

# SELF-AWARENESS WORKSHEET

## OUR "ZONES"



"Zones" represent physical, emotional and psychological states that we experience as we move through life. We may feel comfortable (green zone), challenged (yellow zone), or at a point where we need to stop, take a step back and re-evaluate (red zone).

As high-performance athletes, we are generally good at noticing the physical signals (e.g., out of breath, lactic acid build up, dizzy) that indicate we are moving through these different zones during training and competition, and are well-trained in how to respond.

Generally, we're not as skilled at recognizing and labeling the **behaviours, thoughts, and emotions** we experience as we move through our comfort, challenge and stop zones during our daily lives. Often, we have been socialized to dismiss pain, push through discomfort, and suppress our emotional reactions (be stoic). But being able to recognize when we're not feeling like ourselves is an important skill and can prevent distress if we intervene early. Continued self-awareness is the foundation of mental health maintenance. In order to intervene when our mental health is declining, we first need to notice the "signals".



### IDENTIFYING YOUR "SIGNALS"

#### SIGNALS: LOOKS LIKE

- How am I behaving?*
- How am I interacting with others?*
- How do I look?*

#### SIGNALS: SOUNDS LIKE

- What am I saying to myself (inner monologue)?*
- What am I saying to others?*

#### SIGNALS: FEELS LIKE

- What emotions and sensations am I experiencing?*

## EXERCISE



Complete the chart below to identify some of the behaviours, thoughts and feelings (signals) that correspond to your mental health zones. **REMEMBER:** Your signals are likely very different from others' signals because many factors influence how we move through our day to day lives.

### COMFORT ZONE

Explore the 'signals' that let you know you're in the green zone

- For example:
- I feel peaceful
  - I am patient with others
  - I am assertive
  - I smile often
  - I feel grateful to be alive

### CHALLENGE ZONE

Explore the 'signals' that let you know you're in the yellow zone

- For example:
- I am easily frustrated by others
  - I don't talk as much
  - I spend more time alone
  - I have trouble focusing
  - I need frequent, deliberate breaks

### STOP ZONE

Explore the 'signals' that let you know you're in the red zone

- For example:
- I lash out at others
  - I'm scared even though there is no visible threat to my safety
  - I worry constantly
  - I have trouble completing my daily tasks
  - I have difficulty sleeping

## BUILD



Now that you're more aware of what it looks like, sounds like and feels like to move through your mental health zones, consider "checking-in" with yourself a few times during the day (e.g., when you wake up in the morning, before you go to bed in the evening, after working out). You can ask yourself: "What zone am I in right now?" / "How do I know?" Just like any other technical or tactical skill, self-awareness is a skill that can be developed – so check in often!

# WORKSHEET: ACCEPTING UNCERTAINTY & ADVERSITY

Acceptance is the active process of embracing all human experiences, without trying to deny, control, or fight them. When we cling to situations that are no longer representative of our current reality (e.g., *expected preparation for the Olympic Games*), we are not as receptive to potential new situations (e.g., *modified preparation for the Olympic Games*). When we learn to accept our experiences for what they are and utilize our values to guide our actions, we are more open to the future and can more effectively respond to adversity.

This worksheet will help you to work through accepting any uncertainty and adversity you are experiencing at the moment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## EXERCISE IDENTIFY WHAT YOU ARE THINKING AND FEELING



Identify what you are currently thinking and feeling regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on you. By doing this, you can begin to accept and externalize your experiences to more effectively manage them. Also take the time to indicate what you value at this time to guide your future actions.

Complete the following prompts:

**I CURRENTLY THINK:** E.g., I am thinking that I may not be able to compete in the Olympics, and all this preparation was for nothing.

**I CURRENTLY FEEL:** E.g., I feel tense, disappointed, anxious about the future

**I CURRENTLY VALUE:** E.g. Health, support, communication, transparency

Acknowledge that it is normal and appropriate to experience a variety of thoughts and feelings given the current COVID-19 situation and uncertainty about the future.

**GIVEN THE CURRENT PANDEMIC, IT IS APPROPRIATE AND NORMAL TO THINK AND FEEL:** E.g., The pandemic is new and rapidly evolving for everyone, so it's normal to worry and feel stressed.

Identify helpful ways of thinking and feeling to generate positive experiences amidst this stressful period.

**MOVING FORWARD IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO THINK:** E.g. This is a great time to adapt my training, spend quality time with loved ones, and add recovery to my routine.

**MOVING FORWARD IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO FEEL:** E.g. A sense of calm, control, hope.

**EXERCISE IDENTIFY THE FACTS ABOUT THE SITUATION:**



Examine the factual evidence available to you using the following prompts:

**COVID-19 EXPERTS ARE SAYING:** E.g. Everyone must respect social distancing to limit the spread of the virus

**SPORT EXPERTS ARE SAYING:** E.g. Training facilities are closed to respect health regulations and we can adapt training by doing X, Y, Z.

**EXERCISE IDENTIFY WHAT IS WITHIN YOUR CONTROL:**



List the elements of this COVID-19 situation that are within and outside of your **control**. Consider what's **external** to you in your environment (physical, online - typically outside of your control) and what's **internal** to you (thoughts, feelings, body sensations, actions - typically within your control).

**OUTSIDE OF MY CONTROL:** E.g. Cancellation of upcoming trials, imposed physical isolation from my team.

**WITHIN MY CONTROL:** E.g. My attitude toward the cancellation of upcoming trials, my ability to communicate online with my team.

**FOCUS** *It is best to focus on what you can control, and avoid spending unnecessary time and energy on what is outside of your control.*



Acknowledge and accept the thoughts and feelings you are experiencing as they are valid and normal amidst this unpredictable and emotional storm. At the same time, build resilience and maintain your well-being by developing positive and helpful thoughts that will generate "feel good" experiences.

**BUILD** *Create a self-talk statement to remind yourself to:*



- accept your current situation,
- focus on what is within your control, and
- generate a positive experience.

E.g. "Even though I don't know what's coming next, decisions are made to protect everyone's health and this is what's most important. I can control what I do today, such as exercising and spending quality time with my family."



# Navigate //

Grounding is a technique rooted in mindfulness that helps bring the mind away from challenging emotions and towards the present moment. You can use grounding techniques when you're feeling anxious, panicked, frustrated, or distressed in any way. Here are two tools to help you ground yourself in your senses:

## 1. THE 5-4-3-2-1 TECHNIQUE:

- 5 – NAME FIVE THINGS YOU CAN SEE
- 4 – NAME FOUR THINGS YOU CAN TOUCH
- 3 – NAME THREE THINGS YOU CAN HEAR
- 2 – NAME TWO THINGS YOU CAN SMELL
- 1 – NAME ONE THING YOU CAN TASTE

2. A body scan – tune in to the sensations in your body. Try it out with this [guided meditation](#) from Stop, Breathe, & Think



# WORKSHEET: ADAPT

Social distancing has no doubt disrupted your plans for training and competition. Although the request from Public Health officials to minimize or eliminate contact with others is outside of your control, you can modify your training to meet these requirements while continuing to prepare for potential competitions ahead.

Here are some ways you can modify your physical, technical/tactical, and mental/emotional preparation while respecting social distancing guidelines.

## PHYSICAL



- **Sleep:** Improve your sleep hygiene in order to boost your immune systems and allow yourself to perform optimally.
- **Workout of the day:** If you don't have access to a gym, modify your workouts (e.g., bodyweight only, using bands instead of bars, use heavy objects as weights).
- **Conditioning:** Work on your conditioning with long distance runs, cycles, sprints, hill-work or interval training and use this time to connect with nature.
- **Mobility:** Focus on improving your flexibility (try yoga for some mindfulness-infused stretching).

## TECHNICAL & TACTICAL



- **Fly solo:** Refine your individual technical skills (e.g., stick handling).
- **Throwbacks:** Review competition videos to stay connected to positive experiences and memories. Learn from what you were doing well and what you can improve.
- **Fancy footwork:** Focus on improving speed and agility with footwork drills and games.
- **Become a student of the game:** Review footage of the "greats" in your sport to learn from what they do exceptionally well.

## MENTAL & EMOTIONAL



- **Stay connected:** You can still communicate with your teammates and coaches virtually. Consider scheduling daily or weekly check-ins or virtual hangouts at times you would usually gather in person to maintain routine and social support.
- **Self-care:** Engaging in activities that support your emotional, spiritual, physical and psychological well-being is more important than ever. Make a list of things you find enjoyable and relaxing (e.g., try a new relaxation technique or mindfulness program using an app)! Set a self-care goal for yourself each and every day!
- **Visualize:** Researchers have found that visualization is almost as effective as practice when it comes to skill acquisition and retention. Visualize yourself successfully performing key skills or sequences in training or competition by using all of your senses. Visualizing yourself accomplishing tasks is important, but it is also valuable to imagine how you will effectively respond to potential setback and barriers that could arise in the future.
- **Invest in yourself:** Take this time to learn more about yourself, spend time with yourself, and engage in activities that allow you to grow.
- **Get support:** If you already have a mental performance consultant (MPC), reach out for support. If you'd like to connect with an MPC, visit the CSPA website to find a qualified practitioner in your area ([www.cspa-acps.com](http://www.cspa-acps.com)). Our team is also available via telehealth to support your mental health needs. Visit [www.ccmhs-ccsms.ca/refer](http://www.ccmhs-ccsms.ca/refer) for more information.

## EXERCISE



### YOUR TURN! WHAT ARE SOME WAYS YOU CAN ADAPT YOUR TRAINING FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS?

Things are changing rapidly amidst the COVID-19 epidemic, so it's important to tackle your training in small manageable chunks. Establish flexible goals to achieve along with a realistic training plan. Consider discussing this with your coaches, teammates, MPC, and/or other support staff

# WORKSHEET: VALUES DRIVEN BEHAVIOUR

## VALUES VS. GOALS

Values and goals can be related but are distinct concepts. For example, our values may inform the goals we choose to strive for. If life is a journey you can think of values as a compass reminding you of where your true North lies, while goals are "check-points" you want to hit along the way.

Values are the principles that guide our way of being (e.g., behaviour, decision-making, priorities) in all domains of life. When our **goals** and behaviours are aligned with our values, we are taking **committed action**, leading us to experience satisfaction, intrinsic motivation, fulfilment, and contentment.



Identifying our values provides us with a compass by which to live, helping us to plan, set goals, and make difficult decisions in sport and life.

## COMMITTED ACTION

Committed action means behaving in ways that are both motivated and guided by our values. It includes physical (e.g., verbal/non-verbal language) and psychological (e.g., attitude) components. Committed action moves us toward the people and things that we value.

This worksheet will help you identify your values and guide you toward taking committed actions as you manage yourself and your environment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## EXERCISE



1. Read through the list of values below (Table 1) and reflect on each word individually. Sit with each word for a moment and explore to what extent it resonates with you.
2. After your first read through, think about your life and your athletic performance. Ask yourself: How do I want to be in life and in sport? **Circle the values that you feel reside at the core of your response to this question.**

Make sure the values you chose are based on your personal beliefs and desires. Remember the difference between a value (i.e., principle guiding your way of being) and a goal (i.e., an aim or result you want to accomplish).

Curious	Hard-working	Creative	Determined	Fair	Optimistic	Forgiving
Present	Generous	Adventurous	Helpful	Respectful	Peaceful	Flexible
Persistent	Cooperative	Competitive	Challenged	Encouraging	Responsible	Grateful
Patient	Balanced	Humble	Brave	Trusting	Autonomous	Controlled
Healthy	Honest	Caring	Friendly	Supportive	Compassionate	Self-aware
Others: _____						

List your top 3 chosen values below and indicate why they are important to you.

**Value 1:**

This value is important to me because: \_\_\_\_\_

**Value 2:**

This value is important to me because: \_\_\_\_\_

**Value 3:**

This value is important to me because: \_\_\_\_\_

When faced with challenging or uncomfortable situations, we can take actions that move us **TOWARD** (closer to) or **AWAY** (further from) from what we value. When we move toward the people and things we value, we are taking committed action (e.g., deciding to train out of one's hometown rather than a Sport Centre in a different province is a committed action for someone who highly value being responsible, flexible, respectful, cooperative, and competitive). Living by our values allows us to inevitably change what we can to improve a situation while making room for the challenges/struggles that go with it (important with some the elements of this COVID-19 situation). Making room refers to acceptance and self-compassion.

## EXERCISE

Using the top 3 values you identified in the previous exercise, identify the **committed actions** you can take to effectively manage yourself and your environment within the constraints of this COVID-19 situation. Remember, committed actions include physical and psychological components.



E.g., Value 1: Responsible

**Committed Action:** I will adhere to national guidelines and engage in social distancing, including when training outside. I will encourage and support others in doing the same.

**Value 1:**

**Committed action:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Value 2:**

**Committed action:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Value 3:**

**Committed action:** \_\_\_\_\_