Glossary of terms

Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT): A psychological intervention which teaches people how to respond to their thoughts, feelings, sensations and memories in a more flexible and/or positive way. ACT teaches individuals to notice and accept feelings/reactions as normal behavioural responses to personal experiences (including unwanted ones). It proposes individuals choose and move towards their more valued or desired responses.

Adaptive Anxiety: The positive function of anxiety. In a sporting context this may mean being nervous, but alert, excited and ready to compete.

Adrenalin (Epinephrine): A hormone and neurotransmitter. Every emotional response has a behavioural component, an autonomic component (that occurs largely unconsciously and regulates the heart rate, digestion, respiratory rate, pupillary response, urination, and sexual arousal), and a hormonal component. Adrenalin (epinephrine) is released in response to stressors such as physical threat, excitement, noise, bright lights and high ambient temperature, triggering the 'fight or flight' response in human behaviour.

Agitation: An emotional state of excitement or restlessness.

Aggression: Intentional behaviour aimed at harming another person, motivated by a desire to assert power or control.

Anonymous: Without any name acknowledged. An unknown or withheld authorship.

Anger: A predominantly normal emotion to perceived threat, which involves strong or uncomfortable feelings. Anger is an emotion related to one's psychological and physical interpretation of events around them. It may be expressed verbally, out of frustration, and/or in response to a perception of having been hurt or wronged in some way.

Anorexia Nervosa: An eating disorder characterised by food restriction, abnormal eating habits and behaviours which focus on an obsession with having a thin figure and an irrational fear of weight gain. It is accompanied by a distorted perception of one's own body shape and size, and often involves excessive weight loss.

Anxiety: A state of inner turmoil which can occur when subjectively anticipating unpleasant feelings or a perceived threat. Anxiety may trigger nervous behaviour (i.e., pacing, nervous speech), physical complaints (i.e., muscle tension, rapid heart rate) and/or rumination (worry, unhelpful thoughts).

Assertive: Is the quality of being self-assured and confident without being aggressive. It generally includes a respect for one's boundaries and the boundaries of others.

Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): A primarily biological condition with features of inattention, overactivity and impulsivity due to a neurochemical difference that first appears in early childhood.

Attributes: Resulting from a specific cause.

Atypical Depression: A form of depression that contrasts with the usual characteristics of depression. An individual may experience an increase rather than decrease in appetite, need to sleep all the time rather than experiencing insomnia, be hypersensitive to feeling rejected and/or have higher levels of anxiety.

Bereavement: A state of grief in reaction to a loss.

Binge: A period of time when someone has engaged in too much of something.

Biomechanics: The study of action (movement), of internal and external forces on the body and in particular the skeletal system.

Bipolar Disorder: A mental illness characterised by periods of elevated mood (mania) and periods of depression. During mania an individual feels or acts abnormally happy, energetic and/or irritable. They may make poorly thought out decisions with little regard for the consequences. The need for sleep is usually reduced. During periods of depression an individual has a negative outlook on life.

Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD): A disorder where that individual perceives their body or physical appearance to be defective. It can lead to an excessive preoccupation with weight, thinness/leanness and physical appearance.

Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD): An individual suffering from a borderline personality disorder may demonstrate a marked instability in personal relationships, be highly impulsive and have low self-image. They may experience frantic efforts to avoid feeling abandoned, and/or engage in self-harm (e.g., cutting) and/or suicidal behaviour. They may experience swings in mood in relation to perceived stressful life events and have difficulties in personal relationships, with symptoms that are generally consistent over time.

Bulimia: A habitual disturbance in eating behaviours effecting individuals of normal weight, characterised by frequent episodes of grossly excessive food intake followed by purging behaviours which may include self-induced vomiting, the use of diuretics and/or laxatives, and excessive exercise to avert weight gain.

Cannabis: Commonly known as marijuana, a preparation of the Cannabis plant intended for use as a psychoactive drug and/or as medicine.

Cognitive: Is the set of all mental abilities and processes related to knowledge: attention, memory and working memory, judgement, evaluation, reasoning, problem solving and decision making, comprehension and production of language.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT): A type of psychotherapy that helps people to change unhelpful thinking habits, feelings and behaviours. CBT may be used to treat problems including anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, uncontrollable anger, substance abuse, eating disorders and others.

Comorbid: In the presence of one or more medical disorders.

Compartmentalise: To separate and divide into discrete sections or categories.

Context: The circumstances that form the setting for an idea, statement or event, and in terms of which it can be more fully understood.

Cyclothymic Disorder: Is a mood condition with brief highs. For those who have mercurial temperaments (i.e., quick and changeable), marked by periods of exuberance and flatness but no distinctive hypomanic or melancholic periods, then a judgement of a particular personality style or personality disorder may be more appropriate.

Deceleration: To slow down.

Depression: Is a clinical medical condition reflecting a negative emotional, physical and cognitive (thinking) state that interferes with the ability to function at work, home or school, or in other aspects of daily life. There are four main types of depression and it is considered a diagnosed illness when it is long standing – i.e., lasts longer than two weeks.

Desensitise: To make less sensitive or less likely to be affected.

Dopamine: A neurotransmitter that helps control the brain's reward and pleasure centres. Dopamine also helps regulate movement and emotional responses, and it enables individuals not only to seek rewards but to take action to move toward them.

Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT): A therapy designed to help people change unhelpful patterns of behaviour especially self-harm, suicidal thinking and/or substance abuse. DBT assumes that people are doing the best they can but are lacking the skills to function appropriately. Rather than challenging and/or changing one's perceptions or strongly held beliefs (a key focus of CBT), DBT helps individuals increase their self-regulation by identifying their triggers, (reactive thoughts, feelings and behaviours) and developing helpful coping strategies to apply at those times.

Diuretic: A substance that increases the excretion of water from the body.

Dysfunctional Eating Behaviour: Temporary restrictive eating behaviours that do not constitute a clinical diagnosis for an eating disorder.

Dysphoria: A state of unease or generalised dissatisfaction with life.

Dysregulation: A term used by medical health professionals to refer an emotional response that is poorly modulated.

Eating Disorders: Are psychological illnesses defined by abnormal eating habits that may involve either insufficient or excessive food intake to the detriment of an individual's physical and mental health.

Emotions: A feeling state that results in physical and psychological changes that influence human behaviour. The physiology of emotion is closely linked to arousal of the nervous system and various states and strengths of arousal.

Emotional Intelligence: The ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behaviour.

Empathy: Is the capacity to understand what another person is experiencing from within the other person's frame of reference, i.e., the capacity to place oneself in another's situation/experience.

Ensue: Happens or occurs afterwards, as a result of.

Essential Fatty Acids: Fatty acids that are essential for healthy metabolic functioning. The body can make most of the fats it needs. However, two essential fatty acids, (linolenic and linoleic acid), cannot be made in the body and must be obtained from (plant) foods.

Exacerbating: To make a bad situation, negative feeling or problem worse.

Existential: Dealing with existence, especially human existence. Known by experience rather than reason.

Foetal Alcohol Effects (FAE): Negative developmental and health effects resulting from moderate maternal drinking throughout pregnancy. The effects of FAE are not as severe as Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) but are still irreversible and lifelong. Impairments include learning disabilities, poor school performance, poor impulse control, and problems with memory, attention and judgement.

Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS): Is a pattern of physical and mental defects that can develop in a foetus in association with high levels of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. Alcohol crosses the placental barrier and can stunt foetal growth or weight, create distinctive facial stigmata, damage neurons and brain structures, resulting in potential intellectual disability and other psychological or behavioural problems.

Frenetic: Fast and energetic, wild, hectic, frenzied.

Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD): A chronic disorder characterised by excessive, long-lasting anxiety and worry about nonspecific life events, objects and situations. Usually begins in childhood.

Hormones: Are chemical messengers that regulate processes in the body. Hormones are used to communicate between organs and tissues to regulate physiological and behavioural activities such as digestion, metabolism, respiration, tissue function, sensory perception, sleep, excretion, lactation, stress, growth and development, movement, reproduction, and mood.

Hypnosis: A state of human consciousness involving focused attention and concentration with reduced peripheral awareness which is characterised by an altered or entranced state.

Hypomanic Episode: Is a description of part of a bipolar II disorder, characterised by a distinct period of persistently elevated, expansive or irritable mood, lasting (at least) several days and present for most of the day nearly every day. A hypomanic mood is clearly different from a person's usual mood but is not as severe as mania experienced in bipolar I disorder.

Immune Response (function): Is how the human body recognises and defends itself against bacteria, viruses, and/or substances that appear foreign and harmful.

Impulsive: Acting without forethought and/or regard for consequences.

Intelligence Quotient (IQ): A score derived from a number of tests believed to be reflective of human intelligence.

Interpersonal: Skills and ways of communicating/interacting with other people, both individually and in groups.

Intrapersonal: Communication skills that occur within an individual's mind.

Judicial Discretion: A judge's power to make decisions based on fairness or a weighing of the facts and circumstances where there may not be an automatic or legal right.

Kinaesthetic: The sensation of movement. Kinaesthetic learning takes place through physical movement activities rather than reading, listening or watching demonstrations.

Lactic Acid: A chemical compound that plays a role in biochemical processes. During power exercises such as sprinting the rate of demand for energy is high. This results in glucose being broken down and oxidised to pyruvate. Lactate is produced from the pyruvate faster than the muscle tissues can remove it and so lactate concentration begins to rise causing muscles to fatigue and muscle soreness results.

Learned Helplessness: Occurs when people (or animals) become conditioned to believe a situation is unchangeable and they need to be helped through it.

Limbic System: A complex set of brain structures related to human survival (finding food and self-preservation), instincts and arousal (fight or flight), emotions and feelings, as well as motivation and memory.

Maladaptive Anxiety: Maladaptive is a term used in psychology to refer to unhelpful patterns of thinking and behaving that may contribute to emotional and mental health problems. Maladaptive thinking may be accompanied by irrational beliefs which are held to be true even though they are not.

Malicious: Intent to harm, spiteful, hostile, bitter.

Manic Episode: An unusually aroused and elevated energy level that may include unrestrained thoughts, rapid speech, elated or irritable mood, and fast, erratic behaviour. A manic episode is characterised by a period of at least a week of notably persistent goal-directed activity (i.e., excessive planning and participation in a multitude of activities). A manic mood disturbance is observable by others and uncharacteristic of an individual's usual state/behaviour. These episodes are sufficiently severe to cause difficulty or impairment in occupational, social, educational or other important functioning.

Melancholic Depression: A biologically based and particularly severe form of depression.

Mental Wellness: A state of wellbeing in which an individual has the resources to cope with normal life stressors and they are able to work productively and contribute to community.

Mental Illness: A significant health problem that negatively affects how a person feels, thinks, behaves and interacts with other people. It is diagnosed according to standardised criteria. It is often experienced as a reaction to stresses in life.

Mental Health Problem: A health problem which interferes with how a person thinks, feels and behaves but to a lesser extent than a mental illness.

Metacognition: the capacity to think about one's thinking and to have knowledge of one's self. Metacognition refers to a level of thinking that involves active control over the processes of thinking that are used in learning situations – i.e., planning the way to approach a learning task, monitoring, comprehending, assessing and adapting in order to progress towards successful task completion. Metacognition includes an awareness of one's own strengths and weakness, including thinking processes for study skills, memory capabilities, and the ability to monitor learning and adapt.

Metacognitive Experiences: Are those experiences where self-awareness links the individual's present understanding with past learning, to facilitate or inhibit, self-regulatory learning in the present as well as in the future.

Metacognitive Knowledge: Is knowing about one's own capabilities and what factors influence their performance and the capabilities of others. When an individual has procedural awareness tasks are performed more automatically.

Metacognitive Processes: include monitoring one's own thoughts, reflecting, planning, problem solving, making decisions, implementing strategies, monitoring, evaluating and adapting one's thought processes.

Metacognitive Self-regulation: Is the regulation of cognition and learning experiences through a set of activities (strategies) that help to control learning and experiences for a more desired outcome.

Metacognitive Strategies: Are the strategies an individual uses to regulate their thoughts, feelings and behaviours, adjusting them based on the situation to which the strategy is being applied and usually involving self-reflection and previous learning.

Mindfulness: Is a form of self-awareness training adapted from Buddhist mindfulness meditation. It has been adapted for use in treatment of depression, anxiety and mood regulation and is described as a state of being in the present, accepting things for what they are in a non-judgemental way.

Modulate: To exert a modifying or controlling influence on.

Multidimensional: Having many aspects, elements, levels of importance.

Multi-tasking: Doing more than one activity/ task at one time.

Muscle Dysmorphia: A preoccupation with the perception that one's own body build is too small or insufficiently muscular.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD): A mental disorder in which one has an inflated sense of their own importance, a deep need for admiration and a lack of empathy for others. One may appear ultra-confident but this often covers a fragile self-esteem underneath which is vulnerable to the slightest criticism. A narcissistic personality disorder causes problems in many areas of life, such as relationships, work, school or financial affairs. Individuals with NDP may be generally unhappy and disappointed when they are not given the special favours or admiration they believe they deserve. Others may not enjoy being around them and individuals with NPD often find relationships unfulfilling.

Naturalistic: Natural laws are the rules that govern the structure and behaviour of the natural universe. Individuals who have high naturalistic intelligence are often more in tune with nature and interested in nurturing, exploring the environment and learning about other species.

Neural depletion: Temporary inability of neurons to fire and therefore transmit an input signal. Caused by a temporary depletion of synaptic vesicles that house neurotransmitters and thought to occur as a result of persistent high frequency neuronal stimulation.

Neurochemical: An organic molecule, such as serotonin, dopamine or nerve growth factor, which participates in neural activity.

Neuropeptide: A small protein-like molecule (peptide) used by neurons to communicate with each other – i.e., neuronal signalling molecules that influence the activity of the brain in specific ways.

Neuropsychophysiology: Refers to studies of the structure and function of the brain as they relate to specific psychological and physical processes and behaviours.

Neurotransmitters: Chemicals that transmit signals across a synapse from one neuron (nerve cell) to another target neuron.

Non-Melancholic Depression A non-biological form of depression. It has to do with psychological causes and is often linked to stressful events in a person's life or an individual's personality type.

Norepinephrine: The hormone and neurotransmitter most responsible for vigilant (sustained) concentration in contrast to the chemically similar hormone, dopamine, which is most responsible for cognitive alertness.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) Characterised by recurring thoughts, images, impulses or actions that are repetitive, distressing and intrusive.

Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD): Characterised by a persistent pattern of irritable

and/or angry mood along with vindictive, resentful and defiant behaviour.

Oxytocin: A neuropeptide hormone and neurotransmitter that is made in the brain. It is a facilitator for childbirth and breastfeeding, and other aspects of human behaviour. It is believed to be involved in emotional, cognitive, social and prosocial behaviours with evidence that oxytocin promotes ethnocentric behaviour (i.e., judging other individuals and groups relative to one's own group or culture), incorporating the trust and empathy found in social groups.

Panic Attack: An anxiety attack characterised by brief or sudden intense physical sensations of fear, which may include a racing heartbeat, shortness of breath, dizziness, trembling and muscle tension. These feelings of panic can be overwhelming and combined with stressful experiences or prolonged stress. They can occur without a clear trigger.

Pathological: Extreme, abnormal, pertaining to an illness.

Parkinson's Disease: A progressive and degenerative neurological disease with symptoms including tremors, shaking, rigidity, stiff and sore muscles. Parkinson's occurs when a substantial number of brain cells called 'substantia nigra' die or become damaged. These cells normally produce dopamine which allows smooth and coordinated movement of the body's muscles.

Peptides: Are naturally occurring biological molecules, small chain amino acids which are the building blocks for protein creation.

Perfectionism: A multi-dimensional measure by which individuals strive for extremely high standards in themselves and in others. Perfectionism may be adaptive where individuals are highly competent and successful without being rigid or maladaptive (neurotic) where individuals set extremely high standards with little latitude for mistakes and their self-worth is based largely on their ability to strive for and achieve unrelenting high standards.

Performance Anxiety: A state of nervousness or fear which can adversely affect the activity being attempted, such as performing in front of others.

Personality Temperament (Style): Personality is defined as a dynamic and organised set of personal traits and patterns of behaviour such as introversion and extroversion, and including attitudes, thoughts and feelings in response to opportunities and/or stress in everyday interactions. When these elements are expressed in a characteristically repeated and dynamic combination they are considered reflective of an individual's personality style.

Physiology: The mechanisms that work to keep the human body alive and functioning including the mechanical, physical and biochemical functions of humans, their organs and the cells of which they are composed.

Phobia: A type of anxiety disorder, usually characterised by a persistent fear of an object or situation in which the sufferer commits a great deal of time and effort to avoid. These efforts are usually disproportionate to the actual danger posed and are often irrational.

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): An anxiety disorder that can develop after a person has been exposed to a severe physical or mental trauma, with symptoms such as disturbing recurring flashbacks, avoidance or numbing of memories of the event, and/or hyper-arousal which may continue for more than a month after the occurrence of a traumatic event.

Prefrontal Cortex: Is located at the front of the brain and is responsible for abstract thinking and thought analysis. The prefrontal cortex mediates between conflicting thoughts – e.g., making choices between right and wrong and predicting the probable outcomes of certain actions, behaviours or events. It is also the area of the brain that governs social control and the ability to suppress urges. It helps individuals adjust their actions or reactions in changing situations.

Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD): A distinct depressive condition associated with emotional or physical symptoms linked to one's menstrual cycle, with feelings of despair, sleep difficulties, appetite changes, low energy levels, irritability, marked anxiety, frequent crying, anger, impaired concentration, sensitivity to rejection and/or social withdrawal, recurring

and present over a number of weeks on each occasion.

Proactive: Acting in anticipation to a future challenge or problem.

Procrastinate: Postpone, delay or put something off, over think.

Prosocial: The voluntary actions of an individual intended to help or benefit others. This behaviour may be motivated by empathy or other practical concerns.

Psychotic Depression: A more severely depressed mood than either melancholic or non-melancholic depression. Symptoms include a severe psychomotor disturbance and psychotic symptoms - i.e., delusions or hallucinations - along with over-valued guilt ruminations. Psychotic depression only responds to medication such as antidepressant drugs.

Reactive: Done in response to a situation or problem when it occurs instead of preventing the occurrence.

Reframing (cognitive reframing): A psychological technique that consists of identifying, reflecting on and disputing irrational or unhelpful thoughts. Reframing is a way of adjusting one's thoughts, emotions or experiences to achieve more positive alternatives.

Resilience: An individual's ability to adapt to stress and adversity, the capacity to cope with and/or recover from change and/or challenge.

Reward Circuitry: In neuroscience, the reward circuitry system is a collection of brain structures that attempts to regulate and control behaviour by inducing pleasurable effects. It is a brain circuit that contains dopamine neurons, which when activated, motivates or reinforces behaviours.

Ruminate: To compulsively focus one's attention on the symptoms of one's distress, its possible causes or consequences. Rumination is associated with worry and anxiety, and may be a contributing factor towards depression and/or other mental health issues.

Self-complexity: A person's perceived knowledge of self-based on the number of distinct self-aspects they believe they possess. These self-aspects may include social roles, relationships, activities, traits and goals which combine to form the larger sense of how an individual defines them self.

Self-harm: Is the deliberate self-injuring of body tissue to cause pain or inflict harm, most often without suicide intention. Self-harming may include cutting, burning, scratching, interfering with wound healing and the ingestion of toxic substances.

Self-medication: A human behaviour in which an individual self-administers a substance for a non-clinical physical or psychological ailment.

Separation Anxiety Disorder: Mostly occurs in children. It is characterised by high levels of anxiety when separated from a person or place (usually home) which is associated with feelings of security and/or safety.

Serotonin: A chemical created by the human body that works as a neurotransmitter. It is the chemical that is believed to be responsible for maintaining mood balance. A deficit of serotonin may lead to depression. Serotonin is also linked with appetite and sleep, memory and concentration.

Specific Phobias: Are the result of excessive anxiety triggered by specific objects or situations.

Social: The interaction of human beings (organisms) with other humans and to their collective co-existence – i.e., communities or social groups.

Social Learning Theory: Proposes that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur purely through observation or direct instruction, even in the absence of motor reproduction or direct reinforcement.

Social Phobia: Is characterised by a fear of being negatively judged by others. It appears to have links with neurobiological mechanisms (fear based conditioning in the amygdala) and neurotransmitter changes (serotonin and dopamine).

Stimulant Medication: Medication and/or other substances that increase alertness, attention and energy, as well as elevate blood pressure, heart rate and respiration.

Substance Induced Anxiety Disorder: Occurs in individuals who experience strong anxiety symptoms due to the physiological effects of certain substances in the body. The symptoms may include panic attacks, obsessional or compulsive behaviour triggered by either or both prescription and non-prescription medications and/or drugs.

Sympathetic Nervous System: The autonomic nervous system functions to regulate the body's unconscious actions. The sympathetic nervous system's primary process is to stimulate the body's 'fight or flight' response.

Synapse: Is a structure that permits a nerve cell to pass an electrical or chemical signal to another cell.

Team Metacognition: Thinking about how teams process collective information, reflect, evaluate and problem solve together based on team context, group knowledge and cultural norms, including both spoken and unspoken expectations.

Therapeutic Use Exemptions (TUE): An exemption that allows an athlete to use, for therapeutic purposes only, an otherwise prohibited substance or method of administering a substance which may be present during competition.

Unencumbered: Free to move.

Weight Cycling: Repeated cycling of gaining and losing body weight.

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