



PÉCSI TUDOMÁNYEGYETEM
ÁLTALÁNOS ORVOSTUDOMÁNYI KAR

Mental Health Prevention and Rehabilitation of Sport Related Injuries

Szonja Temulin Erdene
erdene.temulin.szonja@pte.hu

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The role of stress



Stress I.

- body's non-specific response to regain homeostasis/balance through adaptation (Selye, 1976)

positive (eustress) – helps to focus, achieve flow, perform better

negative (distress) – can lead to anxiety, sense of threat (**higher risk of injury**)

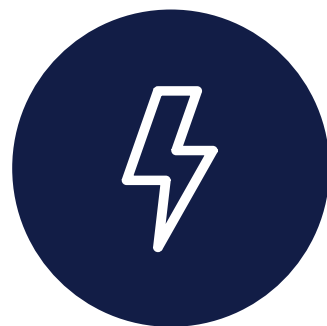
- **STRESS RESPONSE:** physiological and biochemical changes for coping (if unsuccessful: anxiety appears)
- **Stress level is influenced by:** importance of the event, number of uncertain factors, personality traits
- **Increased sensitivity and strong reactions caused by elevated stress**

->VULNERABILITY! (risk of injury)

Stress II.

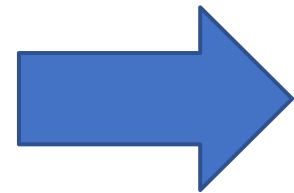
- **Personalities**, who perceive a situation as more stressful -> **higher psychological activity, mentally exhausting**
- Increased muscle tension -> exhaustion, reduced flexibility, motor coordination problems, muscle functioning difficulties
(strain, sprain, tear)
- **Narrowing of the visual field**

Cognitive evaluation model



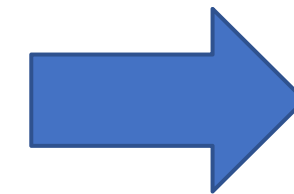
Injury

Severity of injury?



Reaction to stress= evaluation, processing

How “dangerous” is the situation?
What resources are available?



Selection of coping strategies

Adaptive or maladaptive
strategies?

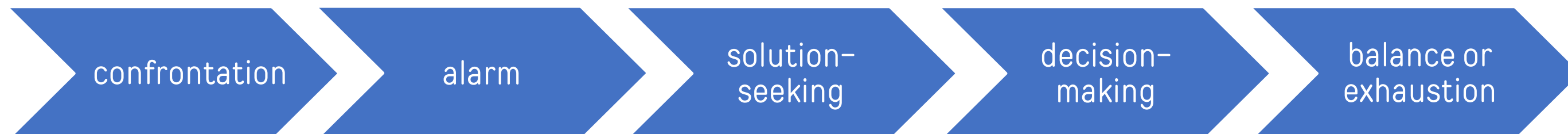
Injury= crisis

- CRISIS= danger and opportunity (Greek)
- **Some kind of decision, turning point**
- It carries the potential for **growth and change**
- Two types:

1. psychosocial/developmental crisis- unavoidable (natural to happen), PREVENTION is key (e.g. career ending)

2. accidental/situational crisis- unexpected, external event (e.g. **injury**)

- response to crisis depends on: 1) severity of injury 2) possible consequences 3) timing 4) personality 5) environment
- **5 stages of a crisis:**

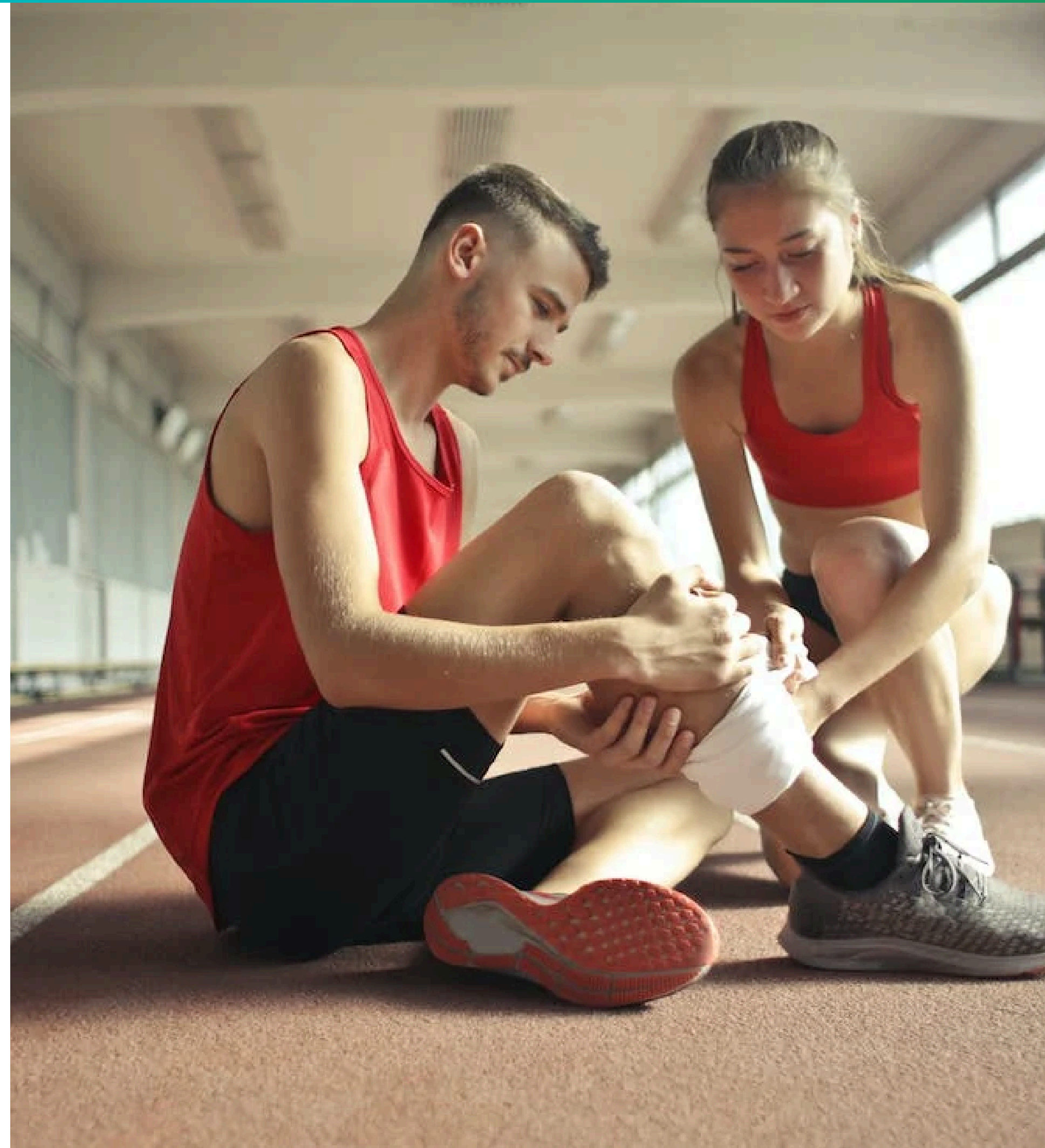


The psychology of sports injuries



An injured athlete may experience...

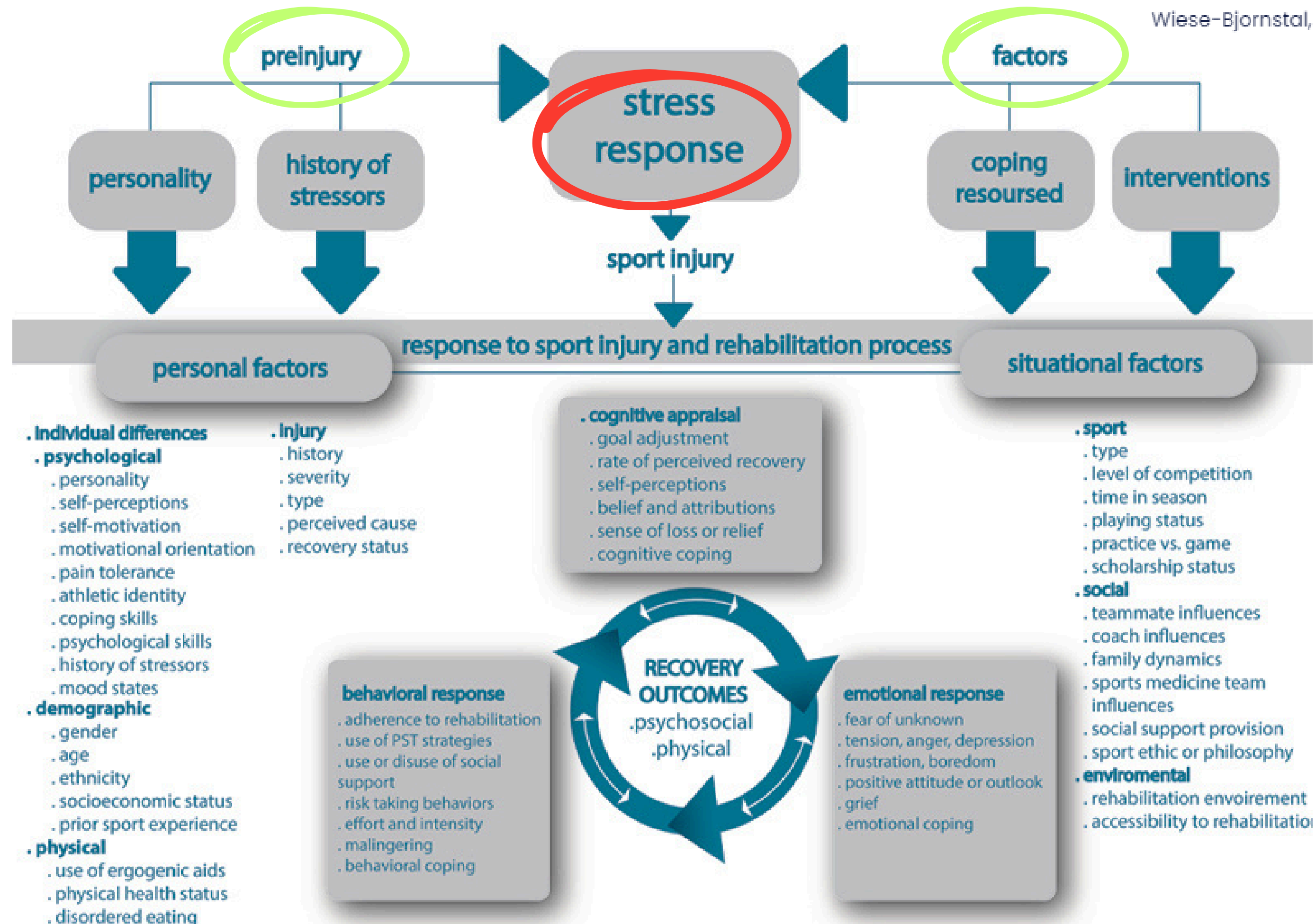
- **restricted attention** (focusing on the problem)
- **reduced mental capacity** (challenges in processing of the situation)
- **decreased emotional control and self-regulation** (extreme behaviors, aggression)
- **changed relationships** (egocentrism, increased need for support)
- **regression** (blaming others, denial)





Negative psychological consequences

- Stress and anxiety
- Anger
- Issues related to compliance
- Depression
- Concentration and attention problems
- Exercise addiction



Anxiety

- **Anxiety:** negative emotional state, when a situation perceived as threatening + without specific object (e.g. **fear of injury**)
- **Signs:** muscle tension, rapid breath, sweating, nausea, mental symptoms such as decreased concentration
- **State anxiety:** temporary emotional reaction to a specific situation (e.g. the starting moments of a competition)
- **Trait anxiety:** a “predisposition” to anxiety, „general characteristic” (e.g. performance anxiety) (Spielberger, 1983)
- pre-competition anxiety: cognitive and somatic manifestation



Athlete Identity and Injury

- most of an athlete's life revolves around sport → **self-concept and personality merge with the athletic role**
- **injury → IDENTITY AT RISK**
- the more exclusively life is invested in sport, the more likely the injury will be experienced as a trauma → impacting all areas of life
- **possible consequences: depression, anxiety, hopelessness**
- **increased attention from professionals is essential!**
- encourage development in multiple life domains
- goal setting provides stability amidst uncertainty



Rehabilitation





Rehabilitation I.

- the mental aspects are receiving more attention in healthcare
- feelings related to pain are natural — in fact, they are part of the rehabilitation process
- **return to play:** often, athletes not mentally ready -> **tension, anxiety**, which can lead to:
 - re-injury
 - injury to another body part
 - low self-confidence, decreased performance
 - depression
 - fear of injury
 - decreased motivation

Rehabilitation II.

psychological support:

- help to process the event (emotions and thoughts) related to the injury
- support the overall rehabilitation process
- social support (family, friends) is also primary!

- **TECHNIQUES**

Relaxation

- reduces tension, enhances blood circulation
- provides a sense of control
- combined with visualization and imagination (e.g. return to the court)

Negative self-talk – reframing

- helps to change negative thought patterns into more positive ones

Goal setting

- clear, achievable goals can enhance motivation and focus



Remington- University of North Carolina



Literature

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Thank you for your attention!