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How do people get stuck? How do they get unstuck?

People get stuck due to conscious and unconscious patterns of thought and behavior that are not fully adaptive to their current challenges. These patterns can be rooted in people's genetic endowment or personal history. Some behavioral tendencies are inherited, and some are learned or developed in response to traumas or other particular circumstances. Finding the roots of maladaptive thoughts and emotions can be helpful, but not always necessary, to change old patterns and get unstuck. Awareness is often the first step, but learning new behaviors might be essential to find new, adaptive responses to new expectations. These patterns can also affect different levels of behavior and functioning. Change can be promoted in multiple ways, using different techniques for varying levels of thinking and functioning. People change by understanding their **deepest unconscious motives, by the awareness of irrational thoughts, or simply by counterconditioning**. Choosing the proper intervention must comply with the specific problem, the levels of functioning, individual needs, expectations, and communication styles.

Sport psychology is a distinctive area because of the unique requirements of its competitive environment. Time is a special factor in a fast-paced field where psychological solutions may be needed in minutes and applied under enormous pressure. I appreciate the approach of Prochaska and Norcross (2014), working across systems and focusing on the processes of change in various psychotherapy systems. The commonalities of the therapy systems are the primary source of change and the main reason people get unstuck. The healing

therapeutic relationship, the increased awareness, and the attention given to a problem are universal to most therapeutic systems. The realization of the old, unconscious patterns and the discovery of new alternatives is often accompanied by a catharsis of the patient in many models. Trusting the therapist and believing in the process are critical elements of change. The differences between the models can have a value for the varying depth and pervasiveness of the problems; the level of functionality; the individual characteristics, needs, and motivations of the client. Therefore, many interventions of the different models may serve the therapists well in integrated and eclectic systems.

The motives for psychotherapy integration (Prochaska & Norcross, 2014, p.388) include many critical factors in a sport and performance setting. A single theory cannot serve all clients and solve all problems in sport, where success depends on multiple aspects at individual, team, organizational or societal levels. A comprehensive conceptual framework is necessary to solve complex problems and address diverse needs. Prochaska and Nordcross (2014, p.390) also listed external socio-economic contingencies as the public and policymakers increasingly demand evidence-based, effective treatments. Effectiveness and a high return on investment of services are strongly required both in professional sport and business. Competitive environments quickly eliminate processes that don't serve them quickly and effectively. The need for short-term, problem-focused therapies is evident in sports and business. Short-term interventions require a pragmatic approach open to "whatever therapy works better and quicker for this patient with this problem." Time and a narrow focus are critical factors in competitive settings. Finding the most focused and quickest solution requires flexibility and openness to new systems and techniques.

My choice of an integrative approach to sport psychology comes from a wide range of personal experiences with different therapy systems. As a sport psychology professional, I will

use the psychodynamic model much less than ACT, CBT, and the existential-humanistic model. Still, it is vital that I also have a good understanding of this theoretical system. My awareness can aid me in understanding psychological problems from a unique perspective. Later in my career, I worked as a corporate trainer and became interested in business coaching. I have studied Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP), used by one of the world's most successful self-development gurus, Tony Robbins. I have learned powerful techniques that proved to be very effective. I have also studied the cognitive behavioral approach, and strategies based on CBT and ACT will dominate my sport psychology practice. The existential-humanistic approach is also essential to a sport psychologist; finding a purpose and a broader perspective on a sport career and beyond is inevitable for all athletes. Multicultural counseling and social justice counseling will also be critical to utilize in my work. I'm thrilled to continue learning about all the significant forces of therapy and consciously integrate them into my philosophy and everyday practice.

References

Prochaska, J. O., & Norcross, J. C. (1994). *Systems of psychotherapy: A transtheoretical analysis* (3rd ed.). Thomson Brooks/Cole Publishing Co.