

Brainspotting Performance System

Overcoming Blocks, Slumps, and Performance Anxiety and Increasing Sports/Artistic Performance and Creativity

The Brainspotting Performance System identifies and targets performance problems stuck in the athlete's brain and body, down to the roots of the Repetitive Sports Performance Problem (RSPP). "It uses activation of the left-right brain by moving sound between both hemispheres in addition to a process that uses eye position to locate and release trauma, all helping the athlete "process through" the underlying trauma (personal and/or injury related) feeding his or her performance difficulties." (David Grand, Founder & Alan Goldberg, Sports Psychologist).

The roots of all significant sports performance problems are in the athlete's sports trauma history, especially in sports injuries, which are simultaneous physical and emotional traumas accumulated over time. So, the emergence of an RSPP is not the start of the problem but the end product of a long sequence of accumulated traumatic events.

When the trauma symptoms are triggered in the present performance, the body and brain, hard-wired to respond to danger, instinctively and involuntarily attempt to keep us safe. Our systems do not separate a perceived threat in real life from one on the court or field. In other words, when an athlete faces a situation similar to his original trauma or injury, his body is triggered into the fight/flight/freeze response and the developed skill reflexes quickly go offline. These trauma symptoms stem from the energy that has been trapped in the athlete's nervous system that has never had a chance to fully release.

An injury instinctively triggers a natural protective reflex around the injury site to keep that part of the body safe. So, when an injury occurs, the body instantly memorizes the physical and emotional experience of the event in exquisite detail. If the brain is not given the chance to process the information at that time, the information attached to the injury (including the negative thoughts), is stored in the brain in exactly the same form it was initially experienced, including images, sounds, smells, emotions, and physical movements/sensations.

The Brainspotting Performance System is based on the fundamental belief that every case is different and each treatment must be tailored to the specific needs of the athlete. The treatment is always exploratory in nature. We focus on the trauma-conditioned reflexes to **decondition** them. We undo the interfering survival reflexes allowing the athlete to relax and let his or her naturally developed performance instincts take over.

The Fundamentals of the Brainspotting Performance System

We should never separate an athlete's performance problem from who he or she is as a unique human being. To heal performance, we must heal the person because the psychological and physical wounds underlying the RSPP are in the person, not the performance.

RSPP's can be traced to the athlete's trauma and injury histories, both inside and outside their sport.

The onset of RSPP's never makes sense to the athlete, parents, coaches, or fans.

The traumatic nature of an event is always determined by the meaning that the individual athlete ascribes to it.

Sports are 90% mental but the brain is in the body and directly wired into every part of the body thus, everything starts in the body.

The problem is not physical. An athlete can never truly overcome an RSPP by physically practicing more. The more conscious and analytical an athlete gets about his or her performance, the more the athlete will struggle.

All negative self-talk flows directly from our instinctive attempts at self-protection and it is often the battle between positive and negative self-talk that is the first signal that the performance problem is emerging.

Traditional Sports Psychology

Traditional Sports Psychology targets only the athlete's conscious mental state using behavioral techniques such as relaxation, self-talk, focus, mental rehearsal, letting go of mistakes, and quieting an active mind. Although these techniques are useful as they assist the athlete through mental-toughness training as well as being a necessary part of an athlete's skill set, these are temporary, partial fixes that only bring some relief to performance problems.

Behavior techniques only address the symptoms of the problem (pre-performance nervousness, negative thinking, poor focus, etc.), the surface issues, without touching the underlying roots, so the performance difficulties remain or eventually reemerge. However, the unconscious remains of previous negative performance experiences, including negative thoughts and self-doubt ultimately interfere with optimal performance. All RSPP's have their origin in trauma and operate outside the athlete's conscious awareness and control. If the underlying physical and emotional traumas are not identified and processed, the block, slump, performance anxiety, or other symptom may decrease through behavior techniques, but they will not fully release.

Expansion Model of Brainspotting (For Athletes, Artists, & Performers)

In addition, the same techniques that remove blocks, performance anxiety, and slumps can be used to significantly expand performance, especially for the athlete who is performing well. This method is used to expand and enhance the athlete's performance via a portal to the deeper neurobiology and body.

As well, this method can be used to expand creativity and performance in many other disciplines including acting, singing, dancing, composing, writing, painting, drawing, and sculpting. Essentially, the belief is that "there is no healing without creativity and there is no creativity without healing" (David Grand, founder).

This method works simultaneously with the left-right brain, mirroring and integrating both the artistic and scientific nature of each. It also incorporates form and structure, tools and techniques. It is an open, creative model that will appeal to all performers alike.