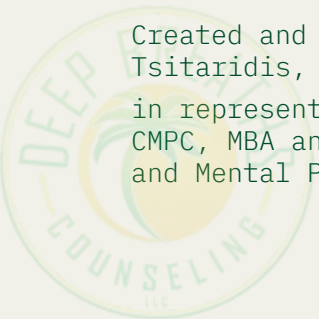


# Anxiety Management for Youth in Sports



Created and presented by Katie Tsitaridis, LPC, CMPC;  
in representation of Andrew Toce, LPC, CMPC, MBA and for Deep Breaths Counseling and Mental Performance



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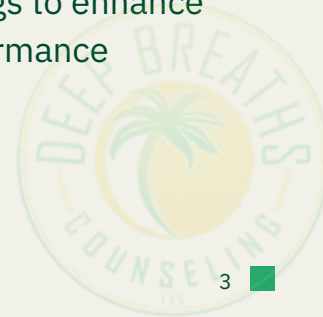


# About Me



■ KATIE TSITARIDIS, LPC, CMPC

- Licensed psychotherapist (RI and CT)
  - Trauma informed; ED trained; anxiety; depression; relationships; athletic counseling; women's health; sexuality; addiction informed
- Certified Mental Performance Consultant
  - National license to work with athletes and teams in various settings to enhance mental skills and performance
- Exerciser
  - Gymnast; runner
- Chocoholic



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# Intentions

SUPPORTING YOUR ATHLETE  
FROM AN APPROPRIATE,  
ADOLESCENT-DEVELOPMENT  
LENS

UNDERSTANDING AND  
ADDRESSING ANXIETY FROM A  
MINDFUL, HOLISTIC, AND  
LESS-VILLAINIZING MANNER

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- RECOGNIZE **SX'S** OF ANXIETY

- UNDERSTAND HOW ANXIETY **IMPACTS** PERFORMANCE AND SELF CONCEPT

- LEARN ABOUT & APPLY STRATEGIES THAT WORK FOR **YOU**

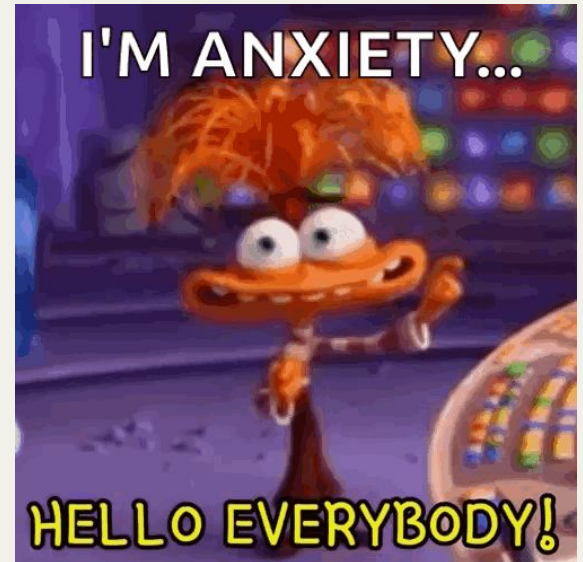
- UNDERSTAND WHEN TO ASK FOR MORE **SUPPORT**

- REFRAME OUR **RELATIONSHIP** WITH ANXIETY

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# // // IT'S JUST IN YOUR HEAD"

YES IT IS, AND THE DISTRESS IT CAUSES DOES  
**NOT MAKE IT ANY LESS REAL**



Anxiety is...our  
body's natural  
response to  
perceived  
stress...internal  
alarm system; dread,  
fear, intense worry



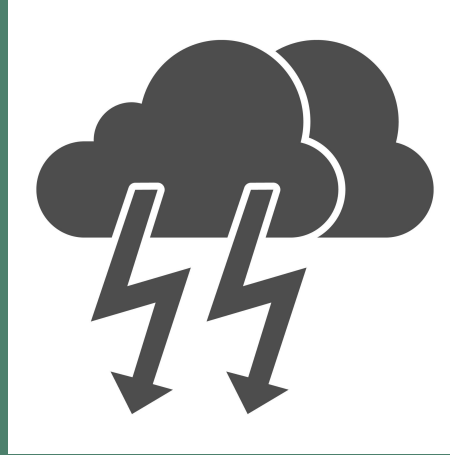
PRESENTS AS:

WHAT IF SCENARIOS; NEG  
COGNITIONS

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

MOOD & MOTIVATION  
SHIFTS

FIGHT, FLIGHT, FREEZE OR  
FAWN MECHANISMS



**AUDIENCE:** What do you notice  
within yourself or your athlete  
when anxious? How does this  
Part of You/Them show up?

IMPACTS & COMPOUNDS

WITH:

PERFORMANCE

SLEEP & APPETITE

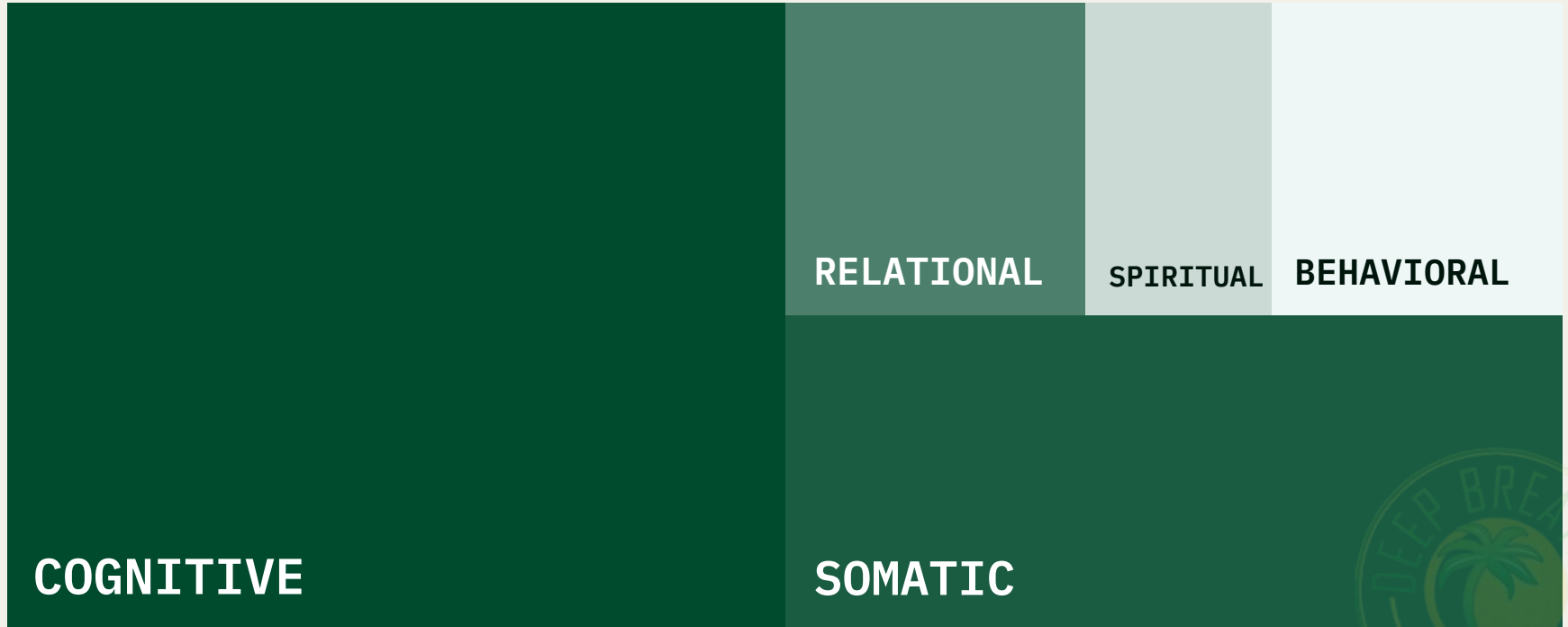
PUBERTY

MANAGEMENT OF OTHER  
STRESSORS

SELF CONCEPT

RELATIONSHIPS

# TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS



# TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS

## COGNITIVE

- Thought-stopping techniques
- De-catastrophizing; challenging unrealistic beliefs about self, others and the world
- Changing to more adaptive self talk
- Growth mindset
- Imagery/Visualization
- Exposure \*
- Motivational Interviewing to help athlete understand discrepancy b/w what they wants vs. what they're actually doing/believing



# TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS

- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Breathwork
- Grounding (5-4-3-2-1)
- Movement
- Attend to physical symptoms
  - Ginger or mint
  - massage
- Emotional Freedom Tapping

**SOMATIC**

# TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS

- Make a Game Plan to work with Anxiety; structure a routine
- Journal, or Log feelings/experiences before, during , and after X
- Attend to healthy lifestyle habits
- Reinforcement for activating preferred behavior

**BEHAVIORAL**

# TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS

- Check yourself before you wreck yourself
  - Connect with others about the anxiety
  - Create accountability system
- Group support
- Seek support from reliable and trustworthy sources

RELATIONAL/  
INTERPERSONAL

# TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS

- Use your Faith or connection with Higher Power
- Internal Family Systems:  
Personify your Anxiety and:
  - Ask what it's trying to achieve for you
  - Validate it
  - Ask to share what their Fear/Concerns are if they go away
  - Invite it to Soften

**SPIRITUAL**



# Responding to Anxiety in Real Time when you need to be **ON**

*Example,  
anyone?*



# Proactivity

Lifestyle/Behavioral

Mindfulness

Consistent Outside  
Help

Sleep/Appetite

Reduced drug/alcohol use

Game Plan

Consistent, smart exercise  
and conditioning

Breathwork

Journaling

Notice symptoms and feelings  
as they come; identify  
patterns, triggers, alleviators

Offer Self-Validation

Medication  
management

Therapist, Mental  
Skills Consultant,  
Coach, Spiritual  
Leader, Professor,  
Guardian or friend

# Recruit Support

## ■ Friends & Family

## ■ Coaches, PT's, AT's, etc: the wellness crew

## ■ Outside Help



### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS & CUES TO LOOK OUT FOR or CONSIDER



Sport or Family Culture

Institutional Culture



Social Media Content and Consumption

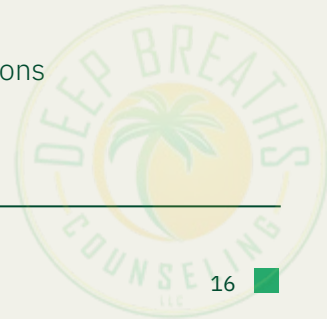
Development of SI

Harmful or Disruptive Rituals/Compulsions



Substance Use

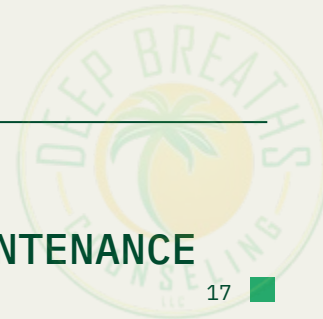
Disordered Eating



# Takeaways



- AWARENESS & NORMALIZATION; DE-VILLAINIZE
- UNDERSTAND SYMPTOMS, AND EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR THE ATHLETE
- ENGAGE IN HELP SEEKING BEHAVIOR
- THERE IS POWER IN PROACTIVE AND MAINTENANCE WORK



Questions?

Comments?



# Resources

Mental Health  
& Performance

DBC; Insurance company;  
[Psychologytoday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com);  
[appliedsportpsych.org](https://www.appliedsportpsych.org)

988 or 911 for Mental Health  
Emergencies

Inventories to  
Measure  
Anxiety Level

Sport Anxiety Scale:  
<https://cpdcoursesonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Sport-anxiety-scale-SAS.pdf>

Education &  
Sport Culture

CJSA>  
[changingthegameproject.com](https://www.changingthegameproject.com)

Worksheets

[therapistaid.com](https://www.therapistaid.com)



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# Contact for Deep Breaths Counseling

[deepbreathscounseling.com](https://www.deepbreathscounseling.com)

[contact@deepbreathscounseling.com](mailto:contact@deepbreathscounseling.com)

[katie@deepbreathscounseling.com](mailto:katie@deepbreathscounseling.com)



# Thank You!

