



**2022**  
**NSCA**

**TACTICAL ANNUAL TRAINING**

*#NSCATactical22*

# *CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT*

I have no actual or potential conflict of interest in relation to this presentation.

# Introduction

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# Overview

- What are Psychological Skills
  - How Psychological Skills Apply to Tactical Athletes
  - Psychological Skills Training Programs
    - Goal Setting
    - Arousal Control
    - Imagery
    - Self-Talk
    - Relaxation
    - Beliefs and Values
  - Application of Psychological Skills

Do not think what is hard for you to master is humanly impossible; but if a thing is humanly possible, consider it to be within your reach.

- Marcus Aurelius



# Psychological Skills

- Psychological skills are tools of the mind that can be used to enhance performance and improve psychological well-being.
- These skills include imagery, self-talk, goal setting, arousal control, activation and relaxation, and more
- Psychological skills can be practiced and developed



# Psychological Skills Training Programs

- Education Phase
  - Teach the importance of learning psych skills (Weinberg & Gould, 2015)
  - Understand the fundamentals of psych skills (Weinberg & Gould, 2015)
- Acquisition Phase
  - Focused on learning strategies and techniques for learning psych skills
  - Ideally tailored to athletes' unique needs and abilities (Weinberg & Gould, 2015)
- Practice Phase
  - Seek to automate skills through overlearning (Weinberg & Gould, 2015)
  - Create opportunities for practice of each skill- Active learning situations

# Psychological Skills Applied to Tactical Athletes

- Psychological skills training improves psychological skills use within the military setting and other performance focused environments (Fitzwater et al., 2018; Röthlin et al., 2020)
- Psychological skills use is suggested as a potential for increasing success and reducing attrition in military training (Fitzwater et al., 2018; McCrory et al., 2013).
- Psychological skills training improves observer-rated mental toughness and performance in a military setting (Fitzwater et al., 2018).
- Psychological skills training has been used to improve self-efficacy, reduce anxiety, and improve performance among military pilot trainees (McCrory et al., 2013).



# Goal Setting

- SMART Goals
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Achievable
  - Relevant (Realistic)
  - Time Sensitive
- STRETCH Goals
  - Go beyond what you believe
  - Difficult, but achievable



# Arousal Control

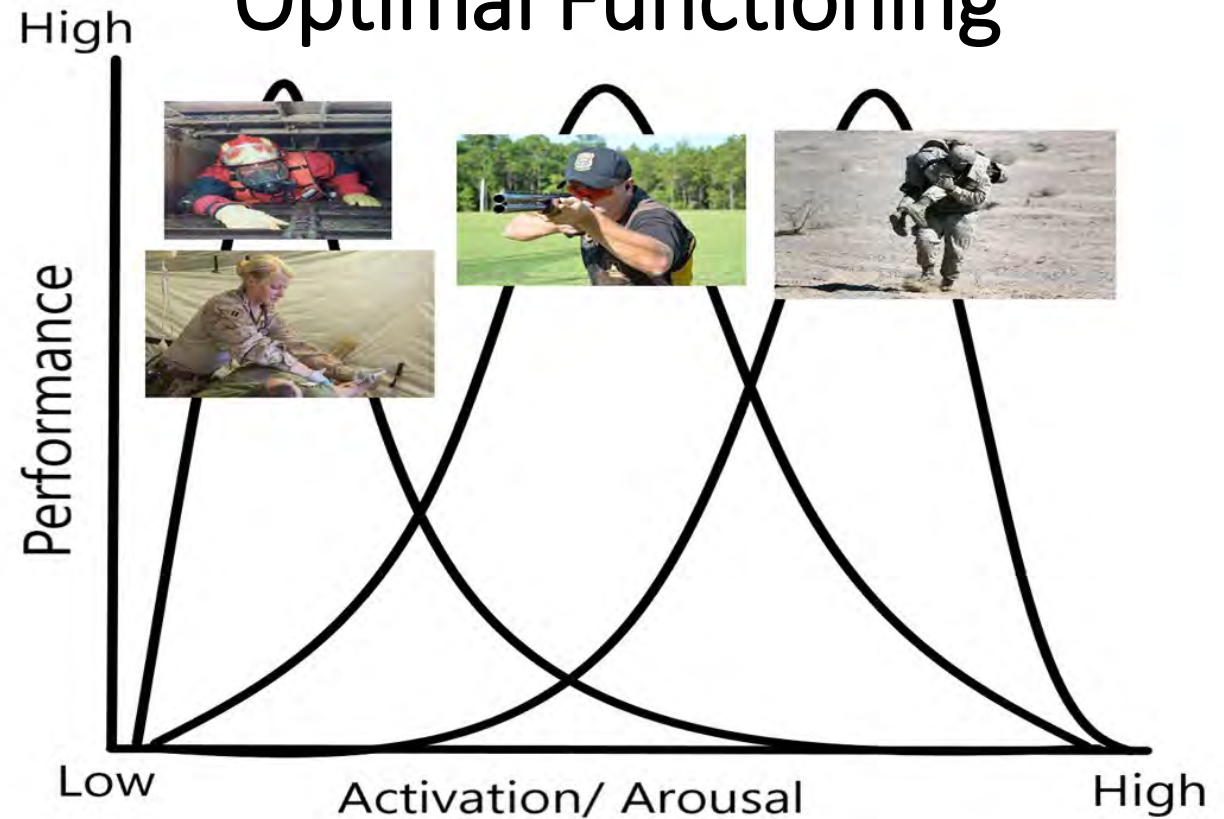
## Acute Stress Response

Arousal Level Too High or Too Low =  
Poor Performance

When arousal is too low, outside  
influence distract and negatively  
impact performance (Strycharczyk &  
Clough, 2015).

When arousal is too high, attention  
narrows and relevant information is  
discarded (Strycharczyk & Clough,  
2015).

## Individualized Zones of Optimal Functioning



# Arousal Control (continued)

- Getting amped up
  - Energizing imagery
  - Self-talk
  - Abdominal breathing with inhale lasting longer
  - Physical warm-up
- Calming Down
  - Relaxing imagery
  - Self-talk
  - Unplug
  - Tactical Breathing/ Relax muscle tension



# Imagery- PETTLEP Model (Anuar et al., 2018)

- Physical – Create image of physically relevant characteristics and go through the motions
- Environmental – Place yourself as close to the performance environment as possible
- Task – Focus on Specific Tasks
- Timing – Perform imagery in real time at pace of event
- Learning – Update imagery to include newly learned skills
- Emotion – Include emotions linked to performance
- Perspective - First person/Internal Orientation is best

# Self-Talk

- Increase awareness of what you say to yourself
- Develop a “script” you can carry forward.
- Can also use cue words/images that refocus, motivate, make them dig deep.  
Ex: “I’ve done the work”; “Slow is Smooth, Smooth is Fast”; “Conversation w/Dad”
- “I am Speed”



# Relaxation

- It is important to unplug from stressors and practice relaxation so that it can be called upon as needed
  - Progressive Relaxation
  - Breath Control
    - Tactical Breathing/ Box Breathing
  - Relaxation Response
    - Quiet Place with Minimized Distractions (Weinberg & Gould, 2015)
    - Comfortable Position- Not lying in bed (Weinberg & Gould, 2015)
    - Mental Device- Word such as “calm” or “relax” (Weinberg & Gould, 2015)
    - Passive Attitude- Allow thoughts to pass by (Weinberg & Gould, 2015)
  - Unplug through reading, watching movies, playing sports, etc.



# Beliefs and Values

- Beliefs
  - Beliefs are core thoughts that a person holds to be true and important
  - I believe statements...
- Values
  - Values are guided by beliefs and are the fundamental aspects of living that one holds to be important
  - Values should motivate a person to act one way or another
  - One to two words followed by personal definition
- Cognitive Dissonance
  - Psychological stress or tension caused by behaving inconsistent with one's values (DeBono, 2021)

# Application of Psychological Skills

- PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE
  - Set time aside to practice each skill set
    - Imagery
    - Relaxation
    - Arousal Regulation
  - Use specific psychological skills in training
    - Self talk
    - Imagery
  - Set aside time to write out beliefs and values
  - Set aside time to write out goals
  - Review Beliefs, Values, and Goals regularly



# References

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# Questions?

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  - Relaxation
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