “understanding of behaviour and cognitive processes”.





Psychology as a scientific study of behaviour and mental processes has three important aspects to be discussed.

- Firstly, it is scientific in nature; this means it has a scientific approach to acquiring knowledge involving certain key values and standards which are universally accepted and reliable.
- Secondly, it is the study of behaviours which are observable actions and reactions.
- Thirdly, it also includes study of cognitive processes, which involve different aspects of mental life, like memory, reasoning, intelligence, attention etc.

The European Federation of Sports Psychology defines sports psychology as “the study of the psychological basis, processes and effects of sport.”

Sport psychology, therefore, is an interdisciplinary science that draws on knowledge from the fields of Kinesiology (the scientific study of movement) and Psychology. It includes the study of the manner in which psychological factors affect performance and the way in which participation in sport and exercise affect psychological and physical factors. Sport psychology is used for team sports as well as individual fitness endeavours.

It was in 1925 that Coleman Griffith, often called the “Father of Sports Psychology” in North America, set up the Athletic Research Laboratory at the University of Illinois. The field of Sports Psychology became an area of proficiency that uses psychological knowledge and skills to address performance and well-being of athletes, developmental and social aspects of sports participation, and systemic issues associated with sports settings and organizations. Sports Psychology is the study of psychological factors that affect the learning and performance of motor skills. Due to its important role in the enhancement of performance in the sports field, it is necessary for us to understand the broader meaning and scope of Sports Psychology.

Do you know?

American Psychology Association in 1986 created a new division for Sports Psychology referred as Div.47. According to APA the field of sports psychology focusses on two main areas:

- a. helping athletes use psychological principles to achieve optimal mental health and to improve performance (performance enhancement).
- b. understanding how participation in sport, exercise and physical activity affects an individual’s psychological development, health and well-being throughout the lifespan.

Exercise and Sports Psychology is the scientific study of the psychological factors that are associated with participation and performance in sport, exercise, and other types of physical activity.



APA (2009)

A field of study in which the principles of psychology are applied in a sports setting.

R Cox (2007)

Sports Psychology is concerned with the psychological foundations, processes and consequences of the psychological regulation of sports related activities of one or several persons acting as the subject(s) of the activity.

Richard. H. Cox (2012)



Sports and exercise psychology is the scientific study of people and their behaviours in sports and exercise activities and the practical application of that knowledge.

Weinberg and Gould (2011)

9.1.3 APPLICATION OF PSYCHOLOGY IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS

Many strategies and procedures are used to address problems faced by athletes and other sports participants. Some of the applications of psychological concepts and theories in physical education and sports are:

Cognitive and behavioural skills training for performance enhancement

Counselling and clinical interventions

Consultation and training

1. Cognitive and behavioural skills training for performance enhancement include
 - Concentration and attention control strategies
 - Goal setting



- Imagery Training
- Cognitive-behavioural self-regulation techniques
- 2. Counselling and clinical interventions include support for managing:
 - Athletic motivation
 - Over-training and burnout
 - Eating disorders and weight management
 - Substance abuse
 - Grief, depression, loss and suicide
 - Sexual identity issues
 - Aggression and violence
 - Athletic injury and rehabilitation
 - Career transitions and identity crises.
- 3. Consultation and training include
 - Team building programmes for sports teams and organisations.
 - Sports organization consultations for behaviour economics
 - Systems interventions with parents and families involved in youth sports participation
 - Education of Physical Educators, Coaches and Trainers regarding role of interpersonal and leadership skills for talent development
 - Education of Physical Education and sports professionals towards early identification and prevention of psychological difficulties.

9.1.5 IMPORTANCE OF PSYCHOLOGY IN SPORTS AND EXERCISE

A. Benefits of Exercise and Physical Activity:

- i. **Cognitive Aspect:** The benefits of physical activity go beyond health and wellness of the body. Research suggests that physical activity positively impacts the brain and improves cognition, mood, attention, problem-solving abilities, strategic planning and academic achievement in students.
- ii. **Emotional Aspect:** Physical Activity provides positive feelings and counters negative mood state, depression and anxiety because of increased engagement in recreational, health-related and competitive activities. Sports psychology enhances physiological capacities such as strength, speed, flexibility, etc. as motivation plays a major role in the enhancement of the physical capacity of sportspersons. Acute bouts or



short duration of exercise are also beneficial, but chronic or regular exercise is required for maintaining long term benefits.

Extension Activity

Choose a sport or activity in which you regularly participate. Explain the motivational forces that have driven you when you have achieved your best.

Are the motivators you chose the same as for all your class mates? Why/ why not?

Think of times when you have been anxious and nervous when facing a challenge. What strategies did you employ to overcome your anxiety? Do you think athletes utilize similar strategies? Why/why not?

Share your ideas with the class.

- iii. **Social Interaction:** Exercise as an activity provides opportunity for people to participate in both group as well as individual exercise programmes. e.g., participating in a team event, group exercise programme or an individual activity in a social structure. Group Exercise experience is pleasurable for participants; hence it is good for mental health and social wellbeing. However, choice of individual exercise is preferable and beneficial for people low with self-esteem or for those suffering from anxiety related to body image and physical self-concept. In addition, spectators and fans at a match or sports activity also bond socially.
- iv. **Distraction Ability:** Exercise provides opportunity for distraction from the current mood state. Acute dose or short duration of exercise is helpful in reducing anxiety through the distraction ability of exercise; regular exercise has long term benefits.

B. Psychological Advantages of Sports Participation

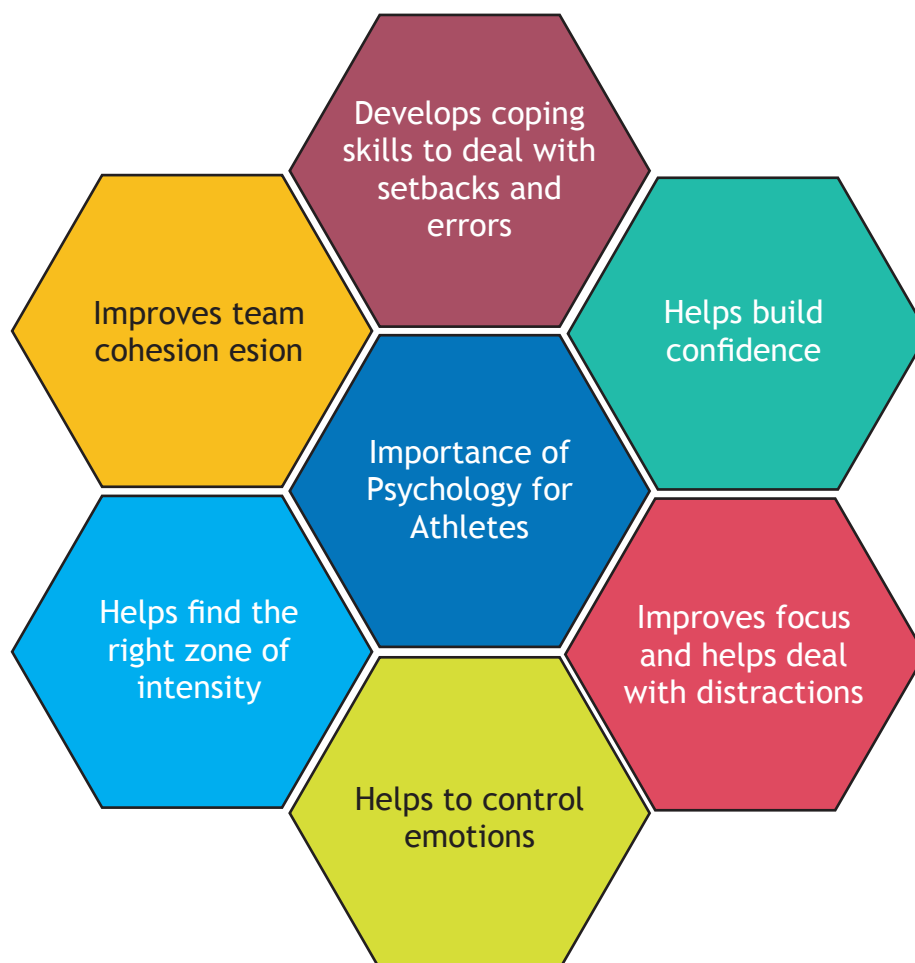
- i. **Life skills:** Sports participation and competitions help to develop sense, sensitivity and sensibility among participants which helps them to approach and tackle the issues and challenges of life with positivity.
- ii. **Developmental aspects:** Sports participation experience provides opportunity among the participants to develop social relationships including making friends and enjoying team atmosphere; it also helps in developing a spirit of healthy competition.





- iii. **Behaviour modifications:** Sports participation increases perceived competence and self-efficacy. Positive sports experience enhances intrinsic motivation
- iv. **Cognitive and Motor Skill acquisition:** Repeated training and playing sports helps in:
 - ◆ improving attention deficit disorder
 - ◆ developing memory
 - ◆ developing reasoning ability
 - ◆ developing decision making skills

C. Performance enhancement of athletes through sports psychology



D. Exercise adherence through psychological interventions

Regular exercise is an essential component for a healthier lifestyle and the concept of following a culture of exercise and physical activity throughout life is appreciated uniformly across the world. However, there may be still a large population whose exercise level must be low or some of those who have begun exercise, but may not continue for long, and many who may lose steam in



between. Psychological theories and research understand the determinants of exercise adherence and non-adherence to help participants maintain a lifelong commitment to regular exercise, and may also be used to identify potential drop outs.

I. Tick the correct option.

1. Psychology as study of behaviour was defined by
 - i. JB Watson
 - ii. Plato
 - iii. Skinner
 - iv. Pavlov
2. Who known as father of experimental psychology?
 - i. Wilhelm Wundt
 - ii. John B Watson
 - iii. Richard H Cox
 - iv. Sigmund Freud

II. Answer the following questions briefly.

1. Define psychology?
2. Define sports psychology?

III. Answer the following questions in 150-200 words.

1. In what ways could knowledge of sports psychology benefit athletes?

9.2.1 DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Growth and development are multidimensional requiring integration and coordination between the various aspects. To understand the growth and development of an individual, it is helpful to understand the four main areas of development.



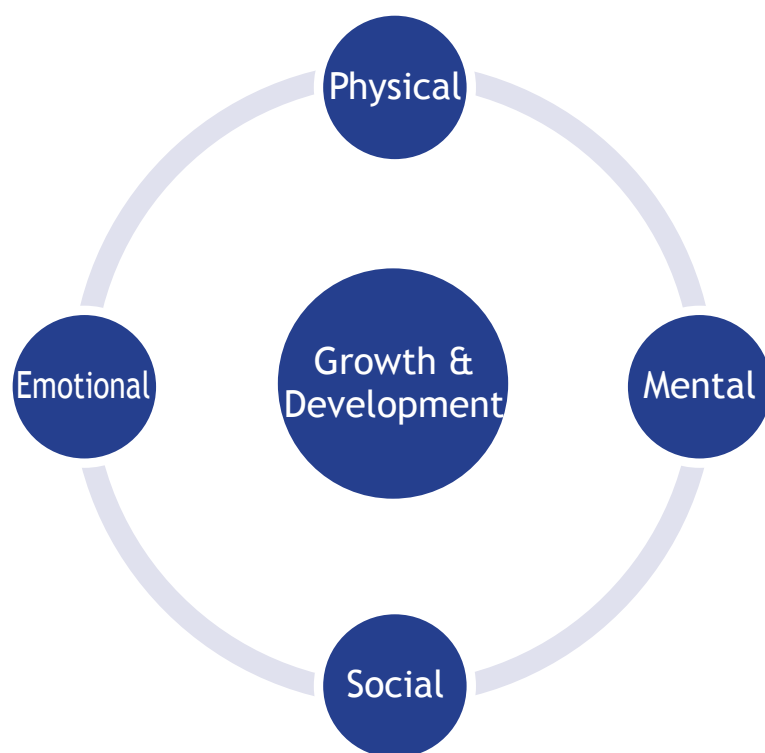


Figure-1: Schematic illustration of the interaction between the four main areas of development

S. No.	Areas of Growth and Development	Characteristics
1.	Physical	height and weight
2.	Mental	thinking and understanding
3.	Social	interacting with others
4.	Emotional	feelings and attitudes

As is illustrated in Figure 1, the overall development of an individual is influenced by a constant interaction between the four areas of development. Growth and development of an individual is the result of interaction between physical, mental, emotional as well as social aspects of development.

What is physical development? Development of physical aspects includes of the various physiological changes occurring to an individual starting from birth till death. Measurement and assessment of physical aspects of development includes factors such as height, weight, strength, flexibility and other motor abilities. Changes in body composition due to change in age influences various other aspects of development. Most of the physical developments are quantifiable and measurable in terms of size, shape and weight, therefore have standard tools to assess them.

What is cognitive development?

Cognitive, or its extended term mental development, is an essential aspect of an individual's development. It includes abilities such as memory, perception, language,



information processing, and thinking which influence decision-making abilities. According to change in biological age, these abilities keep changing along with growth and maturation. There is a general pattern of mental development, but each individual develops their mental abilities in a unique pattern which is influenced by genetic factors, social environment and experience available to an individual during different stages of growth. The important aspect about cognitive aspect is that, all the abilities are inter-related and they develop as a unit.

What is social development?

Social development refers to the aspects wherein an individual interacts with the society and which results in development in various aspects of an individual at different stages of life. Social development is also the ability to communicate effectively with the members of the society and to observe societal norms of the community according to one's age group.

What is emotional development?

Emotion refers to responses consisting of physiological reactions and expressive behaviours which may be subjective in nature. Emotional development is part of a person's personality development and it refers to the ability to express and control one's emotions. It includes control over psycho-physiological reactions of the body with respect to the conditions, environment and situations surrounding them. From childhood to old-age, individuals acquire new skills to manage feelings and emotions as it is highly affected by the environment and conditions around an individual. A wide variety of emotions are expressed by individuals at different stages of growth and display. Age and gender along with quality of emotional experiences are major factors affecting the emotional decisions an individual.

9.2.2 STAGES OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Change is the one inevitable thing in life. Change could be visible, as in physical aspects, involving weight, height gain or muscle and fat mass reduction and increase etc., or it could be related to cognitive abilities, i.e., the ability to understand, the emotional ability to respond to different stimuli, or the ability related to social aspects and the capability to choose groups and individuals, or the ability to evaluate the moral aspects and to value and respect people and happenings with rationale regarding ethical and moral principles. These changes are commonly described according to various stages of development based on different age groups. If we observe the behaviour of people living around us, we see they are not similar in their behaviour. Most of the changes or differences are because everyone is in different stages of development. The developmental stages are considered to be temporary and consist of characteristics which are dominant at a particular stage. Individuals





differ with respect to time and rate of development, but they are expected to attain these developments within their stages. Thus, these accomplishments become social expectations which are known as developmental milestones.

From the perspective of physical education and sports, these changes influence participation and performance in physical activities, exercise and sports. Therefore, a detailed understanding of the changes which occur at different age groups or different stages of growth and development is very essential and critical for optimal growth and development of an individual.

While there is no consensus in classification of different stages of growth and development, broadly speaking, the stages of human life span can be divided into:

- Infancy (birth to age 2)
- Childhood (2-11 years)
 - ◆ Early childhood (2 to 6years)
 - ◆ Middle childhood (6 to 11years)
- Adolescence (11 years to about 20 years)
- Adulthood (20 -65 years)
 - ◆ Young Adulthood (20 to 40 years)
 - ◆ Middle Adulthood (40 to 65 years)
 - ◆ Late Adulthood (65 years and above)

Stages	Developmental milestones
Infancy : 0-2 yrs	Physical: The child's body weight increases to almost triple the birth weight, and increase in height is about one-third during the first year alone. Growth of brain size is also rapid during first 18 months. Linguistics: Children start developing language ability and learn through their sense organs. They explore the world in their own ways and express their intellect by making various sounds like gurgling, cooing, etc. Social & Emotional: Expressing joy, anger, sadness is achieved by 6 months. Motor skills: The infant first controls his head and trunk, then lifts his chest, sits upright, crawls, creeps, stands with help, stands holding some objects and starts walking.



Early Childhood: 2-6yrs	Physical: The child develops athletic appearance and loses baby chubbiness. Brain and head grows rapidly during this period. Cognitive: The child develops ability to classify objects, people or events. They are imaginative, animated and create their own hypothetical world. Psycho Social: He/She is able to express his/her feelings and emotions and communicate needs and feelings with others. Linguistic: The child develops the ability to speak in complete sentences. Motor skills: The child has better control of his/her physical movement and can have better coordination of body parts.
Late Childhood (Pre-Adolescence) 6-11yrs	Physical: There is an increase in strength as body parts become stronger. Cognitive: By this age children develop concrete thinking abilities, in which they develop ability to think logically and use mental operations to solve problems. However, they still lack abstract thinking ability. Psycho Social: The child develops gender identification and social comparison to identify themselves from others. Motor skills: They have developed the ability to use body parts with appropriate speed.
Adolescence (11-20 years)	Physical: Boys and girls develop height, weight, muscles and achieve maturity but in growth is in spurts. The onset of this stage is marked by the onset of puberty. Psycho Social: At this stage boys and girls are argumentative and they have a tendency to find fault with the authority figures. They are self- conscious and influenced by their peer group. Cognitive: Boys and girls become innovative and take great interest in learning various skills. They also develop the ability of abstract thinking. Motor skills: They develop strength, speed, endurance, flexibility, coordination at a rapid rate.
Early Adulthood (20 -40 years)	By the time they reach adulthood, individuals are responsible, mature, self-supporting and well-integrated into society.





Middle Adulthood (40-65 years)	This period is characterised by strong social networking, relatively stable personality, and life is dominated by work and family.
Old Age (65 and above)	This period is marked by decline of health and faculties, and individuals often plan to retire. It is marked by inactiveness and people are prone to various physical limitations.

Developmental Characteristics and Stages of Growth and Development: A Sports Model

In sports, an athlete's growth and development at different stages of life is an essential component to be considered while planning training, selection of activity, grouping of athletes according to abilities etc.

The growth and development stages of athletes can be grouped into four categories:

- below 9 years Fun Phase
- 10-12 years Foundation Phase
- 13-15 years Formative Phase
- 16-19 years Final Phase

By identifying and understanding the main characteristics of each of these developmental stages, athletes' needs can be better taken care off.

Key Features

Fun Phase: Below 9

Elements	Physical	Motor Skill	Cognitive	Psycho-social
Characteristics	Slow but steady increase in height and weight	Learns basic motor skills	Short attention span.	Sensitive to criticism
Teaching/ Coaching Pedagogy	Add minimal physical conditioning	Plan fun-oriented activities to develop motor skills	Add variation and variety in drills	Create stress free atmosphere

Foundation Phase: 10-12 years

Elements	Physical	Motor Skill	Cognitive	Psycho-social
Characteristics	Growth spurt and changes due to puberty	Motor skill development at different rate	Increased perception and Logical	• High Self-Confidence • Tendency to self-evaluate and compare oneself with others
Teaching/ Coaching Pedagogy	Plan low intensity physical conditioning	Focus on skill refinement and development	Introduction of Small Sided Games (SSG); Allow guided discovery	Avoid winning and losing; Give positive feed backs

Formative Phase: 13-15 Years

Elements	Physical	Motor Skill	Cognitive	Psycho-social
Characteristics	Physical and hormonal changes	Increase in adaptation	Development of ability for abstract thinking	• Sensitive to peer pressure • High level of criticism • Self-centred
Teaching/ Coaching Pedagogy	Plan Training at match speed Add fitness component	• Practise in Real match situations • Add tactics and strategy	Schedule long and intense playing hours	Allow increased decision making





Final Phase : 16-19 Years

Elements	Physical	Motor Skill	Cognitive	Psycho-social
Characteristics	All round development (Automatic capacity). Specified gym drills prerequisite	Autonomic phase of skills acquisition	Abstract reasoning skills	- Emotional autonomy - Able to take positives/negatives
Teaching/ Coaching Pedagogy	Prepare for High intensity match-related drills	Develop Motor perceptual abilities; Develop tactical and actual game scenarios.	Involve and allow decision making during scheduling of training	Assign Individual roles and responsibilities

The phases may differ slightly between males and females as females tend to mature more quickly than males, thus reaching adolescence at an earlier age.

I. Tick the correct option.

1. Infancy stage is for the age group
 - i. 0-2 years
 - ii. 2-6 years
 - iii. 6-11 years
 - iv. 11-20 years
2. Change in memory and perception are indicators of
 - i. social development
 - ii. physical development
 - iii. mental development
 - iv. emotional development
3. Peer interaction and relationship reflects
 - i. group dynamics
 - ii. physical growth
 - iii. moral values
 - iv. emotional development



II. Answer the following questions briefly.

1. Define concepts of Growth and Development?
2. Explain characteristics of Growth and Development?
3. Which type of activities can be undertaken in early childhood? Why?

III. Answer the following questions in 150-200 words.

1. Discuss the developmental characteristics of early childhood and their impact on learning.

9.3.1 ADOLESCENT PROBLEMS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

Adolescence as defined by WHO includes individuals between the age group of 10-19 years, a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. It is marked by the onset of puberty, which now occurs earlier, on an average, than in the past. This age group is considered critical because it marks the developmental transition of an individual from childhood to adulthood, which involves physical, psychological, social and neuro- developmental changes.

Raman is a 14-year-old who has just entered Class 9 in his Secondary School. He has noticed that his body is going through some physical changes. As a result, he has become self-conscious about his physical appearance. He has also begun taking measures to insure more privacy at home. For example, he locks the door every time he enters the bathroom, and he always takes his phone calls in his room with his door closed. He also values his relationships with his friends and has begun spending more time with them. He has started valuing his freedom, thus gets aggressive or irritated with restrictions by family members on certain tasks. His parents understand the behaviour changes, thus creating space for him at home and listening to his thoughts and ideas. They involve him in sports and outdoor activities to channelize his energy. Raman's behaviour and physical changes are common during adolescence.

Adolescence stage is a critical time of life, when a child transforms into an independent individual, develops new relationships, enhance social skills and acquires behaviours which will be everlasting throughout life. Due to these various changes, adolescents need explicit attention and support to help them contribute positively to society.

Physical growth and development during adolescence is marked by changes in height and weight, body composition, skeletal mass, and sexual maturation. The biological changes during adolescence that occur due to the onset of puberty, mark the transition of the child into an adult. The growth spurt associated with puberty, which results in physical and hormonal changes is also marked by remarkable changes in energy levels, thus developing in the individual a strong recognition of personal identity,





moral and ethical value sets, and a feeling of self-esteem. The hormonal changes are linked to the cognitive and psycho-social changes, wherein adolescents develop stronger reasoning skills, logical and moral thinking, and become more capable of abstract thinking and making rational judgements. This stage of adolescence surely creates opportunities for significant developments because of wide chronological age range, but it also creates space for dissatisfactions too, thus creating turbulence in the adolescent which can be reflected in behavioural as well as emotional aspects. They are exposed to a variety of substance abuse like tobacco, drugs etc. They face greater risk of violence and can experience different types of emotional drainage leading to depression and suicide tendencies.

Do you know?

Adolescent health

Coming of age: adolescent health



24 September 2018 -- The world now has more young people than ever before -- of the 7.2 billion people worldwide, over 3 billion are younger than 25 years, making up 42% of the world population. Around 1.2 billion of these young people are adolescents aged between 10 and 19 years. Adolescence is a critical time of life. It is a time when people become independent individuals, forge new relationships, develop social skills and learn behaviours that will last the rest of their lives. It can also be one of the most challenging periods. "Coming of age" examines these issues facing adolescents.

Read "Coming of age"



Extension Activity

Answer the following questions:

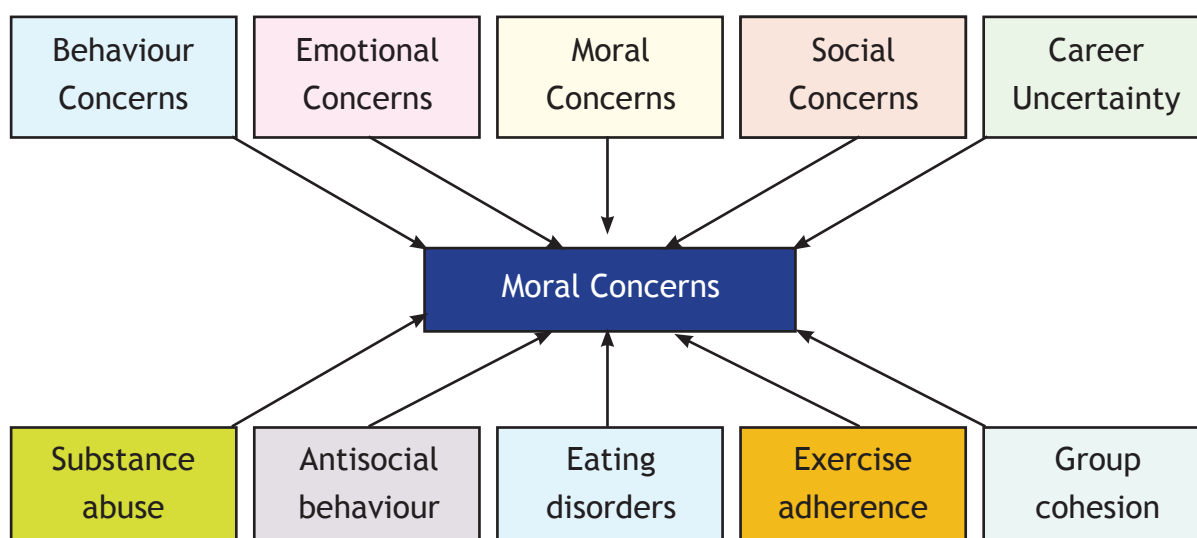
- How important is it for you to be accepted by your peers?
- What are some situations in which you have, or someone you know has, experienced peer pressure?
- Why do you think it's so difficult to withstand peer pressure?
- What would you do if one of your friends began pressuring you to do something you didn't want to do, or didn't approve?
- If someone were consistently trying to pressure you to do something you were uncomfortable with, would you consider that person a friend? Why or why not?
- Why do you think peer pressure is so often associated with negative behaviour?
- What are some ways to avoid negative peer pressure?
- Is there positive peer pressure?
- What are the ways in which friends could have a positive influence? Share your views with the class.

Early Adolescence (10-14 yrs) is the initial stage wherein a child like Raman starts adjusting to the rapid body changes and adapts to sexual changes. This stage is very suitable for cognitive development, the child develops concrete thinking, and an ability to understand the perspective other than their own. They also fall short of problem-solving skills related to behaviour modifications. They develop early moral concepts about there being just no one right view, instead there can be different opinions regarding similar concerns. At this stage, a strong peer influence is also reflected through development of relationships among peer group/ friends and admiring celebrities.

Middle adolescence (14-17 yrs) is the stage wherein puberty has passed, thus creating a consciousness in the adolescents about their physical appearance and sexual attractiveness. This stage is very critical, as it establishes emotional separation from the parents and a desire for being independent and need for space. This period is also marked by development of abstract thinking, ability to use verbal communication effectively, and development of conventional morality. With the development of conventional morals, importance of peer pressure and peer acceptance and approval increases. They start focusing on maintaining social order but will surely like to match their behaviour with their beliefs by trying the things which they consider as “undesirable”. Due to this, individuals in this age group are prone to engage in social problems including addiction to smoking, drug abuse and other health-risk behaviours.

Late adolescence (17-19 yrs) is the stage where the adolescent develops a personal sense of identity as the biological development concludes for most. Thus, he/she is now better able to cope with situations of peer group pressure, body imaging and behaviour impulses. They move on from concrete thinking to abstract thinking which prompts them to set their own moral guidelines without any need for social acceptance. This stage is also marked by increased behaviour control, consistency and stability leading to creating space for themselves within the society.

Adolescence Problems





Adolescence problems: When various problems like behaviour issues, emotional problems, moral dilemmas, social concerns along with career uncertainty combine together, they create behaviour deviations among the adolescents and raise concerns and problems among the society members at home, at school, in the sports teams etc. These behaviour deviations lead to problems such as substance abuse which have negative effects on health, developing of eating disorders leading to anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa, indulging in anti-social behaviour due to aggression and anxiety, non-adherence to outdoor activity, sports and exercise. The various types of concerns associated with adolescence at different stages are to be understood and supported by family, friends, teachers, coaches, relatives in accordance to the needs and demands of the individual. Any deviation in any of the mentioned aspects of the adolescent leads to different types of problems which need appropriate understanding and management.

The problems associated with adolescence due to behaviour deviations can be many, but a few major issues along with their management are discussed below.

1. **Substance abuse** is one of the major concerns among the adolescence. It is behaviour that is neither ethical nor socially acceptable. Drugs have addictive properties, and have lethal effects on health. Alcoholism, smoking, drugs etc attract the adolescence age group due to peer pressure and various other factors.

Management: The issues related to intervention include a combination of cognitive and behaviour techniques.

- The cognitive techniques include expression of concern for individuals by coaches and parents, setting limits on unacceptable behaviour and developing behaviour policies for class, team or group.
- The behaviour techniques include involvement of peer for transfer of accepted behaviours, engagement of individuals during free time through participation in sports, exercise, recreation or any outdoor or indoor activities for constructive modification.

2. **Eating Disorders** are the result of various psychological aspects like anxiety, depression etc. due to which the adolescent develops eating disorders like
 - (a) Anorexia nervosa which is reflected in bizarre eating patterns and habits like unusual starvation due to social or physique anxiety for weight loss.
 - (b) Bulimia Nervosa which is presented by binge eating patterns due to depression and other psychological fluctuations.

Eating disorders can be found among addicted exercisers when they stop exercising, start dieting and develop anorexia or bulimia due to depression, especially in females, who develop consciousness towards physical appearance.



Management: These issues concerned with eating disorders can be managed through two essential processes

- **Diet Awareness** is essential towards management of eating disorders. It can be done through promotion of awareness about dietary habits among the adolescents at various levels including at school, home, residential organizations and at community events involving adolescents.
- **Promotion of Fitness:** Physique and physical appearance have no substitute other than exercise and physical activity along with a healthy diet pattern. Promotion of fitness activities and participation in sports or outdoor activities need to be facilitated at all levels of community interaction opportunities.

3. **Anti-Social Behaviour** is a prominent pattern reflected among the adolescents due to the psychological turbulence happening along with sudden spurts of physical changes during adolescence when not adequately supported by the community and associated members. Issues of aggression have a larger impact on the adolescent due to change in cognitive abilities.

Management:

Catharsis: Aggression can be regulated through fulfilment or discharge of negative feelings, or catharsis. Individuals should be given an opportunity to speak and express their emotions, as suppressing of emotions and provision of opportunities for adolescents to share their thoughts along with their peer group.

Circular Effect: Aggression has a circular effect, as one act of aggression leads to another. Therefore, there is a need to break the circle so that it is not repeated again. Ideal recommended style to break the circle is through positive reinforcement.

Management:

- Break the violence cycle as soon as frustration is reflected i.e., aggressive behaviour of seniors is reflected on juniors or of one player on another.
 - Provide space for players to speak and express their opinion and the manager/coach must listen to it positively.
4. **Exercise Adherence:** With the growth in physical aspects and development in social, mental, cognitive aspects in adolescence, energy channelization is essential for cohesive development. Participation in outdoor and indoor activity along with participation in sports and exercise is essential for lifelong learning towards wellness. Dropout rate from participation of sports and exercise is a





common reflection among the adolescence. The general reasons identified for the dropouts are:

(a) Intrapersonal Constraints:

- i. Lack of fun and enjoyment or getting bored;
- ii. Low perceptions of physical competence;
- iii. Low intrinsic motivation and high stress level;
- iv. Negative feelings towards team or coach;
- v. Anxiety and nervousness due to excessive criticism.

(b) Interpersonal Constraints:

- i. Family or peer pressure;
- ii. Social priorities;
- iii. Excessive alternate opportunities;

(c) Structural Constraints:

- i. Time available for training;
- ii. Sports related injuries;
- iii. Financial feasibility;
- iv. Insufficient facilities and infrastructure;
- v. Overuse/Burnout;

Adherence Management: Support of family, teachers, coaches, trainers is essential towards helping adolescence towards exercise adherence as an essential component towards life.

Adoption	Maintenance
• Access to facility and time • Self-motivation • Social influence • Self-efficacy • Behaviour coping skills	• Knowledge about importance of healthy life style, exercise and sports • Positive attitude towards exercise and sports • Confidence to succeed in vigorous exercise Programme/sport



I. Tick the correct option.

1. Rajita regularly binges on large meals. She then makes herself vomit and follows up with two hours of exercise. Rajita is most likely suffering from which eating disorder?
 - i. Toxaemia
 - ii. Obesity
 - iii. Bulimia nervosa
 - iv. Anorexia nervosa
2. Which of the following is the age group for Early Adolescence?
 - i. 6-9 yrs
 - ii. 10-14 yrs
 - iii. 14-17 yrs
 - iv. 17-19 yrs
3. Which one of the following is NOT a problem related to adolescence
 - i. Eating Disorder
 - ii. Substance Abuse
 - iii. Anti Social Behaviour
 - iv. Lack of Language development

II. Answer the following questions briefly.

1. Define Adolescence as per WHO?
2. Explain the different stages of adolescence?
3. List some of the problems of adolescence.

III. Answer the following questions briefly.

1. Describe various adolescence problems? How can they be managed?

9.4 Team Cohesion and Sports

As a social psychological topic, team cohesion ranks as a very important factor for enhancing team performance and feelings of satisfaction among members. Let's try to understand about the terms Group and Team along with the term 'cohesion'.

Group can be defined as 'two or more persons who interact with one another such that each person influences and is influenced by each other person'. A team is more than just a group. The term 'team' can be defined as 'a small number of people





with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, common performance goals, and an approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable’.

When we refer to a ‘team’ in sport psychology we are also referring to a group of people who play together and have a powerful influence on each other. For this reason, the terms group and team are sometimes used interchangeably. Group cohesion can be defined as “a dynamic process which is reflected in the tendency for a team to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of goals and objectives”. Because a sports team is a group, definition of group cohesion can be applied equally well as a definition for team cohesion. Fundamental to the study of team cohesion is the understanding of group dynamics. Members of a team or group begin to interact with each other the moment the group is first formed. Once a group is formed, it ceases to interact with outside forces in the same manner that a collection of individuals would. The team becomes an entity in and of itself.

The word cohesion literally means sticking together. Thus, team cohesion is the sum of the forces that influence members to remain part of a group or team. A highly cohesive team is likely to be more united and committed to success than a team low in cohesion. It is often said that a team is more than just the sum of the individual players. This is because the cohesiveness of a team can be just as important as the talent of individual team members. If you are a follower of football or cricket, you might have noticed that, in certain seasons, teams composed of brilliant individual performers collectively underperform. This is probably due to the fact that the team members have somehow failed to ‘gel’ together. This is an example of lack of team cohesion.

Team Cohesion in sports: Team cohesion is a multidimensional construct that includes both Task Cohesion and Social Cohesion. In sports when team cohesion is to be developed, coaches need to differentiate between task cohesion and social cohesion. Task and Social cohesion are two independent components of team cohesion and failure to differentiate between the two can lead to failure in developing team cohesion among the teams. Task cohesion refers to the level of team members working together to attain and achieve common and identifiable team goals in a cohesive environment. Social Cohesion refers to the level of liking among the team members and amount of personal satisfaction of being together in as team members. Group orientation of each team may differ in their task and social cohesiveness, therefore its essential to understand the team cohesion in a more comprehensive way to help sports teams to remain united in the pursuit of goals and objectives.

Group Cohesion: Belonging to a peer group is a key need for an adolescent, which



can be dynamic in both structure as well as process. Group cohesiveness and its norms help to facilitate the group to achieve more than individuals would be able to on their own. The purpose of a group is towards bringing a change along with providing support and insight into either the individual, the group as a whole, or the environment. Working in groups may well encounter internal problems and conflict at certain stages, but with effecting group functioning strategies, they provide a positive and supportive environment to develop and learn new interpersonal skills. Teams are special kinds of groups, members of teams often have complementary skills and are committed to a common goal or purpose and they are mutually accountable for their activities. In teams, there is a positive synergy attained through the coordinated efforts of the members.

Group Management:

a. Goal Setting

- i. Set teams goals and take pride in their accomplishment.
- ii. Each player must be aware of their roles and make them believe it is important
- iii. Take time to learn something personal about an individual

b. Avoid formation of cliques

- i. Promote regular meetings and interactions
- ii. Positive encouragement on losing and avoiding public punishment
- iii. Avoid personal prejudice or scape goats usage
- iv. Provide equal opportunity
- v. Focus on maximum transparency
- vi. Develop team drills and activities to promote team cooperation
- vii. Highlight areas of success even during failure.

Determinants of Team Cohesion

There are various factors which decisively affects the team cohesion among sports teams. While developing team cohesion in sports among the team members, several elements have been identified that determine conditions for setting high level of team cohesion. Below are list of few determinants of team cohesion in sports, which can be classified into personal factors, teams factors, leadership factors and environmental factors.

1. Personal factors





- Satisfaction
- Similarity of experience

2. Team factors

- Prior success
- Communication
- Having team goals
- Importance of achieving goals

3. Leadership factors

- Effort to develop cohesion

4. Environmental factors

- Size of group

Benefits of Team cohesion

The consequences or benefits of high level of team cohesion in sports can be observed for team as a group outcome as well as for individual athletes. Improved team cohesion do help individual athletes to give their optimal performance and it also helps team as a group to stay unified in a cohesive environment while attaining team goals and objectives. Let's discuss the benefits of team cohesion from the perspective of group outcome as well as individual outcomes.

1. Group outcomes

- Team stability : Research reveal that when athletes reflect high level of social cohesion in sports teams, there is high possibility of their continuation in sports in future season. Therefore, social cohesion is a strong predictor of athletes intension to continue with sports team involved and improve team stability.
- Team Efficacy: Group cohesion helps teams to believe in their abilities and develop self-confidence among team members, leading to improved level of group or team efficacy. Team efficacy helps teams, and its members to believe that that can be successful.

2. Individual outcomes

- Improved Athletic Performance: Team Cohesion in sports has a strong association with improved athlete performance. When athletes as associated with common and identifiable team goals (task cohesion), their individual performance of athletes within the team is enhanced.



- **Perceived Psychological Momentum:** Sports team having high level of team cohesion and have increased task cohesion are more likely to enjoy the benefits of psychological momentum. Team cohesion helps athletes during competition and contests to develop a perception about momentum of competition to be in their favor.
- **Enhanced mood, emotion, and satisfaction:** Improved team cohesion reflect increases positive emotions and greater self-satisfaction among athletes. Athletes part of highly cohesive sports team enjoy positive mood compared to athletes associated with less cohesive teams.

I. Tick the correct option.

1. Which of the following is considered as characteristic of team cohesion?
 - i. Members seeing themselves as one rather than collection of individuals.
 - ii. Members of group having their own objectives
 - iii. Members hold hidden agenda
2. The main objective of Team Cohesion is to ?
 - i. Work independently
 - ii. Cooperate and work together to accomplish common goals
 - iii. Criticize other group.
3. Which of the term describes the level to which group members work together towards a common and identifiable objectives of a team?
 - i. Group Respect
 - ii. Task Cohesion
 - iii. Social Cohesion
 - iv. Group Respect

II. Answer the following questions briefly.

1. Define Group and its characteristics ?
2. Describe the benefits of Team Cohesion?
3. Explain the determinants of Team Cohesion?

III. Answer the following questions in 150-200 words.





1. How important is for a sports team to develop Team Cohesion.
2. Discuss a plan to develop team cohesion among team members?

9.5 Introduction to Psychological Attributes

9.5.1 Attention

The term attention and various concepts related to attention are very common in the arena of sports and athletes do consider it important for performance. Attention is about taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or train of thoughts. It implies withdrawal from some things in order to deal effectively with others. In sport, nothing can be more important than paying attention to the object at hand. On the surface, the idea of paying attention seems simple enough, but psychologists have long recognized that the attention process can be very complex. Attention in sports describes the focusing of his or her own role in relation to other teammates, set of situations, particular stimulus on the play field and its often accompanied by an increase in readiness to receive and respond to the situation involved. Inability to do so may lead to effect performance even by the athletes with highest skill sets and abilities. For athletes, state of attention may be produced initially in many ways, including as a conscious, intentional decision, as a normal function of social interaction, or as a reaction to an unexpected event. Attention can more broadly defined as the concentration of mental effort on sensory or mental events, thus attention focus on addressing to relevant environmental cues and elimination of irrelevant cues.

In sports, the theory of all-or-none phenomenon which means either you concentrate or you don't is not relevant anymore. It is interesting to understand that there are various types of attention focus and each type has specific utility for specific sports, this is referred as attention styles. The attention styles can be classified of four types which is divided as per two independent dimensions i.e. 'direction' and 'width'. Attention style as per width can be narrow attention or broad attention focus, whereas attention style as per direction refers to external and internal attention focus.

- A. **Width:** refers to athletes' tendency to take in multiple or wide range of information as opposed to focusing very narrowly on one source of information or cue while churning out other cues and information.
- (a) **Broad Attention Focus** allows athletes to perceive several occurrences simultaneously. Athletes with broad attention focus would be aware of rapidly changing situation and environment around them. For example, a batsman focusing on the pace of the ball as well as the seam and swing





of the ball, or a football player dribbling the ball focusing on ball as well being aware of the space where he is moving.

- (b) **Narrow Attention Focus** is the ability of the athlete to focus on a particular or important task when surrounded by multiple cues. For example, athlete listening only to his team-mates' instructions or focusing on to their specific task rather than getting distracted by other cues or information.

B. Direction refers to where we tend to focus our attention, and varies from internal state of own mental or physical state to external state of what is happening around the athletes.

- (a) **External Attention Focus** directs an athlete to focus outward or attend to other objects or cues other than their own self. A hockey player focusing on their own position on the field as well as attending focus to opponents and their own team mates around them is an example of external attention.
- (b) **Internal Attention Focus** directs inward thoughts without attending to the external cues or objects. A Basket baller just sticking to his/her own position on the court rather than making changes to get away from opponents or an shooter focusing only on to their shooting target without getting distracted by other influencing factors.

9.5.2 Mental Toughness

Mental toughness is a multifaceted construct made up of multiple key components including values, attitudes, cognitions, emotions, and behaviors that refer to an individual's ability to thrive through both positively and negatively construed challenges, pressures, and adversities. Mental toughness is having the natural or developed psychological edge that enables you to (a) generally, cope better than your opponents with the many demands (competition, training, lifestyle) that sport places on a performer, and (b) specifically, be more consistent and better than your opponents in remaining determined, focused, confident, and in control under pressure.

Mental toughness is not considered just as personnel disposition anymore, according to latest research mental toughness consists of 'natural and developed' psychological characteristics. Mental toughness is important to sports psychology because it represents a culmination of what it takes to be an elite athlete at any level of competition. There are several important factors required for mental toughness:

- i. Ability to thrive through challenge,





- ii. Sport awareness,
- iii. Tough attitude,
- iv. Desire for success.

Attributes of Mental Toughness

Mental toughness can be developed among athletes and play an important role in competitive sports. There are several characteristics of an individual which can be considered as attributes of mental toughness.

- Self-confident and self- assured
- Able to focus and concentrate
- Intrinsically motivated
- Strong work ethic
- Committed to excellence
- Persistent and determined
- Positive attitude, no negativism
- Resilient in the face of failure or injury
- Thrive on pressure and challenge
- Consistent personal values
- Emotional intelligence
- Physically tough
- Gracious in face of success

9.5.3 Resilience and Sports

The challenge to solve mystery of life is lifelong. The ability to cope and recover with these said or unsaid encounters in life is known as Resilience. The one who has the ability to adapt to life's challenges by integrating a wide range of traits, habits, and skills is a resilient person.

Resilience refers to one's ability to bounce back emotionally in the face of adversity
Resilience is the ability to bounce back from adversity, trauma, tragedy, danger or other sources of stress in life.

Resilience is the force within the individual that drives a person to confront and overcome adversity. Resilience drives a person to confront and overcome adversity



and has been described as an innate righting mechanism. This force may be described as an innate mechanism and as the human capacity to confront and overcome adversity.

When stress is prevalent, one can learn to deal with it and bounce back quickly. Becoming more resilient in the face of inevitable stress can enhance one's outlook and health significantly. In other words, it can be said that one of the ways in psychology, to deal with trauma, threats, adversity, or substantial stressors such as problems in sportsperson's personal or professional life, health challenges, and performance-related stress is to develop a strategy known as Resilience.

Sports is no different story, everyday existence in sports entails a certain amount of stress. It's always there, no matter if it is learning of the new skill, injury, fear of training load, challenge of winning in competition, etc. In the face of hardship situations in sports, it is easy to lose one's composure. Despite the best efforts to cope with pressure, results might be unfortunate like, high chances of failure, dropouts, loss of interest, lack of confidence, harm to self, aggression, inability to perform learnt skills, etc

Types of Resilience:

1. **Natural Resilience:** It is a natural ability that is bestowed upon a person at conception. It is characterized by openness to new experiences, an eagerness to learn, and a want to have fun.
2. **Adaptive Resilience:** Adaptive resilience is when, as a result of adverse circumstances, one has to learn, adjust and adapt.
3. **Restored Resilience:** Restorative or "learned" 'resilience is the type of resilience, restored by learning skills that aid in coping with life's challenges. This can also aid in dealing with the past, present, and future traumas in a more effective manner.

I. Tick the correct option.

1. Which of the following is not a psychological attribute ?
 - i. Heart rate
 - ii. Attention
 - iii. Resilience
 - iv. Mental Toughness
2. Attention focus allowing athletes to perceive several occurrences simultaneously is referred as:





- i. Narrow Attention Focus
 - ii. Broad Attention Focus
 - iii. External Attention Focus
 - iv. Internal Attention Focus
3. An individual's ability to bounce back emotionally in the face of adversity is referred as :
 - i. Aggression
 - ii. Anxiety
 - iii. Resilience
 - iv. Motivation

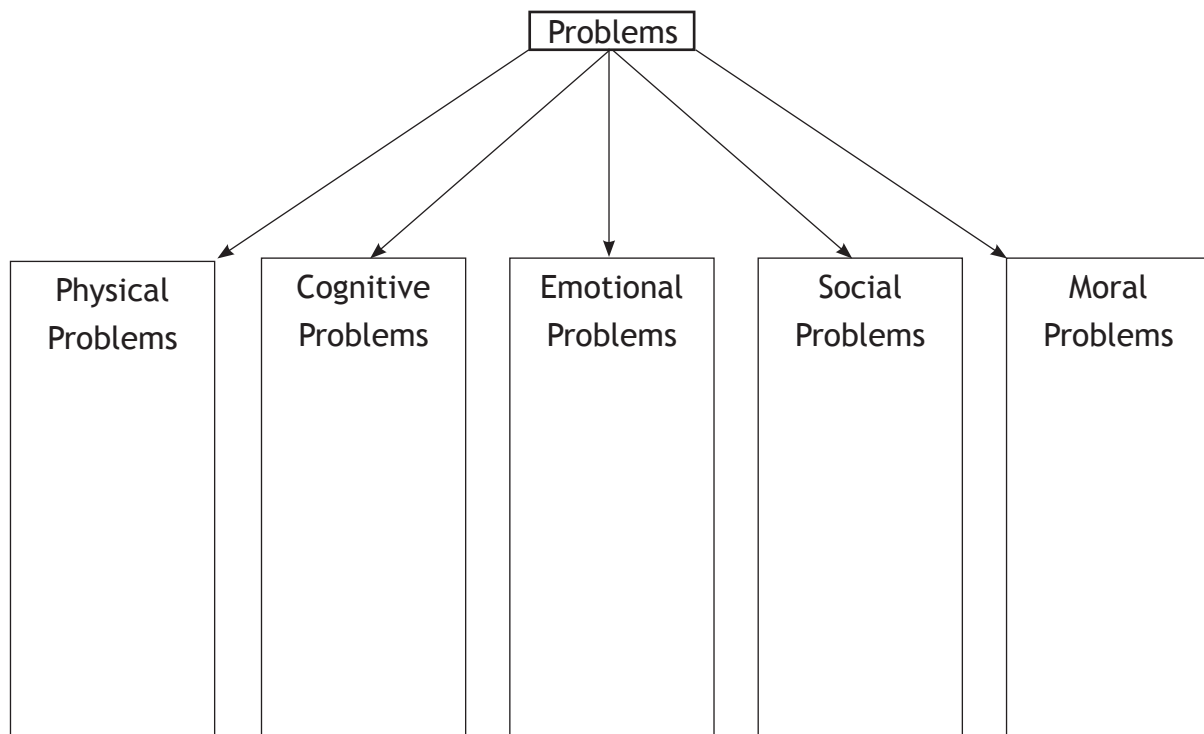
II. Answer the following questions briefly.

1. Describe Attention along with its types?
2. Explain Resilience and its importance in sports?
3. Describe role of Mental Toughness sports performance?

III. Answer the following questions in 150-200 words.

1. Explain the role of various psychological attributes influencing sports performance ?

IV. What are the common problems faced by Adolescents?



V. Case Study



Zaneet , a school sports champion and grade A student, has not been performing well in the past few months due to which his coach scheduled a counselling session with him to understand his problems. After a heart to heart talk the coach understood that his problems are basically related to his age and are commonly faced by Adolescents. Therefore he explained to Zaneet how to deal with these issues.

- List down any four Adolescent problems.
- List down any four ways how to manage Adolescent Problems.
- What is the range of Adolescence?

VI. Sports Integration

Sports Integration - WRITING A STORY

Choose an Indian athlete who has won a medal in the International arena - Olympics, Paralympics or Special Olympics. Research and write the story of the athlete highlighting the factors that made her/him succeed.





Suggested Reading

- Baron. R.A. (2008). "Psychology" Pearson Education South Asia, New Delhi.
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- Jarvis. M.(2006). "Sport Psychology" Routledge, New York, USA.
- Weinberg. R.S; Gould.D. (2003). Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology" Human Kinetics, Champaign. USA.

