

Expectation-Performance Model

Horn, Lox, and Labrador (2010) described the four-step expectation-performance model: formation of expectations by PersonA; expectations affect PersonA's behavior and treatment towards PersonB; PersonA's behavior affects PersonB's performance and behavior; PersonA's expectations are realized via self-fulfilling prophecy on PersonB. PersonA may be a coach or an instructor; PersonB may be the athlete. This expectation-performance model occurs in domains other than sports and athletics--even within family dynamics.

However in many instances (e.g. news stories of unbelievable triumph over the odds), PersonB was able to channel "something" in order to prevail--exceeding the "limits" or "expectations" constructed by external factors. Researchers have referred to this ambiguous "something" as [personal] resilience and "mental toughness", both of which are multidimensional constructs (Meggs, Ditzfeld, & Golby, 2014; Taormina, 2015).

While the construct of personal [adult] resilience (as opposed to resilience in children) is multifaceted, it generally embodies: determination (to survive, persevere); endurance (enduring hardships, inner strength/fortitude); adaptability (adapting to dynamic conditions, flexible, resourceful); and/or recuperability (to recover from adversity) (Taormina, 2015).

Research into resiliency have followed a three-wave resiliency inquiry model. The first wave concerns the qualities (e.g. hardiness) that the individual might possess (resilience as a trait) that would predisposition him/her to be resilient (Brown, Lafferty, Triggs, 2015; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012). The second wave analyzed the individual's qualities that contributed towards successful adaptation (Brown et al., 2015). The third wave examined how resiliency or such capacity (process-conceptualization) was developed over time (e.g. through learning, experiences, interpersonal interactions) (Brown et al., 2015; Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014). Brown et al. (2015) noted that much of sports psychology focused on the second wave and the inclusion of coping strategies/theories/methods (in the face of stress/adversity).

Sarkar and Fletcher (2014) referred to "psychological resiliency" within the context of sports/athletics as "the role of mental processes and behavior in promoting personal assets and protecting an individual from the potential negative effect of stressors" (p. 1419). Resilience in sports often refers to how individuals maintain their level of performance (and skills) when adversities present (Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014). Many adversities seemed to be related to either injury, performance slump, illness, and/or career transition (Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014). Stressors may generally be categorized as competitive (environmental demands associated with the competitive performance), organizational (demands by the organization of which the athlete is part of), and personal (demands on the athlete that are non-sports related) (Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014).

In Sarkar and Fletcher's (2014) study of Olympic gold medalists, individuals appearing resilient demonstrated the ability to take personal responsibility for their thoughts, feelings, and actions; meta-cognition (evaluating one's own thoughts); challenge-appraisal (e.g. stressors as opportunities for growth/development/mastery); positive outlook/positivity; determination; confidence; competitiveness; maturity; persistence; and passion for their sport/network (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012).

References

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