



Examiners' Report Lead Examiner Feedback

January 2021

Pearson BTEC Nationals
In Sport and Exercise Science (31815H)
Unit 3: Applied Sport and Exercise Psychology

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January 2021

Publications Code 31815H_2101_ER

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Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

This was the seventh series of the 2017 specification, and the third time the case study has been presented as unseen. The structure has remained constant in the format of a case study where a young athlete experiences an event that changes their relationship to their activity. The format of the assessment is the same with three activities based on the case study. Each activity is marked using a levels-based approach, where the overall quality of the response is considered rather than identifying individual marking points. While the case study is always different the three activities remain the same.

The case study is about Millie who is a 16-year-old gymnast whose arousal and anxiety levels are impacted when she falls off the balance bar during her routine. Prior to this fall Millie is a very self-confident gymnast who shows a growth mindset by believing she will be successful if she practices enough. Her coach works hard to develop her self-efficacy by working on the four factors, performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal, that influence self-efficacy.

When Millie falls off the balance beam her cognitive ('I can't relax and focus on my routine as I am worried about falling off the bars') and somatic anxiety ('she has sweaty palms and butterflies in her stomach') increase. This increase in anxiety is the result of overarousal that impacts on Millie's performance and causes her to give up on her routine. This is an example of choking or reaching the point of catastrophe. Finally, Millie shows a lack of resilience by saying that she cannot cope during adversity.

Individual Questions

Activity 1

In this activity learners had to describe how psychological factors were impacting on Millie in the case study. To do this activity well, learners had to read and analyse the case study thoroughly to enable them to draw out the relevant information and produce an extended answer.

This involved three stages which made up the three traits of the levels-based mark scheme. Firstly, they had to identify specific psychological factors that were impacting on Millie; secondly, with reference to the content of the case study show where each factor was present and the positive or negative impact/effect each factor was having on performance. Credit was also awarded for defining/explaining each factor and for providing any additional information about the factor.

Learners could be awarded with a Band 3 grade either by covering 3 factors in detail or covering up to five factors in less detail.

Good responses made significant and continual references back to the case and showed the examiner that they were clear about how each factor was impacting on Millie. In this case study the psychological factors that had most relevance were as follows:

- Self-confidence
- Self-efficacy
- Mindset (growth and fixed)
- Stress
- Anxiety (cognitive and somatic)
- Arousal
- Resilience

It is really important for learners to identify the key issues specific to the case study. For example, in this case study arousal, anxiety and self-confidence were the key factors with growth mindset and resilience also being present. Learners will only receive full credit for selecting these specific factors rather than generic psychological factors.

In particular, some learners focus on motivation which has very limited relevance to this case study and as a result will receive very limited credit. If motivation is covered in there would be very explicit references to motivation, such as 'she really enjoys winning medals and trophies' or 'she really likes pushing herself and finding out what she is capable of'.

There is a maximum amount of credit that can be awarded to each factor so there is no need to write everything you know about each factor. You will receive credit for identifying a factor, defining or explaining it, showing where it is present/impacting in the case study (most important) and whether the impact is positive, negative or both. Credit can be awarded to each factor that the learner writes about.

Learners will benefit from spending time reading and rereading the case to accurately identify which factors are most important and relevant in this case study rather than trying to fit their knowledge to case studies.

Learner's responses were marked by gaining a mark in one of three grade bands:

Grade band 1: 1-5 marks

Grade band 2: 6-10 marks

Grade band 3: 11-15 marks

Activity 1

This response was placed in Band 3: and gained 15 marks out of 15

Activity 1

Describe the psychological **factors** that impact on Millie in the case study.

Your answer should focus on the:

- (a) key psychological factors
- (b) impact of the factors
- (c) effect of the factors on Millie's performance.

(15) Act1

^{significant A}
~~The most~~ ~~single~~ ~~important~~ ~~factor~~ ~~for~~ ~~that~~ ~~links~~ ~~to~~
 Millie is stress and anxiety. Stress is defined as a mental or emotional response to the body to any demand made on it. There are two types of stress: Eustress and distress. Eustress is a positive form of stress that allows the performer to remain focused on the task whereas distress is a negative form of stress that can have a negative effect on performance. For Millie she becomes stressed ^{after} when she "falls off" during the balance beam routine. There is a four stage process which describes how Millie becomes stressed which is a: demand, your perception of the demand, does your level of arousal increase or decrease and finally what is the outcome. For Millie the demand would be "performing her last event" and because she fell off she is concerned about

not being able to do the last performance. This causes Millie to become more stressed and as a result Millie "stops and walks off" from the routine. This has a negative impact on Millie as her stress causes her to withdraw from the performance and therefore this could have a negative effect on her overall score over all of her routines.

One of the most significant factors ~~ANOTHER~~ factor that links to the case study is anxiety. Anxiety is a negative emotional state ~~the~~ associated with feelings of nervousness, apprehension and worry. The two main forms of anxiety are cognitive and somatic anxiety.

~~Anxiety~~ Cognitive anxiety is related to negative thoughts and doubts and somatic anxiety is physical/physiological forms of apprehension such as sweating or an increased heart rate.

Millie shows signs of anxiety after she "falls". She shows signs of ~~both~~ cognitive and somatic anxiety as she tells her coach she has "sweaty palms and butterflies in her stomach."

Millie also shows cognitive anxiety when she said she is "worried about performing in her last event." Millie's cognitive and somatic anxiety would have a negative impact on her

performance as she will lose focus and having cognitive anxiety ^{will} could make her doubt her ability therefore decreasing her self-confidence.

A factor that links to Millie's case study is self-confidence. Self-confidence is defined as the belief in our own ability to perform well during general tasks. For Millie, she is usually a very confident performer who "believes she will be successful" which shows she has a lot of self-confidence ~~however~~. This will positively impact her performance as she will have confidence in her ability therefore she will ~~have~~ be focussed ^{on the task} which will increase her effort and therefore her overall performance. ~~the~~ After her fall Millie loses her self-confidence as she believes she ~~isn't~~ ^{she isn't} able to carry on so she "walks off" ~~from the line~~ ^{is} "too difficult" for her. This will ~~probably~~ cause Millie to ~~not~~ have a fixed mindset as she doesn't think she is capable of performing well after the fall.

The factor that is associated with self-confidence is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy ^{another significant factor and} is defined as someone's belief in their ability to perform a set task. Self-efficacy differs to self-

confidence or self-confidence relates to general tasks whereas self-efficacy is specific. For Millie her self-efficacy decreased after her balance beam performance as after she starts her uneven ^{bars} beam routine she comes off and says the routine is "too difficult for her." This shows low levels of self-efficacy as Millie does not believe she is capable of completing the final routine as it is "too difficult" for her. This has negatively impacted Millie's performance as she withdrew and "walks off" which will result in her ~~own~~ overall score being affected. This will ~~be~~ also cause Millie to get into a ~~growth~~ fixed mindset as she believes her ~~an~~ ability ^{(of} ~~is~~ ^{that she}) can not perform the routine.

Another factor linked to Millie's case study is mindset. The two main types of mindset are growth and fixed. Someone with a growth mindset believes their ~~an~~ ability is never static, they like to challenge themselves ~~also~~, they love feedback and criticism, and they always go against challenging opponents. In the beginning Millie has a growth mindset

believer that "practising for as many hours as possible is the best way to achieve excellence." This links to Millie constantly challenging herself as she wants to do well. However after her last competition Millie changes from a growth to a fixed mindset. This is because after she fell off the beam Millie "can't go on" as the routine is "too difficult". Performers with fixed mindsets ~~do~~ do not challenge themselves and are afraid of being compared to by others. Millie shows a fixed mindset as she believes she cannot come back from her fall so she wants to give up. Having a fixed mindset will negatively affect her performance and future performance as she will begin to stop challenging herself as she feels as though there is nothing more she can do. This will also decrease her self-confidence as she will believe she isn't good enough.

Another factor that is not a significant but is in the case study is resilience. Resilience is someone's ability to overcome adversity or how well performers deal with challenges. Adversity is defined as being a difficult

situation and adversity, includes: slump in form, burnout, transition or decrease in performance. ~~not the case study~~ Depending on how well you cope with difficult situations, your resilience can affect how much effort you put in. For Millie, she suffers from a drop in form / "falling off" the balance beam as she is put in a difficult situation. Millie reacts negatively by stopping during her uneven bars performance and "walks off" saying, "I can't go on, the routine is too difficult." This shows that Millie hasn't got a lot of resilience which affects the amount of effort she puts in. Her lack of resilience causes her effort to decrease so she gives up. This will inhibit Millie's performance in the future as if she makes another mistake or falls, she will give up. This will cause Millie to have low motivation to try the routine for the uneven bars and it could cause her to suffer from a fixed mindset.

This response shows both breadth and depth of knowledge and skills. The learner identifies six factors – stress, anxiety, self-confidence, self-efficacy, mindset, and resilience. For each factor, the learner provides a definition and then some further information or explanation of each factor, they use quotations or content directly from the case study to show where the factor is impacting and link it to performance showing whether it is having a positive or negative impact.

This response would have been at the top of grade band 1 even if they had only covered 3-4 of the factors that they identified due to the accuracy of their response and the depth of content they produced.

This response was placed in Band 2: and gained 6 marks out of 15

Question 1

Millie is showing signs of stress. This is shown when she tells her coach that she has butterfly's and sweaty palms before her last event. There are different types of stress which are eustress (stress that is intrinsic) and de-stress (stress that is caused from outside sources). There are also different levels of stress which are: cognitive, somatic and behavioural. Millie is showing eustress because her own failure is causing her to worry about the next event and she is worried that she will not perform well or she will fall again which would embarrass and humiliate her.

Millie is showing signs of anxiety. This is shown when she tells her coach she has butterfly's and sweaty palms before her last event. There are different types of anxiety which are state (anxiety from a certain situation) and trait (characteristic that she has naturally anxious). Millie shows state anxiety because this is the only situation that it has happened in. It says that when she competes she usually looks calm under pressure and totally focussed on her events which shows she doesn't have trait anxiety. This shows state anxiety because this is the first time that she is anxious for an event which is effecting her self-confidence and her belief that she will do well.

Millie shows that she is properly motivated. There are 2 types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is motivation that comes from inside herself whereas extrinsic motivation is motivation that comes from outside sources. It is shown that Millie gets a lot more extrinsic then intrinsic motivation. This is shown when her coach tells her to read about her previous successes. Extrinsic motivation is good but intrinsic motivation is better because it is always there when you need it whereas extrinsic motivation is only there for a certain amount of time until it goes away. It is important that Millie should not be over motivated as if she is then she will start to experience negative effects such as overtraining, lack of motivation and burnout which will all lead to a decrease in motivation and loss of interest. Millie is starting to show signs of over motivation when she practices for as many hours as possible.

Millie shows self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is defined as the belief in your abilities at performing well in a certain situation. Millie's self-efficacy is shown in her first 2 events and then she has a lack of self-efficacy in her last event. Millie's self-efficacy in the first 2 events comes from her coach who is constantly motivating her and then she believes that she will do well. Millie's lack of self-efficacy in the last event when she walks out of the event. She does not believe that she will do well so she walked of so she didn't have to embarrass herself.

In this response the learner has identified 3 relevant factors but there are inaccuracies in their response. Stress is correctly identified and while eustress/distress is an aspect of stress the explanation is not correct. Somatic, cognitive, and behavioural components relate to anxiety and eustress is inaccurately linked to poor performance.

Anxiety is correctly identified and then trait and state anxiety are accurately explained. There is an accurate link to the case study but the relationship to performance is not clear. Motivation does not attract any credit. Self-efficacy is correctly identified and defined but the link to performance is unclear.

The breadth of content here and small pockets of knowledge and application put this response at the bottom end of grade Band 2.

Activity 2

In this activity learners had to explain psychological theories that account for Millie's experiences in the case study. To do this activity well learners had to do three things: i) identify correct theories that are linked to the factors described in Activity 1; ii) explain the key principles of each theory and iii) contextualise the theory to show how it accounts for the experiences of Millie in the case study.

Ideally a learner would cover at least three theories that are clearly linked to the factors that they identified in Activity 1. It is expected that there is detailed coverage of at least two theories and less detailed coverage of other theories with clear and coherent links to the case study and how it could explain Millie's experiences. Credit can be received for all theories that are covered so a learner can receive credit for depth and breadth of knowledge.

In this case study the theories with most relevance were as follows:

Bandura's self-efficacy theory

Multidimensional anxiety theory

Inverted U hypothesis

Catastrophe theory

Individual zones of optimal functioning

Reversal theory

Vealey's multidimensional model of sport confidence

Dweck's mindset theory

To gain full credit for Vealey's multidimensional model of sport confidence learners should refer to the most recent 2008 model which significantly updates the original 1986 model of sport confidence. This multidimensional model is presented in both the Pearson and Stafford-Brown and Rea textbooks.

Motivation theories (need achievement theory, achievement goal theory) were poor choices of theory as there is no explicit evidence in the case study to support their relevance. Thus, they attracted limited credit.

Learner responses were marked by gaining a mark in one of three grade bands:

Grade band 1: 1-5 marks

Grade band 2: 6-10 marks

Grade band 3: 11-15 marks

This response was placed in Band 3: and gained 15 marks out of 15

Activity 2

Explain how psychological theories can be applied to Millie's experiences in the case study.

Your answer should focus on:

- (a) key psychological theories linked to this case study
- (b) explaining key principles of each psychological theory
- (c) applying and justifying the key psychological theories in this case study.

NAME
EXPLAIN
CASE STUDY

(15) Act2

Throughout the case study lots of theories can be applied to Millie's experiences. These include: reversal theory for self confidence, diwecks mindset theory, vearys model of self confidence, banduras model of self efficacy and catastrophie theory of anxiety.

Firstly, the reversal theory for anxiety is displayed through Millie's behaviour. This suggests that anxiety can change based on how the athlete sees the situation. At the beginning Millie shows very little anxiety and she is confident in herself however towards the end of the case study her anxiety levels rise because she is getting nervous. At the beginning Millie doesn't see the situation as threatening and resolutely displays very little anxiety however when Millie makes the mistake on bean this makes her anxiety levels rise massively as she sees it as a negative situation

making her stressed and panicked. In the case study it says "millie is very upset and tells her coach that she is worried about performing in the last event". This has occurred because millie fell off during the beam, this made her arousal levels extremely high causing her anxiety to rise from being all calmed to over anxious. This is a negative thing to happen to millie because she can no longer concentrate or focus as she sees the situation as negative.

Another theory demonstrated throughout the case study is Dweck's mindset theory. This theory suggests there are 2 mindsets that can be shown within an athlete. Fixed mindset and growth mindset. A growth mindset is where athletes believe effort and hard work will lead to increased performance whereas a fixed mindset believes that natural talent is the reason for success. Fixed ^{mindset} athletes also see situations negatively and believe they can't do it. whereas growth mindset athletes believe it's a challenge and can be completed. At

The beginning Millie demonstrates characteristics of a growth mindset athlete. This is because she believes "practicing for as many hours as possible is the best way for excellence" this shows her belief that effort is the way how progress is made. This is a good way for an athlete to think as it means they look for challenges so they can be the best they can be. Towards the end of the case study Millie shows signs that she is displaying characteristics of a fixed mindset athlete. This is because she believes "she can't go on because the routine is too difficult for her." This shows how she is now seeing the bars as a threat rather than a challenge. This should not be the case because Millie has been doing gymnastics since she was 5 years old and would have completed bars many times before. Since Millie stated thinking like a fixed mindset athlete it led to her suddenly "stopping" and walking off. This shows how Millie is losing confidence in herself which led to her thinking completing bars is unachievable. This means Millie will not get a score on bars meaning her overall

score will be much lower.

Bandura's model of self efficacy is also relevant to the case study. Bandura's model has 4 parts which lead to efficacy expectations which can then lead to performance and satisfaction. These 4 parts are: vicarious experiences which involve looking at clips of watching other athletes, verbal persuasion which is encouragement ~~and~~ by coaches and respected role models, emotional arousal and performance accomplishments which are looking back at previous success. Millie demonstrates vicarious experiences in the case study as her "coach shows her video clips of her favorite gymnasts", this will keep her motivated and will keep her confident, verbal persuasion is used by her coach as she tells Millie "that she can be successful because she has practiced hundreds of times" ^{she also says "she is just excited to perform"} this shows her coach is helping with her self efficacy, her emotional arousal level changes from low to high in the case study and finally Millie shows performance accomplishments by ~~looking~~ ^{thinking} about the "hundreds of times Millie

has completed the tasks. All of these were present in the case study. The emotional arousal was too much for Millie so this is why performance and satisfaction was not completely achieved. Despite this & the most of her performance was successful.

Another theory shown in the case study is the catastrophe theory of ~~arousal~~ ^{arousal}. This catastrophe theory is when arousal steadily increases to an optimum point; something then happens which affects performance in a negative way. In the case study Millie was confident in herself at the beginning which is why performance was going well however "she falls off the balance beam and gets a low score" this is the catastrophe in the theory because it's when her performance levels drop massively and Millie cannot recover from it. This has a negative effect on Millie because her arousal levels get to an optimum point before the beam however the fall causes a negative impact on performance leading to a lack of self belief and confidence.

Another theory demonstrated in the case study is Vealey's model of self-confidence. This theory explains the reasons for self-confidence. The 4 parts to this theory are: Factors, Sources, Constructs and Consequences. Factors is individual to the athlete and in Millie's case she is 15 years old and has been doing gymnastics since being 5. Sources are where confidence can come from. So in Millie's case she "looks in the diary of her successful performances" this is likely to keep herself motivated and confident. Constructs are the things that come together to construct confidence. Finally consequences are the results from self-confidence; an example of this for Millie is her "tumbles she has completed hundreds of times". These lead to self-confidence the next time, if self-confidence is successful more consequences are shown due to belief in yourself.

In this response the learner covers five theories in detail. Each theory is correctly identified and there is significant explanation of the main principles of this theory and then the theory is applied to the case study using content from the case study. The way the student presents Bandura's self-efficacy theory presents a model for this question as the theory is explained and then each aspect of the theory is applied to the case study using content from it.

This response would have been placed at the top of grade Band 3 even if only three theories had been covered in this depth and accuracy. Alternatively, they could have achieved the same mark by covering five theories but without the same depth as presented here.

This response was placed in Band 1: and gained 3 marks out of 15

Activity 2

Explain how psychological **theories** can be applied to Millie's experiences in the case study.

Your answer should focus on:

- (a) key psychological theories linked to this case study
- (b) explaining key principles of each psychological theory
- (c) applying and justifying the key psychological theories in this case study.

(15) Act2

There're many psychological theories linked into the case study. The first one is need achievement theory when it says "Practising for as many hours as possible is the best way to achieve excellence" that show that she want to achieve excellence by practising as many hour she can.

The second theory is multidimensional theory. So by pre-performance tests her events and recording her self she can work out strength and weakness which will allow her to perform with much confidence as she work on her specific area to improve and high motivation by watching video-clips of her favourite gymnasts.

Catastrophe theory. This when her performance shown a streat and direct drop when she was in the begining vers confidence about her self and all of the sudden she says she can perform

This response gains credit for identifying catastrophe theory as being relevant and being able to show some knowledge of the theory. The learner is awarded some

credit for acknowledging other theories even though the explanations are inaccurate. It is important that learners are accurate when identifying the name of a theory; for example, multidimensional anxiety theory is the correct name rather than multidimensional theory.

Activity 3

In Activity 3 learners had to focus on interventions that would help Millie to control her arousal levels, reduce her cognitive and somatic anxiety and build up her self-confidence

The interventions that were most relevant to the case study were as follows:

Progressive muscular relaxation
Mind-to-muscle relaxation (relaxation imagery)
Breathing control
Self-talk
Imagery for self-confidence
Music (as a means of promoting relaxation)

There was some limited credit awarded to students who covered goal setting and performance profiling, especially when related to developing self-confidence or reducing anxiety. Credit would not be awarded to interventions that increase arousal as these are not appropriate for a gymnast who already has high arousal and anxiety levels.

To gain credit in this activity learners need to do five things: i) identify 4 or more correct interventions specific to Millie's needs; ii) give a brief description of the intervention; iii) justify why each intervention is needed with reference to Millie's experiences in the case study; iv) explain the principles behind each psychological intervention by giving sufficient detail for the intervention to be replicated; v) describe how and when the intervention can be implemented in relation to Millie's training i.e. when would it be practiced and when would it be used. Learners can receive credit for all the relevant interventions that they cover.

Due to the high weighting of this activity within the paper, it accounts for 50% of the marks, it was expected that learners would cover at least four interventions and provide detailed information on at least three interventions.

Learner responses were marked by gaining a mark in one of five grade bands:

Grade band 1: 1-6 marks

Grade band 2: 7-12 marks

Grade band 3: 13-18 marks

Grade band 4: 19-24 marks

Grade band 5: 25-30 marks

This response was placed in Band 5: and gained 26 marks out of 30

Activity 3

Recommend psychological **interventions** to address Millie's needs in the case study.

In your answer you should focus on:

- (a) justifying the interventions you selected for Millie
- (b) explaining the principles behind the psychological interventions
- (c) explaining how each intervention would be implemented.

(30) Act3

There are many psychological interventions that Millie can implement in order to help combat the negative effects that the psychological factors are having on her.

In order to reduce her stress and anxiety, Millie can use breathing control. This intervention involves using slow and deliberate inhaling and exhaling in order to relax the athlete. Breathing control should be used during a break in a competition in order to ensure the athlete's performance is not disrupted. ~~Breathin~~ When doing breathing control, the ratio of inhaling to exhaling should be 1:2 (usually 4 seconds and 8 seconds). Breathing control will be effective for Millie when she is worrying about "falling off". By doing this, Millie can focus her mind away from the competition and allow her to breathe. This will help to relax her and

therefor increase her performance. ~~High levels~~
~~of stress~~ Millie should implement this by
turning up to her event 5 minutes early
and allowing herself time to effectively carry
out breathing control. Breathing control can be
used to increase the oxygen flow in the body,
therefor reducing chances of injury as muscles
will take longer to fatigue. Breathing control will
also help remove CO_2 from Millie's body ~~as~~
which will help prevent muscle tension. Along
with breathing control, Millie could use
relaxation imagery in order to help reduce
her stress and anxiety. This is where ~~an~~
someone can read an imagery script to
Millie (such as her coach) that will take her
mind away from the competition and allow
her to relax. The most common imagery script
is at a warm beach where there may be
a sunset. ~~the~~ This can be implemented
when Millie is doing breathing control 5
minutes before her event. She can ask her
coach to read an imagery script of a
place she feels relaxed whilst she is doing
breathing control to decrease her stress and
anxiety.

An intervention that can be used to reduce Millie's arousal is imagery. This is where an athlete creates an image in their mind of them doing a skill without physically doing it. Imagery is mostly used with the senses. Three types of imagery include visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. Visual imagery ^{involves} ~~includes~~ an imagining what they would see whilst correctly doing a skill. Millie could use this ~~by~~ internally ~~or externally~~ where she is watching from her prospects or externally where it is as if she is watching herself on TV. This would help reduce Millie's arousal as she will be more aware of ~~the~~ what it would look like doing the skill from the judges perspective (external). This would make her feel more comfortable as she ~~can~~ can visualise when she wants the routine to look like and reinact it. Another type of imagery that Millie could use to decrease her arousal is kinaesthetic. This is where the athlete imagines how it would feel when they are doing the skill. This would be effective for Millie as she can imagine herself having a good grip on the beam and not falling off. This

would reassure her and therefore decrease her arousal levels. Millie can implement her imagery just before she is going to take part in an event. This would remind her of the sights, sounds and feelings of a successful routine just before she does it, ensuring she does not become over or under aroused. Millie can practice imagery in training and create pre-performance routines so that she is familiar with the image she has to create in her head.

An intervention that Millie could use to help with her fixed mindset towards the end of the case study is performance profiling. This intervention involves both the athlete and the coach listing different aspects of the athlete's performance and ranking them on a scale. The profile can be used as a basis for goal setting as well as a way of tracking progress. This would be an effective way of helping with Millie's fixed mindset as she and her coach can track her progress. If her and the coach ~~could~~ create a profile of Millie's performances every

month and Millie can see that she has made progress over the month, she may change her mind set. If Millie works hard in training over a month and then sees that she has made an improvement, she will realise that talent can be increased with efforts. This intervention can be implemented by Millie and her coach dedicating 30 minutes of a session once a month to creating a performance profile. This will allow them enough time to create a profile and then discuss their scores. This will help Millie create a basis for goal setting where she can create SMART goals depending on her progress.

An intervention that can be used to help Millie's self-confidence is self-talk. This is a process where athletes use statements and cue words to boost their self-confidence. In order for self-talk to be successful, the cue words used must be personal to the athlete. Like imagery, Millie can practice her self-talk in training so that she is prepared to use it at an event. Millie could use self-talk in the case study at the end when she feels the routine

is "too hard" for her. Cue words such as "Keep going!" or "You can do this" may give her an extra confidence boost and encourage her to continue to the end of her routine. Another form of self-talk is instructional self-talk. This is where the athlete gives specific performance related instructions to themselves in order to help guide themselves through it. This would be effective for Millie during her routine as she has memorised it from training and doing it "hundreds of times". If she is not confident, she can guide herself through the routine. This will be implemented during a performance however can also be used in training when she is practicing her performance.

This response presents four interventions that are presented in great depth. For each intervention the learner gains credit for correctly identifying appropriate interventions, justifying their selection and linking them to the correct factors in the case study, explaining how the intervention is done and its key principles and then explaining how it can be implemented in training or competition and how it should be practiced.

This response is placed in Band 5 and could have received even greater credit if they had chosen a more specific intervention than performance profiling. Some credit is awarded to performance profiling for showing what it is and how it is done but it cannot be specifically linked to the factors of the case study.

This response was placed in Band 2: and gained 8 marks out of 30

As a Sports Psychologist, I believe that the right interventions that can be used for Millie are; Goal setting and Breathing control. Goal setting is a series of goals that are set over 3 time periods; short, medium and long. These will allow Millie to come back into training gradually and build her confidence back up after such an event. To start with we will set her short term goals which will get her back on track for where she needs to be to start building her confidence again. The short term goal we will set her are goals that can be completed and are realistic to what they need to do within 2-4 weeks, for Millie I shall be setting her goals of that she should be back in training for short sessions where she can build up her confidence on her events she competes in other than the beam. This will allow Millie's confidence to grow over time in events that she knows she can do and is good at, this build her confidence back up. For her medium term goals I shall be setting her to within 1 month to 3 months to be able to get back up on the beam, this will be challenging for her but after 2-4 weeks of training the other events she will be full of confidence and should be ready to start training in the beam. This is a medium term goal because she has taken a massive confidence knock from this one event that it will affect the others during a competition if not seen to and sorted out. To start with it will only require her to get back up onto the beam to get a feel for it again, then a week goes by and she starts to get more confident she can then start to do small simple routines till she is confident enough to do harder and longer routines. Her long term goals which will be set is for a 3 - 12 month period, this would be for her to get back competing again, this is her long term goal because she needs to be able to do all 4 of her events properly or to a good standard, this goal can be used as a landmark goal because she would have gone from not being able to compete to then being able to compete again and in front of a crowd, to start with she can start with

smaller crowds to get the feel back of what it was like to perform in front of people again and the rush it gives. She can then go onto competitions like she was used to before her knock, this will bring back a more exciting feeling to her and should help her be motivated to do it all again.

The next intervention that I will get Millie to use is Breathing control, after the metal battle that she had after her fall I believe that breathing control will have a large impact on her performances. This is where we get an athlete to take a few moments to think about their breathing and how it makes a difference before going into each event. I recommend that Millie does this before a training session, the night before a competition and before she goes up to perform for the competition. This will help her significantly control her nerves and cognitive anxiety that brings down her performances. Millie should use the 7/11 technique, this is where the athlete breathes in for 7 seconds in and out for 11 seconds. This helps the body to relax the muscle and her mind as well as bringing down her heart rate. This will help her control her anxiety as it means that she is then able to relax before her event which is needed in gymnastics because the athlete needs to keep their composure for the whole competition to be able to do well and get the highest score possible. Breathing control will have a large impact on how Millie reacts to falls and stumbles, this should help her keep a level head and see the next task ahead instead of thinking about her previous fall. The breathing control should be done 3 times before she performs in training and competitions and then twice before bed, this will help relax the brain and make it better for her to get a better night sleep so that she feels refreshed and ready to take on the competitions and training.

This response only covers two interventions and of these only breathing control will specifically meet the needs of Millie. Some credit is awarded to goal setting for presenting some of the principles, in terms of the different lengths of time that goals can be set for. Knowledge about when to do breathing control and how to practice it gains credit.

This learner should present at least two more interventions and relate them to the case study to move up into higher mark bands.

Summary

- Read the case study several times, highlight the key content and identify which psychological factors are being covered. As you identify factors you might also think about which psychological theories are closely linked to these factors and which psychological interventions may be used to control these factors.
- Each paper will cover different psychological factors and there will be specific content that has been worded so that it can clearly be linked to specific factors.
- It is most important that you spend time to accurately identify which factors are being covered in the case study as if you select incorrect or less relevant factors it is likely that you will select less appropriate theories to explain the case study and psychological interventions to help the sports person.
- When answering questions refer to the content of the case study as much as possible and make sure that the content you refer to is in the case study
- Once you have selected a factor or intervention then add in a short definition or description showing that you understand what it is as you will receive credit for this.
- Be careful not to discuss more than one factor at any one point as this will limit the amount of credit that you can receive for each one; for example, if you are discussing anxiety and stress then discuss them separately as even though they are related they have different definitions and different aspects.
- Likewise, when you discuss interventions do each one separately rather than putting all the arousal control interventions together; this approach will ensure that you maximise the credit you can receive.
- Credit will be awarded for breadth or depth of knowledge.
- Be careful not to write everything that you know about a factor, theory,

or intervention as each one will have a limit to how much credit can be awarded. Once you have covered the detail that has been asked for in the guidance to the activity then move on to the next factor, theory, or intervention.

- You should be able to cover enough content on the pages provided to achieve the full marks for the activity without having to use additional pages. If you find you need to use more pages, then you are probably including irrelevant content or too much content.
- Be selective about which theories and interventions you cover and make sure they are the most relevant for the answer.
- If you cannot fully justify the inclusion of a factor, theory, or intervention by using the content of the case study then do not use as it prevents you from covering relevant material which will be awarded credit.
- Use the marking grid for each activity to guide you and ensure you cover all the content needed for each activity.
- Please click [here](#) for the specification and SAMS.



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