

The Importance of Positive Exercise-Related Feelings on Exercise Behaviour

According to SDT, a tendency to view causes of a behavior as autonomous (a chance to express personal choice and pursue personal goals), controlled (pressure to fulfill an obligation or to gain an extrinsic reward), or impersonal (a chance for failure, or to demonstrate incompetence) can influence motivation, self-regulation, and experience. This in turn affects a person's feelings towards certain behaviour. Behaviors that satisfy psychological needs for autonomy (feeling that behavior originates from within the self), competence (feeling effective and capable), and relatedness (feeling connected with others) facilitate actions that are more intrinsically motivated (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Self-determined motivation is characterized by a sense that one is acting under one's own volition and choice, whereas non-self-determined motivation is characterized by acting under external pressure and demand (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Research has shown that positive feelings towards exercise predict more frequent exercise behavior (Kwan & Bryan, 2010; Schneider, Dunn, & Cooper, 2009; Williams, Dunsiger, Ciccolo, Lewis, Albrecht & Marcus, 2008). Positive exercise-related feelings are not only a consequence of self-determination, but is also a facilitator of the process of internalizing exercise values and regulations. Importantly, "it is typically people's feelings, beliefs, motives, and goals, and the perceived environment within which these feelings, beliefs, motives, and goals arise, that organize subsequent behavior" (Ryan & Deci, 2008).

Creating an autonomy-supportive learning climate

Listen to students more and offer more empathic statements, to reduce apprehensions related to engaging in practicing new motor skills. E.g. try to give more encouragements and use more empathic statements such as "I can see that you are starting to get tired, you can have a break if you want". Offer greater support for students' autonomy by suggesting different possibilities and enhancing initiative taking. E.g. letting students decide the format of games in PE or offering several options for practice.

Creating an environment of perceived competence

Several authors have agreed that perceived competence is the most influential predictor of intrinsic motivation or interest among adolescent students in physical education (e.g. Ferrer-Caja & Weiss, 2000, 2002; Ntoumanis, 2001; Standage, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2003). E.g. providing differentiated platforms for learning that challenges students but not overwhelm them. Present a well-structured environment that gives clear guidelines on tasks, provides optimal challenges, and offers contingent feedback on how to achieve desired outcomes may be successful in satisfying students' need for competence (Taylor & Ntoumanis, 2007). For example, provide positive feedback by praising students for the effort that they put in instead of just their successful performance.

Creating an environment of relatedness

Try to be warm, sympathetic, humorous, listening and investing time and energy for students. Be more involved with students, listen to them more and offer more empathic statements. This will help in reducing apprehensions related to engaging in practicing new motor skills. Avoid being cold, distant, sarcastic, and inflexible with students.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Autonomy: The degree of volition one feels in pursuing the activity and the need to feel congruence between an activity and one's values (Deci & Ryan, 2000). E.g. "I feel like I can make a lot of inputs in deciding how my job gets done"

Perceived competence: An individual's striving to experience effectance; e.g., "People tell me I am good at what I do"

Relatedness: Refers to individuals' opportunities to feel related and belonging when they interact within a social environment that offers affection, warmth, care, and nurturance (Skinner & Edge, 2002).

Causality orientations: Difference in people's understanding of the nature of causality of their behavior (Deci, 1980).

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