Motivation in sport
A self-determination theory perspective

NIKOS NTOUMANIS AND CLIFFORD J. MALLET

SUMMARY

Self-determination theory (SDT) has been widely applied to the study of motivation in sport settings. In this chapter, we present an overview of some of the constructs proposed by this theory; namely, coaches interpersonal styles, athletes' psychological needs, and motivational regulations. We also explain how coaching behaviors either support or undermine athletes' needs and subsequent motivation, and how the latter result in different levels of engagement, performance, and psychological well-being. Practical suggestions based on this theory are presented for enhancing adaptive athlete motivation. Lastly, potential challenges and solutions for implementing self-determination theory-based instruction and coaching are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Let us consider a youth basketball match where coaches from both teams encourage their players to work hard and win the game. Consider how coaches might go about encouraging their players to work harder. For example, one male team coach might speak to his players and advise them that if they do not hold the opposition to less than six points in the next quarter they will be required to perform "suicide runs" (repetitive sprints up and down the court). He also uses another strategy to encourage them to shoot accurately: At half time he advises that those players who shoot accurately will be rewarded with free tickets to a professional match. The coach uses these two strategies thinking he is motivating his players to work harder. In other words, the intentions of the coach are quite honorable because he believes that these strategies will increase player motivation. Unfortunately, he is unaware of the potential adverse consequences of these strategies on the players' motivation and subsequent engagement. The key question to ask here is: How might those strategies not foster positive player engagement?
Motivating athletes is considered an important aspect of coaching practice. Coaches typically encourage athletes to work hard to achieve success and use specific strategies to “motivate” their athletes because they believe that motivated athletes are more likely to succeed. In an attempt to understand how coaches positively or negatively influence athletes’ motivation we might consider some related key questions: How do coaches attempt to get the best from their athletes? How might research inform coaches about appropriate coaching practices that promote adaptive player engagement? In this chapter, the theoretical framework of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) will be used to inform adaptive coaching practices that lead to promoting motivationally adaptive player engagement.

OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Explain the types of motivation and psychological needs proposed by SDT.
2. Identify two major interpersonal styles of coaches, as described by SDT.
3. Provide recommendations for promoting self-determined motivation and need satisfaction in athletes.
4. Identify barriers and solutions for implementing SDT-based coaching.

PROMOTING MOTIVATIONAL COACHING ENVIRONMENTS: AN OVERVIEW

It is widely acknowledged by athletes, coaches, sport psychologists, and the wider sport community that motivation is a key determinant of success and failure in sport. Often, a coach’s emphasis is solely on increasing the quantity of motivation, the assumption being that higher motivation will lead to better performance. However, motivation research (e.g., Vansteenkiste, Sierens, Soenens, Luyckx, & Wills, 2009) has shown that the quality of motivation also matters in that higher levels of motivation might not result in desirable outcomes if the quality of motivation is poor (i.e., if the reasons underlying engagement in particular actions are problematic). Unlike other theoretical frameworks of motivation, self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) makes the distinction between quality and quantity of motivation.

This chapter will provide a brief overview of the major constructs proposed by this theory and will explain how these constructs have been operationalized in the context of sport. This chapter will also illustrate how coaches can promote adaptive types of motivation for sport participation, optimal performance, and psychological well-being. Lastly, problems and solutions in implementing SDT-based coaching will be discussed. Although in this chapter we focus on sport, the concepts and intervention suggestions we present are to a large extent applicable to any organized exercise contexts (e.g., aerobics classes) in which fitness instructors aim to maximize their clients’ motivation to engage in and adhere to an exercise regime.

PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS AND MOTIVATIONAL REGULATIONS

According to Deci and Ryan (2000), SDT is a theory of human motivation and personality. In a nutshell, the theory argues that individuals have a natural tendency for personal
growth and development. This tendency necessitates that the social context facilitates the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs. When these needs are satisfied, individuals will experience higher quality of motivation, psychological well-being, and will engage in adaptive behaviors (e.g., increased behavioral investment).

The three psychological needs identified by the theory are those for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to desire to feel ownership over one’s behavior. Competence refers to the need to feel effective and achieve valued outcomes. Relatedness is the desire to feel accepted and meaningfully connected with others (Deci & Ryan, 2000). For example, in the context of sport, athletes will experience autonomy-need satisfaction when they are positively engaged in their training and personal development plans; competence-need satisfaction when they are given sufficient opportunities and guidance to achieve success; and relatedness-need satisfaction when they feel accepted and valued by their coach and teammates. Deci and Ryan argue that although these three needs might vary in strength from person to person, they are innate, universal, and essential for optimal human development.

A large volume of research evidence exists to show that the satisfaction of one or more of the psychological needs proposed by SDT can be an important predictor of a number of indices of behavioral investment and psychological well-being/ill-being, such as sport engagement, vitality, self-esteem, and physical health (e.g., Hodge, Lonsdale, & Jackson, 2009). Such findings make theoretical sense. When athletes feel in control of their behavior (autonomy), experience success (competence), and feel accepted and valued by their coach and teammates (relatedness), they will display active engagement and persistence in various activities in training and competition, and will report more positive physical and psychological health states. In contrast, when athletes feel that their psychological needs are frustrated, that is, when they perceive lack of choice or opportunities for personal input, frequent failure in mastery attempts, and feelings of rejection and isolation, they are more likely to report feelings of burnout and negative emotional states (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, Ryan, Bosch, & Thogersen-Ntoumani, 2011).

The satisfaction of the three psychological needs is also expected to lead to higher quality of motivation (i.e., more self-determined; Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT distinguishes three types of motivation with varying degrees of self-determination: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and amotivation (see Figure 5.1). Intrinsic motivation represents the highest degree of self-determined motivation. In sport, athletes with high intrinsic motivation freely engage in activities they find interesting and enjoyable, and which offer an opportunity for learning and personal development.

Extrinsic motivation is evident when individuals perform an activity because they value its associated outcomes (e.g., public praise, extrinsic rewards) more than the activity itself. There are four types of extrinsic motivation. These are, in decreasing order of self-determination, integrated regulation, identified regulation, introjected regulation and external regulation. Integrated regulation is evident when behaviors are performed because they are fully assimilated within one’s self system. For example, integrated regulation is evident when athletes perceive their sport engagement as part of who they are. Individuals with high identified regulation perform activities out of choice but without necessarily enjoying them. For example, some young athletes may participate in sport because they value the importance of sport engagement for their health and performance goals. Both integrated and identified regulations are associated with a personal endorsement of one’s sport participation, and thus are high in self-determination. Introjected regulation describes extrinsically motivated behaviors that are performed out of feelings of guilt/shame or in the pursuit of contingent self-worth. For example, some...
young athletes may participate in sport because they do not wish to let their parents down. Lastly, external regulation refers to behaviors carried out in order to attain tangible rewards (e.g., trophies), social approval, or to avoid punishment. Both introjected and external regulations are associated with low levels of self-determination.

Amotivation represents the absence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. It is evident when athletes lack the intention and willingness to engage in sport. It often results from feelings of incompetence and uncontrollability and is frequently linked to decisions to drop out of sport (e.g., Pelletier, Fortier, Vallender, & Brière, 2002).

The extensive evidence in the sport literature on the application of SDT in sport demonstrates that autonomous/self-determined forms of regulation (intrinsic motivation, integrated and identified regulations), compared to controlled forms of regulation (introjected and external regulations) and amotivation, result in more adaptive outcomes such as higher effort, persistence, performance, and various indices of psychological well-being (cf., Vallerand, 2007; see Figure 5.2). High autonomous types of extrinsic motivation (i.e., integrated and identified regulations) in sport are important given that some behaviors might not be inherently enjoyable (e.g., repetitive drills during training), but could have high instrumental value. Introjected regulation can sometimes lead to persistence, but this is relatively short-lived (Pelletier et al., 2002). Tangible rewards are very frequently used in sport (e.g., athletic scholarships) but evidence suggests that when they are used to motivate athletes they result in athletes being motivated by external regulation (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, & Thøgersen-Ntoumani, 2009).

Figure 5.1 Types of motivation along the self-determination continuum with illustrative examples from sport taken from Lonsdale, Hodge, and Rose (2008).
A coach plays a major role in shaping the psychological experiences his/her athletes derive from their sport participation (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). Many coach behaviors have a positive influence on athletes’ psychological need satisfaction, autonomous motivation, performance, and psychological well-being. However, maladaptive coaching behaviors are not uncommon. The following section discusses two interpersonal styles that have very different consequences for the quality of athletes’ engagement in sport and their psychological well-being.

### COACH INTERPERSONAL STYLES

In an effort to understand the underlying motivational mechanisms associated with the use of different coaching behaviors, SDT-based research in sport has primarily focused on the contrast between an autonomy-supportive and a controlling coach interpersonal style (although coaches can adopt both styles to varying degrees). Short descriptions of these contrasting interpersonal styles are presented in Table 5.1.

Despite the label, autonomy-supportive behaviors are theorized and have often been shown in research to predict the satisfaction of not only autonomy, but all three basic psychological needs, as well as autonomous motivation (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Reeve, 2009). It is important to clarify that an autonomy-supportive coaching style does not encourage an athlete to break off ties and become independent of his/her coach. An autonomy-supportive coach offers emotional support, advice and guidance within specific constraints with the aim of helping athletes develop responsibility and take ownership of their actions. In contrast to autonomy support, a controlling coach interpersonal style can actively undermine the three psychological needs and result in controlled forms of motivation, and perhaps over time lead to amotivation. Controlling behaviors have been theorized and empirically shown to predict the thwarting of the three psychological needs and low or non-self-determined motivation (Bartholomew et al., 2011; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003).

### PROMOTING NEED SATISFACTION AND AUTONOMOUS MOTIVATION IN SPORT

A number of suggestions have been offered (and tested) in the SDT literature with regard to the promotion of need satisfaction and autonomous motivation. These suggestions center on the development of a coach autonomy support style and the reduction of controlling behaviors. One of the central dimensions of autonomy support is the provision of choice of...
### Table 5.1 Autonomy-supportive and controlling interpersonal style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Autonomy-supportive</th>
<th>Controlling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An autonomy-supportive coach:</td>
<td>A controlling coach:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourages athlete initiative</td>
<td>• Behaves in a coercive, pressuring, and authoritarian way in order to impose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allows athlete participation in decision making</td>
<td>a preconceived way of thinking and behaving upon their athletes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Offers choices that are relevant to athletes’ goals</td>
<td>• Uses excessive monitoring and surveillance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and values</td>
<td>• Marginalizes athletes’ input and views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides a rationale for task-engagement</td>
<td>• Attempts to influence aspects of the athletes’ lives that are not directly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Acknowledges negative feelings associated</td>
<td>relevant to their sport participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with task-engagement</td>
<td>• Uses intimidating behaviors (e.g., yelling, physical punishment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is non-judgmental</td>
<td>• Uses guilt-inducing statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attempts to understand athletes’ perspective</td>
<td>• Withdraws attention, positive regard and support when athletes are not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before offering suggestions (Mageau &amp; Vallerand, 2003)</td>
<td>compliant with his/her instructions and expectations (Bartholomew et al., 2009).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Figure 5.3 Rugby.**
activities. Choices offered by the coach should set specific rules and boundaries, be meaningful to the athletes, and meet the athletes’ basic psychological needs. For example, a coach should: a) offer his/her basketball players a choice of drills that will help the development of a particular skill (e.g., defense) that is relevant to the athletes’ goals and interests; b) ensure that the offered choices are not too numerous or complex for the players; and c) minimize the potential of subsequent intra-team disputes. In addition to choice, meaningful rationales should be offered, particularly for uninteresting or repetitive behaviors. For instance, a young soccer player will more fully internalize the importance of performing flexibility exercises if his/her coach can clearly demonstrate the direct benefits of agility for soccer performance. Rationales are also useful to explain the purpose of existing restrictions and rules (e.g., why certain types of food should be avoided). Understanding the underlying reasons for the selected activities will foster positive engagement. Moreover, athletes are more likely to be self-determined when they are offered explanations that are clear, truthful, and meaningful, as opposed to when they are treated by their coach with an “it’s my way or the highway” attitude (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). Furthermore, athletes should be encouraged to provide some input in strategies and tactics. In this way, coaches will demonstrate that they value athletes’ opinions and encourage initiative and problem solving (Vallerand, 2007).

Coaches should also be empathetic and acknowledge the difficulties, negative feelings, or objections that their athletes might have in relation to particular tasks, goals, or rules. For example, they should be empathetic to their athletes’ complaints that certain activities in training are unexciting. Expressions of dissatisfaction by athletes should not be discouraged as allowing them gives athletes the message that their voices are heard and respected, and makes it more likely they will develop a sense of being valued. Further, such objections can result in better rationales being provided or in structural changes (e.g., more choices) that could address criticisms.

Coaches should also provide feedback that is constructive, detailed, informative in terms of competence development (e.g., “your awareness of your opponents’ movements off the ball has really improved because you are now able to…”), and positive where appropriate. Further, coaches should take time to listen first and then respond to athletes’ ideas and goals, be patient with their progress, try to develop an understanding of how their athletes think and feel about certain things, and give them sufficient time and encouragement to take initiatives and develop independently (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Reeve, 2009). In terms of goal setting, athletes should be encouraged to set and strive for goals that are congruent with their values and interests. To facilitate competence need satisfaction in particular, training regimes should provide optimally challenging opportunities that are matched with athletes’ current and varying levels of skill development. Further, in terms of facilitating relatedness need satisfaction, team building exercises, and one-to-one meetings to discuss both individual and team goals should be scheduled. When required, such meetings should also aim to help athletes fully internalize and volitionally engage in team goals and activities that serve the “greater good”, sometimes at the expense of individual goals. In brief, a coach who makes an athlete feel valued, appreciated, and respected will facilitate feelings of relatedness in that athlete.

As stated earlier, the facilitation of psychological-need satisfaction and autonomous motivation requires the reduction of controlling coach behaviors. To this end, a coach should not use language that is verbally abusive, that threatens, humiliates or forces (e.g., via fear or guilt inducement statements such as “don’t let me down”) athletes to accept rules, limits or activities. Coaches should also avoid monopolizing conversations, discouraging questions or alternative opinions from
their athletes, issuing deadlines, directives and commands, asking controlling questions (e.g., “can you do this the way I want it?”), using praising as a contingent reward (e.g., “you did exactly what I asked you to do”), telling athletes how they ought to feel, offering only predetermined goals and choices, and using over-intrusive behaviors to influence their athletes’ lives outside sport (Bartholomew et al., 2009; Reeve, 2009).

**POTENTIAL CHALLENGES IN TRANSLATING THEORY TO PRACTICE**

Research examining challenges and barriers in the translation of self-determination theory to practice when implementing coaching practices such as those discussed in the previous section is scarce. One exception is an autobiographical case study reported by Mallett (2005) in which he described his own coaching practice as autonomy-supportive. He stated that his general personal orientation was inclined towards autonomy rather than control, which influenced how he coached. Although Mallett reported that his autonomy-supportive coach-
ing developed over many years, he felt that the adoption of an autonomy-supportive pedagogical approach to coaching was somewhat unproblematic. However, for many coaches or educators shifting from a controlling to an autonomy-supportive instructional approach can be complex and challenging (Reeve, 2009). How might a coach shift from controlling to more autonomy-supportive coaching practices? What are the potential barriers to shifting towards an autonomy-supportive approach?

Mageau and Vallerand (2003) proposed that three key factors influence coaches' interpersonal style: their personal orientation, the coaching context, and their perception of athletes' behavior and motivation. These factors probably operate interdependently, so understanding the shift from a controlling to an autonomy-supportive instructional approach should include a consideration of all these individual and social factors.

A coach's personal orientation is influenced by his/her general causality orientation and beliefs about how to motivate athletes (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Socialization factors are likely to shape coaches' personal orientation to be more controlling than autonomy-supportive. Coaches' behaviors, for example, may often reflect parenting styles characteristic of the 1950s and 1960s, in which children's and athletes' compliant behaviors were shaped by reward and punishment. This controlling orientation is unsurprising since coaches typically report that they coach the way they were coached (Lyle, 2002). Coaches are also likely to be socialized into believing that controlling behaviors will increase athletes' motivation, especially in the short term (Reeve, 2009). However, most coaches are probably unaware of the medium to long-term adverse consequences of such controlling behaviors (e.g., amotivation, attrition, psychological ill-being). The shift towards an autonomy-
supportive orientation to coaching requires
the coach to endorse such a shift (Mageau &
Vallerand, 2003). This shift may present some
challenges to the coach; for example, the
implementation of an autonomy-supportive
coaching approach might be difficult for the
coach because it takes him/her out of his/her
“comfort zone”. Several coaches have reported
significant challenges in becoming more
autonomy-supportive, especially if their
personal orientation is controlling. Socializa-
tion factors combined with years of coaching
with a dominant controlling interpersonal
style require the coach to change many implic-
itly learned coaching behaviors and beliefs
about how to motivate others, which under-
standably demand sufficient time, patience,
reflection, and practice.

With regard to the coaching context, the
second variable discussed by Mageau and
Vallerand (2003) to influence coaches’ inter-
personal style, several factors are likely to be
influential. In elaborating upon these factors,
the work by Reeve (2009) on teachers’ chal-
lenges to be autonomy-supportive, considered
alongside a program of coach motivation
research by Mallett and colleagues (e.g.,
Ahlberg, Mallett, & Tinning, 2008), can be very
informative. First, in the sporting context,
coaches typically exercise a controlling inter-
personal style because they are the dominant
actor in the coach–athlete relationship.
Controlling interpersonal styles are character-
istic of those with inherent dominance in
differential power relations. In the coach–
athlete relationship, the coach is assumed to
possess greater knowledge and experience,
and thus superior social status. Second, exter-
nal pressures from parents, club officials, and
spectators on coaches to produce winning

Figure 5.6 Tennis.
performances are likely to, consciously or unconsciously, result in coaches transferring those controlling pressures into how they interact with their athletes. Third, the culture of sport supports the use of controlling coaching behaviors. A general perception in coaching is that coaches who use controlling, rather than autonomy-supportive behaviors, are more competent. It is not uncommon to observe controlling coaching behaviors in televised professional sports, which might send a message to viewing coaches and athletes that this approach is the norm. An associated reason is that controlling behaviors also seem to send a message that the coach has a structured coaching practice, which is deemed to be conducive to superior performances. In contrast, an autonomy-supportive approach might send the message that the coach is laissez-faire in their approach and perhaps lazy. One example might be the coach’s use of questioning to enable players to have some input and to think critically about what strategies to use in what situation. In this example, the players might think that the coach does not know what to do if he/she is asking players questions; coaches usually tell players what to do! Another example might be coaches who provide limited direct input, rather than regularly yelling instructions to players, which might also be perceived as an indication of low coach competence. To some extent these situations reflect players’ frames of reference for what is “good” coaching practice; to coach differently might be perceived as inferior coaching.

Anecdotally, sometimes athletes do not want to be in control and prefer their coaches to take that responsibility. In other words, some athletes report that they are happy to be told what to do and when. Perhaps these athletes have been shaped to be passive learners due to socialization experiences or they have impersonal/control orientations, which are the result of need thwarting (Deci & Ryan, 2000). It is also likely that these athletes actually report a preference for a structured coaching environment, where the coach establishes clear expectations, goals and boundaries. However, a structured environment can be autonomy-supportive or controlling, depending on the communication style used by the coach. For example, a coach who pressurizes athletes to meet certain goals and standards is a controlling one, whereas a coach who supports athletes’ efforts toward meeting these goals is autonomy-supportive (Reeve, 2009). It is unlikely that many athletes would flourish under a coaching environment where they are shouted at, are put under surveillance, and their opinion/input is never welcome. If coaches are to become more autonomy-supportive, it is also necessary to teach athletes how to deal with increased autonomy (Pelletier, Fortier, Vallerand, & Brière, 2002). For example, coaches might guide athletes in thinking about some options for a particular play in basketball. Part of the discussion with the athletes might consider what the benefits and costs of alternative strategies are before deciding a course of action. Coaches can gradually scaffold these opportunities (in both frequency and complexity) into training and competition contexts.

The third factor considered to influence coach behaviors is the coach’s perception of the behavior and motivation of the athlete (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). Coaches respond to the behaviors of athletes; for example, some athletes are less cooperative than others and in attempting to “motivate” those less cooperative athletes, coaches typically resort to the use of controlling behaviors. Unfortunately, these controlling behaviors will actually undermine self-determined forms of motivation reinforcing further coaches’ perceptions about athlete motivation and the need for adopting a controlling interpersonal style (Pelletier & Vallerand, 1996).

There is a significant quantum of research supporting an autonomy-supportive approach to coaching. Autonomy-supportive behaviors could be adopted gradually and tried over time (e.g., choices that athletes might prefer during
Figure 5.7  Netball team.

a training session) so that they are refined to meet athletes' needs. In guiding the shift towards an autonomy-supportive approach to coaching, coaches should become more aware of how they communicate with their athletes (e.g., via videoing and reviewing their sessions or seeking feedback from athletes and other coaches). Questions that could be asked to these coaches include:

- What are the most common controlling behaviors you use? What is the frequency of those behaviors?
- What are the most common autonomy-supportive behaviors you employ? What is the frequency of those behaviors?
- What do you think might be the short-, medium-, and long-term consequences of any controlling behaviors?
- Are you interested in changing any controlling behaviors? If so, which ones and how?
- How is your interpersonal style contributing to your athletes' psychological need satisfaction – autonomy, competence, and relatedness?

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, an SDT approach to coaching has much potential in terms of increasing athlete motivation, however, there are some personal, situational and cultural factors that can act as barriers in promoting autonomy-supportive coaching. Such factors should be identified and tackled when developing SDT-based training programs in order to maximize the efficiency of SDT-based training and coaching.
1. Explain what is meant by quality of motivation.

Many people think that it is important to increase the amount of motivation so that athletes will perform better. Essentially, more motivation is assumed to lead to superior outcomes (e.g., effort, performance). However, the quality of motivation is more important than how much motivation one has. Within SDT, higher quality of motivation (i.e., more autonomous) has been found to lead to positive outcomes such as persistence, performance, and psychological well-being. In contrast, lower quality forms of motivation (controlled motivation and amotivation) are related to negative outcomes such as psychological ill-being and attrition from sport.

2. Describe an autonomy-supportive approach to coaching.

Coaches who consider the degree to which they are positively influencing players’ perceptions of choice, competence, and a sense of belonging are considered to have an autonomy-supportive orientation to coaching. In practice, autonomy supportive coaches provide athletes with some choices in what they do in training and competition; they ask questions and listen to what athletes think; they allow athletes some independence and opportunities for showing initiative and problem solving; and they provide informational feedback that guides athletes towards mastering their skills.

3. Identify the three universal psychological human needs advanced by SDT.

Research has supported the key role of three universal psychological needs – autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Satisfaction of these needs fosters optimal human functioning and growth. Autonomy is associated with the perception of choice and personal endorsement in what one does. For example, athletes want to have choice in the design of their training. Also, athletes want to feel good about themselves, especially in activities in which they choose to engage. Experiencing success in sport (e.g., personal improvement in one’s skill level) fosters such perceptions of competence. The third psychological need is that of relatedness. People like to belong to groups – for example, athletes need to feel accepted and valued by their teammates.

4. Discuss how punishments undermine autonomous motivation and psychological needs.

In general, athletes try to do the best they can in sporting contexts; that is, they do not plan to make mistakes. Nevertheless, when athletes do make mistakes it is common for some coaches to use punishment as a means to shape the desired behavior – that is, to avoid the repeat of the same or similar mistakes in the future. Unfortunately, use of punishment has the potential to undermine autonomous motivation by thwarting psychological need satisfaction – autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The avoidance of punishment becomes controlling and can undermine an athlete’s autonomy. Punishments (or threat thereof) can also invoke a fear of failure. In other words, athletes become fearful or worried they will make a mistake, which can become a self-fulfilling prophecy that over time has the potential to reduce an athlete’s perception of competence. Feeling incompetent and worrying about making mistakes can lead to athletes feeling less valued and perhaps not belonging because they perceive they are letting the team down.
REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Compare and contrast autonomy-supportive and controlling interpersonal styles in coaching.

2. In your own words, explain the difference between autonomous and controlled motivation. Include examples to illustrate your understanding of these different forms of motivation.

3. Explain how the SDT constructs reviewed in this chapter can explain variations in athletes' behaviors (e.g., persistence) and psychological well-being.

4. You have been hired as the new coach of a youth soccer team. One of your first observations is that the players on the team have very diverse reasons for playing soccer. Levels of competence vary substantially within the team, some players seem to have very dominant roles, and the relationships among the players are fragmented. Describe how you will aim to increase levels of autonomous motivation and psychological need satisfaction within this team.

5. Identify some of the barriers in implementing an autonomy-supportive interpersonal style.

6. Describe how your (current/past) coach typically behaves. List those behaviors under two headings – controlled and autonomous interpersonal styles. Review those two lists and decide whether you might characterize your coach as either mostly autonomous or mostly controlling. Justify your decision.

EXERCISES

1. Think about why you play your sport and list these reasons. Classify each of those reasons under six headings representing the six motivational regulations.

2. Interview a coach about how they try to foster their athletes' motivation. How do their views align or not align with the key tenets of self-determination theory? Some questions for the interview might include:
   a. How do you foster players' motivation for sport?
   b. How do you support your athletes' autonomy, competence and relatedness?
   c. Do those same strategies work for all athletes? Describe how you might use different strategies for different athletes. Justify your decisions.

3. Interview an athlete coached by the coach chosen for Exercise 2 and ask them:
   a. Why do they play their sport?
   b. How does their coach support or undermine their motivation to play sport?
   c. In what ways does their coach: (i) provide the athlete with some choices; (ii) make them feel competent; and (iii) make them feel valued?

4. Do the coach and the athlete have similar views as to what coaching behaviors are most adaptive and least adaptive? Video a coach in a training session (with their permission). If you are a coach, video your own coaching for one training session. When reviewing the video, label all coaching behaviors as either
controlling or autonomous. Describe the overall coaching interpersonal style in that session using examples to support your conclusions.

5 Describe three controlling behaviors used by the coach in that session. How might you change these behaviors to be more autonomy-supportive? Give specific examples and explanations.

### ADDITIONAL READING


### REFERENCES


