

### Case 1:

A 13-year-old Badminton player had high aspirations but always stressed when it mattered the most-matches. She always felt **low on confidence; increased heart rate, short breaths, perspiration and stiff muscles** right before her matches. She also had a supportive coach but often she felt pressure from her parents who had high expectations from her. They shouted at her for not winning matches. Initially she would like her parents to come and see her match, but later in her career she felt pressurised even when she saw them sitting in the stands when her match was on.

What can a sport psychologist do? After this session of understanding the problem statement, here is a planned approach for a sport psychologist. I usually use CBT/REBT based techniques. Here I target two areas to start off the sessions with:

1<sup>st</sup> Area: **Understand the situations the player faces anxiety in: in match, in practice, pre-match, post-match.**

**E.g:** “My parents have a lot of expectations when I go into a tournament. I also feel I need to give back something to them since they are investing in so much time and money into this. Usually they don’t tell me about how much money they spend, but I know badminton is an expensive sport because of the equipment. All this makes me want to prove something to them and to myself. “

**Psychologist Analysis:** There is too much pressure either created by the player herself due to her perception about the parent’s opinion OR parents always keep on telling her ‘We spend so much for badminton and you don’t play well’ Either case the ultimate goal here becomes- to help her direct her motivation internally.

**Session goals:** help her set smaller goals that are directing her to her performance in her practice. I can also take help of the coach while building upon this.

Secondly, have continuous conversations with parents to help them understand what is pressure and how can expectations create pressure over the child.

2<sup>nd</sup> Area: **Help the player recognize physiological symptoms that occurs when the player is under pressure. Also, add what thoughts and feelings occur before pressure starts to build up..**

**E.g:** How do you feel when under pressure, physically: “I feel something in my stomach. As if I am going to puke any moment. When playing the match my muscles also feel tight”

Can you write against each situation, what thoughts come about “My thoughts usually are- If I don’t win this match my parents are going to shout at me again and they will be very disappointed.”

**Psychologist Analysis:** In order to reduce physiological symptoms she experiences in the matches and before matches, relaxation exercises should be taught and should be practiced not only during matches, but everyday.

In order to reduce overall impact of pressure, thoughts should be reconstructed to more positive and productive thoughts. Making her realize thinking about future- parents reactions, is not going to help her in her matches. Hence, redirecting her thought process to her match goals will help her.

Performance Psychology  
Consulting